An experimental and critical exploration of strategies for the enhancement of academic achievement for Chinese Master of Arts jewellery students in contemporary UK Higher Education

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of Birmingham City
University for the Doctor of Philosophy

September 2018

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Abstract of the thesis

It is generally acknowledged by UK universities that in order that they can (i) better address students' educational expectations, and (ii) enhance their appeal to international students, it is necessary to understand the variety of motivating factors that shape student's study decisions (Su, 2010; Wu, 2008). However, in the field of art and design (A&D), and specifically in relation to the study of jewellery, this thesis argues that there remain significant disparities in the understandings of motivating factors that influence Chinese students' decisions and study expectations with respect to study abroad international education. The thesis also argues that these differences contribute to students encountering academic challenges during their UK courses. These challenges are also highlighted and discussed in relation to the cross-cultural dynamics involved in Chinese / international students moving from their 'home' educational system in China, to an unfamiliar one in the UK's. The specific focus of this thesis concerns the student's transition experience, giving particular attention to the initial period of their higher-level study.

The study presents an educational way forward, the purpose of which is to encourage a more research informed approach to the future development and improvement of the Chinese international postgraduate taught (PGT) student learning experience. With its primary concern being Higher Education (HE), and more specifically the subject of jewellery in A&D education, the main thrust of the thesis focuses on how pedagogical strategies and approaches can be better designed, developed and implemented in relation to Chinese / international PGT students.

Designed from the outset to be exploratory, inductive and action-oriented, the study is founded on subject-specific questions that have previously received insufficient attention. Thus, it was necessary to scope the field of study and to engage with and understand, in a granular way, the perceptions of past and current Chinese learners' experiences of studying jewellery in the UK. In this respect, the study investigates in detail how and to what extent the student's past experiences impact on their learning journey in the UK.

The study explores institutional codes and practices within A&D disciplines, and the views of various stakeholders (educational leaders, lecturers and students) and concludes that rather than viewing Chinese PGT learners' transition into UK learning as one that is challenging in the sense of 'problematic' (Martin, 2010), that such challenges can be

perceived and embraced as highly beneficial to their education. Through a range of intervention experiments, the study proposes a model for based on the centrality of the concept of 'in-between space'.   An in-between space is one in which 'conceptual translation' and 'negotiation' strategies are encouraged. Via their use, a more responsive and flexible programme becomes possible, one that both facilitates positive transitions and contributes to enhanced sustainable orientations to learning and work in wider contexts.

This research is relevant to a wide community: it is believed that it can make a significant contribution to students' and academics' understanding of how Chinese MA students' experiences and perceptions of learning in UK HE institutions (and of jewellery in particular), might be addressed. It will also contribute to the identification of disparities and missing elements in the range of transition programmes, and related methods and approaches that have been instituted by the UK HE jewellery sector as a means of maximising the benefits for Chinese MA design students from their studies. Further, it will support the development of more effective and informed preparation programmes for Chinese design students at HE institutional level, and enable Chinese students to increase their understanding of pedagogical approaches. In this way it should support achievement of higher levels of performance at both earlier and subsequent stages of UK-based design studies, and aid learners as they move beyond Master's level education.

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife, thanks for her endless support and always being there for me.

Acknowledgements

Table of content

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Motivation of the study

I would like to start by outlining how and why I came to be undertaking this research. Jewellery became my professional area of interest when I began my career in 2000 as a jewellery student on the undergraduate course in the Jewellery department of the China University of Geosciences. At that time, jewellery-related education was in its infancy in China. However, I was attracted to this programme as the nature of the design and craft-based subject brought me a lot of joy. After graduating in 2006, I was employed as a lecturer to teach on an undergraduate jewellery course in one of the comprehensive universities in China. However, I considered that the limitations of teaching resources and the inflexible strategy of pedagogical approaches would be unable to meet my expectations of professional development. I thus decided to study abroad in order to enhance my professional knowledge and to seek better academic opportunities.

In 2009, I undertook a Master's Degree in Jewellery, Silversmithing and Related Products (JSRP) at the School of Jewellery (SoJ) in Birmingham City University (BCU). Culturally, the rich literary and humanity heritage; and educationally, the advanced and mature jewellery education, made it the ideal place to explore and fulfil my academic ambitions. Unfortunately, reality did not meet my expectations. My underdeveloped English language skills, coupled with unfamiliar teaching and learning approaches, led to misunderstandings of the course requirements and expectations, which constantly troubled me during the first semester of the course. For example, according to the Master's course requirements, students were expected to present evidence, such as visual materials, written documents and test pieces, in order to reflect one's abilities on thinking and making which have been embedded into the design process. This proved to be a huge challenge and made me feel disorientated, as I had never previously been trained to learn in such a way.

However, by receiving support from tutors and peers, I gradually found a way of improving my study on this course, and finally reached a high level of achievement. The impact of these experiences and struggles felt at the initial stage of the course has never disappeared. Looking back, I can still recollect many moments when I was struggling for 'certainty, confidence, and competence as well as questing for my identity' (Yuan, 2011). With the perception of conflict existing between the two academic cultural traditions in

question, China and the UK, this seemed to be a particular obstacle, and hindered the development of my learning.

My learning experience was not unique. Many Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom (UK) also had this experience. In 2010, after finishing my Master's study, I had an opportunity to become an Artist in Residence (AIR) in the SoJ. I worked predominately with the MA JSRP students, and I helped students to tackle their learning obstacles by sharing my own learning experiences with them. During that period, I found that the majority of the Chinese students on the course were encountering difficulties that were similar to those I had experienced as an MA student. Based only on my own learning experience, I realised that without an explicit understanding of the current educational situation, students were unable to be supported effectively. It reminded me of my question towards the nature of the course – the extent to which the course is explained explicitly and how students are able to bridge the differences between two academic cultures. However, the AIR experience brought me a great opportunity to further explore the issues, which existed within the Chinese group. In the meantime, it was found that an increasing number of Chinese students were entering the UK for higher education, and it was reported that many of them were frustrated with their learning experience. The general international student academic transition experiences are likely to be significant in the British academic world. However, very little attention has been given to more specific academic settings, for example, art and design (A&D) (including jewellery) in an educational domain. As jewellery education was most familiar to me, I investigated how its Western practice-based nature and its use of problem-solving learning strategies brought significant challenges to Chinese students – challenges which differ from the Chinese educational domain – and which stay largely unexplored. I hoped there would be some up-to-date research within this specific area to help Chinese students transition more effectively into a new educational environment and to make their learning experience less troubling and more meaningful. Thus, through these observations, the roots of my passion were laid and then evolved once I began my PhD research in 2012

My education and work (AIR) experiences, situated within both language systems and educational traditions, provide me with particular cross-cultural positions, from and through which to conduct this research. That is, my position as a researcher is bound neither by one space - a cultural / educational environment located in China, nor another space, a cultural / educational environment located in the UK, but is determined by my immersion within both of these environments and conditioned by these experiences. This means that

the research is able to developmentally examine a range of beliefs and perspectives toward data collection, which helps to ensure the quality and credibility of the study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth investigation into Chinese students' learning experiences as they transition into a new educational environment in the context of UK HE system, predominantly within the creative arts disciplines. Specifically, this study will identify and clarify the causes of challenges[1] to such transition, and will propose ways in which this situation can be improved.

1.2   Research Questions

When starting this research study, there was an initial set of questions that I had in mind:

Question 1: What are the learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles that most commonly operate in HE relating to the subject of jewellery in both China and UK?

Question 2: To what extent is it possible and meaningful to identify and classify (a) learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles, and (b) differences in approaches to learning across the two countries?

Question 3: In what ways and to what extent do notional differences in approaches and styles influence Chinese postgraduate taught (PGT) students' learning experiences and perceptions with respect to their jewellery education?

Question 4: What are the perceptions of Chinese PGT students with respect to UK jewellery pedagogical styles, and in what ways do they influence students' preparedness or readiness for their transition from Bachelor's study in China to PGT study in the UK?

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[1] The researcher acknowledges that the term, challenges, is open to be changeable interpretations depending

The researcher recognises from personal experience, as a student and then through mentoring and teaching experiences, and now as a researcher, that it is important to set challenges for students, and that in this sense, challenges are there to encourage progressive and effective learning. In the context of this thesis, whilst fully taking this positive sense of educational challenges into account, when the term is used in relation to the study it relates to the specific difficulties and concerns that the Chinese / international participants spoke about through their reflections on their journey of learning. The researcher also uses the term, obstacles, in this same context. The intended meaning here is when combinations of difficulties and concerns amount to a barriers that stands in the way of effective learning.

Question 5. What provisions have been made in the UK School of Jewellery (SoJ) system to support Chinese PGT students in accommodating and adapting to learning in the UK HE context?

Question 6: To what extent are adaptation methods and techniques in the UK HE jewellery sector, and particularly the SoJ, adequate and effective? Is there more that can be done to improve the student experience of transition from one learning culture to another?

However, it is also worth noting that as the research progressed more deeply, being driven and shaped by the data collected over time these questions evolved and were refined over time.

The first four questions, which are presented in Chapter 4 (the scoping phase of the syudy), are explored through a range of research activities conducted at the first stage of the empirical study. The researcher investigated informants' learning experiences to explore and discuss:

- What are the informants' perceptions of their educational experiences in the UK A&D HE context?
- To what extent do the informants perceive these experiences as 'challenges'?
- How those challenges represent themselves in stakeholders' day-to-day learning and teaching practices?
- How the informants perceive and engage with those challenges?

These first four questions are answered through the scoping phase of the study, and they remain important for setting the theme of the study.

However, as presented in Chapter 5 (the empirical phase of the study) and explained in section 6.3 of Chapter 6 (the interpretation of the empirical study's findings), the Research Questions 5 and 6 were adjusted. This results from the application of the study's action research approach and based on the research evidence, the following deeper questions have emerged and need to be addressed:

Question 5: What provisions are made in the UK A&D/Jewellery HEI sector to support Chinese PGT students in giving meaning to their learning?

Question 6: To what extent and in what conditions are these methods and techniques in the UK A&D/jewellery HE effective?

The following adjusted Research Question emerged from the evidence, with an additional aspect, which addresses the need to envisage possible transition experiences after PGT study.

Question 7: Is there more that can be done to improve these methods and techniques in order to develop meaning and create new knowledge for Chinese students' UK learning in the A&D context, as well as transition into future situations?

1.3   The Significance of the Study

In last few years, it has been reported that there has been a rapidly increasing number of students studying outside their country of origin as a result of the internationalisation of HE (OECD 2016). However, as the British Council (2014, 4) report explains:

> *[S]imply having a diverse student body does not mean the education or even the campus is global in nature. What comes as an essential part of a global education is the inclusion of international students in communities and classes. Integration of all students is an elemental factor in the expanding concept of internationalisation.*

It is therefore essential for education providers to understand factors influencing students' decisions to engage in international education in order to better cater for students' educational expectations and to enhance their own attractiveness to international students. Whilst there has been extensive research on the reasons why Chinese students undertake cross-border HE, their motivations in enrolling and their perspectives on learning experiences in specific programs are still under-researched. In particular, 'there is a lack of empirical study into [Chinese international] students' learning in A&D' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.3), and the area of jewellery HE remains almost entirely unexplored.

In addition, according to Quana et al. (2016):

> *Despite almost a decade of research on Chinese students studying at British Universities, studies have focused primarily on standard-entry undergraduate (UG)*

students (Schweisfurth and Gu 2009; Wang and Byram 2011). The literature reveals limited studies that investigate the cross-culture transition of the diversity of student groups, such as direct entry UG students (Quan, Smailes, and Fraser 2013) and in particular from the perspective of this research of Chinese postgraduate (PG) students (Turner 2006), especially on how international students make their transition following a practical process step by step.

However, completing UG education in China is not an easy task, and pursuing a PG degree in the UK will certainly add a new set of challenges. When Chinese students first encounter jewellery-related HE in the UK they are quite likely to encounter academic problems associated with transferring to a higher level of study – from UG to PGT level – within a different education environment and from tutor-directed study to a more self-directed approach. Not only are they presented with educational styles, approaches and evaluation systems, which are different from their own academic culture, their expectations of educational needs are also different to the local UK students. The learning behaviour of Chinese students is also recognised to deviate from the practices and values of the UK home students. While these differences may not be negative, some of them have caused educational gaps between students' 'home' academic culture and the one they are entering into. This thesis proposes that it is these gaps that create the most significant learning and teaching mismatches for Chinese students in the early stages of their UK study, and these mismatches lead to big challenges for institutions in their aim to fulfil their goals of internationalising HE.

This study presents an educational vision, the purpose of which is to encourage a more research informed educational approach to Chinese international PGT students' learning experience. The thesis is concerned primarily with HE, and more specifically the subject of jewellery in A&D education. The main thrust of the thesis focuses on how teaching and learning strategies can be better designed, developed and implemented for the Chinese international PGT students. Through a series of case studies, which explore the aim of these educational activities, Chinese (international) student issues are unfolded to illuminate the present educational realities that can be improved and to discover more informed practical possibilities.

This research will be accessible to a wide community and aims to make a significant contribution to the sector's understanding of experiences and perceptions of learning in the UK HE institutions, and how creative arts disciplines, in particular, are perceived by

Chinese PGT students. The study also intends to lead to more explicit understanding of the needs and expectations of Chinese PGT students as they move from China to learning in the context of UK HE. In addition, it could also contribute to the identification of gaps and missing elements in the range of transitioning programmes and related methods that have been instituted by the UK HE discipline sectors as a means of assisting Chinese students in getting the best from their studies. It then intends to support the development of more adequate and informed preparation and transition methods and approaches for Chinese students at institution and subject level, and in this way, pave the way for Chinese students to gain more through their learning experience, and to achieve higher levels of performance, with higher levels of achievement during the earlier stages of their UK study being a specific focus.

Importantly, and in common with many of the research studies into international students' transition in to the UK HE system, this research has unearthed some challenging and, in many ways, uncomfortable messages. However, by reflecting on the cases of Chinese students' study, understanding the differences of students' needs and expectations is the first step toward improving the ways of working with diverse groups of students. The data can then be drawn from in order to inform the improvement of internationalising curricula, pedagogies and student support systems.

1.4   The organisation of the thesis

The thesis comprises of seven chapters. The introduction chapter introduces the 'contextual background' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.3) and emphasises the significance of the study; it introduces the current situation of Chinese international PGT students learning in the UK HE and reflects on a presented case of my own learning journey, situated within the internationalisation of UK A&D (including jewellery) HE. Significantly, the introduction identifies and discusses the current lack of research relating to the Chinese PGT students' learning experiences in the context of their early transitional stage to the UK jewellery-related Master's education.

The second chapter presents and discusses a review of literature, which concerns the topic of this study. In particular, it introduces the student journey of internationalisation in relation to frameworks of globalisation and the internationalisation of HE. The literature is discussed with respect to the complexity and challenges of cross-cultural relations in international education. It also focuses on the intercultural aspects of internationalisation of

HE by reviewing both the UK and international perspectives. It also highlights the lack of consensus regarding the academic cultural awareness among educators, for example whom may homogenise or stereotype the Chinese student group, thus leading to a tendency that may influence a misinterpretation of Chinese students' learning expectations, especially given, from a Chinese students' perspective, the ambiguities that often exist for them, within the UK A&D domain.

The third chapter presents the methodology and research design associated with this study. It also provides the overall philosophical rationale for the study, linking this closely with the research questions that underpin the work. The chapter begins with the consideration of relationships between the research questions and research design, giving an outline of the range of qualitative approaches adopted. It also addresses ethical issues and the robustness of the methodology and alludes to issues of validity of data, reliability of research processes and generalisability of results.

The fourth chapter presents the scoping exercise being undertaken as part of the empirical study in this research. It aims to develop detailed knowledge about the challenges that are perceived by Chinese jewellery students during their transition from studying at Bachelor's level in China to studying at Master's level in the UK. It presents the studies taking place at one jewellery institution in the UK and two jewellery institutions in China. By presenting reflections and initial findings that were drawn from these studies, it further aims to form the theoretical basis for the development of interventions. These interventions, which are experimental, are conducted through a Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP), during the later stage of the empirical study.

The fifth chapter sets out the rest of the empirical study, which is also conducted through the LEP, comprising three distinct phases. This chapter explains the structure, aim and objectives of this programme, its rationale and how it was developed. The findings from each phase of the programme are then analysed, reflected upon, subjected to initial interpretations and summarised. The chapter concludes by bringing together the most important findings, forming the basis for more in-depth interpretation in the following chapter.

The sixth chapter presents the in-depth interpretations of key findings and initial interpretations from the empirical research. By applying a thematic approach, several main 'themes are discussed with reference to the literature' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.4), in

order to clarify what can be understood from the findings of the empirical research and what they mean for the study as a whole.

The final chapter concludes the study by providing both a general review of the study. And specific insights into how the aims of the study and the investigation's research questions have been answered. It sets out how the key findings can contribute to new knowledge and discusses the limitations of the research, as well as how those same limitations might drive the future research agenda in this field.

Chapter 2   The internationalisation of higher education and student transitions: themes, issues and controversies – a review of extant literature

2.1   Introduction

This literature review explores the student journey of internationalisation within the frameworks of globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education (HE). It focuses on the educational experiences of Chinese students who have successfully completed a Bachelor's degree in Mainland China and proceeded to Master's level study in the United Kingdom (UK). The review gives particular attention to the social and academic challenges that students encounter during the early transition stage of their journey in the UK. The research began with the aim of addressing these challenges – perceived at the time as obstacles to effective learning and adaptation. However, the investigation has since opened the potential to conceive of challenges in the broader sense of improving the experience of transition for all students. In this way, the research has developed towards the expanded scope of enhancing student learning as well as addressing challenges. This topic is investigated through case study material generated through the research and literature on the internationalisation of higher education, which draws upon UK and world perspectives.

It is notable, this is a consolidated literature review on key factors relating to internationalisation, globalisation, and student transitions. Readers may be interested to know that further allusions to literature appear where are relevant to later chapters. In Chapter 5, it discusses theoretical contributions in relation to Learning Enhancement Programme. While, in Chapter 6, it discusses pedagogical issues in relation to aspects of third space, experiential learning, gamification and bilingual, and it also returns to interpret key findings in relation to literature.

2.1.1   Student transition

The journey of international students, in relation to the internationalisation of HE, has become a topic extensively discussed in the academic world. At the level of academic institutions, the internationalisation of HE is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, comprising academic systems, local and global policy-making and the development of education economies (Altbach, 2003; Kemal, 2008). At micro levels, related to my research, the experiences and perceptions of international students studying abroad are receiving

much scholarly attention, with the intercultural education and student academic transition being prominent themes (Marginson and Sawir, 2011; Marginson, 2013; Sani, 2015).

The main movement of international students continues to be from east and southeast Asian countries to the main student-receiving destinations – the United States of America (USA), the UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, France and New Zealand (OECD, 2016). Whilst students learning in these countries gain valuable 'cultural capital' attached to Western education (Waters, 2006), according to Bartram's taxonomy (2008), their experiences of learning abroad can also involve difficulties, described by Huang in 2012 as 'academic cultural shock' and 'learning shock'. This happens when students have to cope with their new educational environment and develop an understanding towards a new academic tradition (Campbell, 2010) with different teaching and learning approaches compared to their home country. In contrast to Berry (2005), Appadurai (2001) and Haigh (2008), who problematise the topic of the research, Huang suggests a binary approach to cultures and education traditions. This binary perspective is also countered by Haggis (2009) who argues, that 'there is as yet little research that attempts to document different types of dynamic process through time in relation to learning situations in higher education' (p.389) and that the expectations and motivations of students who decide to study abroad are becoming far more complex. Existing research on international student transition has focused on a variety of issues that relate to language proficiency, academic traditions, level of entry and learning expectations. However, the actual transition experiences of individual students are always contextualised and to some extend treated as 'problematic' (Martin, 2010). This means that approaches centred on international student groups and traditional perceptions of difference are inadequate. For example, Chinese students were perceived by Huang (2012) to be uncomfortable with group activities in the classroom, possibly due to what Signorini et al. (2009) reported as approaches to classroom communication in China that are often teacher-centred. However, Tran (2011) warns that it is important to acknowledge that all students adapt differently and therefore to avoid simply attributing learning styles to cultural backgrounds.

There are increasing numbers of international students studying at universities in the leading host countries each year, with Chinese students being the dominant cohorts of these groups. There exists a semantic gap between English and Mandarin, which does not seem to be a matter of direct translation, but requires an understanding of cognitive and learning approaches. These approaches are often perceived to be different within the two

language systems. Therefore, a detailed investigation into what these differences are and an understanding of how and to what extent they effect student transition is needed.

2.1.2 Signposting the research frameworks

This literature review interconnects the personal journey of Chinese students – transferring from Bachelor's study in Mainland China to Master's level in the UK – to broader theoretical perspectives on the internationalisation of HE. The terms associated with this topic are discussed throughout the review and footnotes are used to provide the reader with further detail of context.

Hyland et al. (2008) in the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) project, named: 'A CHANGING WORLD: the internationalisation experiences of staff and students (home and international) in UK HE', provides a definition of 'international students' as 'those studying full-time and who are not resident ordinarily in the UK' (p.4). However, the authors also highlight the 'personal journey of internationalisation' (Appadurai, 2001, cited by Hyland et al., 2008, p.4) and Haigh's suggestion that the 'best approach is to build from the assumption most students are 'international'' (Haigh, 2008, p.432, cited by Hyland et al., 2008, p.4).

Whilst recognising the definition of international students, and thereby Chinese students, 'as those studying full-time and who are not resident ordinarily in the UK' (Hyland et al., 2008), this research will use the perspectives of Appadurai and Haigh in order to take account of groups of students and the personal student journey (Appadurai, 2001).

This study recognises that definitions of globalisation and the internationalisation of HE are complicated and open to variable accounts. They 'are related but not the same thing' (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p.290). It is important to introduce some of the ways in which these accounts complicate the background to my study.

For Trahar (2013, p.7):

> *'Globalisation' is often used interchangeably with 'internationalisation' and, although they are "dynamically linked concepts" they are "different" (OECD, 1999, p.14), often inadequately understood and resisting simple explanation (Sanderson, 2004).*

For Altbach and Knight, globalisation and internationalisation have different meanings but are interconnected. Globalisation is the context within which the education 'policies and practices' take place: these 'policies and practices' are designed to 'support academic systems and institutions—and even individuals—to cope with the global academic environment take place' (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p.290).

Also, according to them, the motivations for the internationalisation of HE includes:

> [C]ommercial advantage, knowledge and language acquisition, enhancing the curriculum with international content, and many others.

The authors describe typical examples of the '[s]pecific initiatives' of internationalisation as:

> [B]ranch campuses, cross-border collaborative arrangements, programs for international students, establishing English-medium programs and degrees, and others have been put into place as part of internationalization.

The Centre for Curriculum Internationalisation (CCI) based at Oxford Brookes University in the UK, considers a range of key issues concerning this topic, including the links between curriculum internationalisation and the concept of a global citizen. However, '[g]lobal citizenship is a contested term" because it has 'both negative and positive connotations'.

According to Mertova and Green (2010, cited by Trahar, 2013, p.4):

> It can be associated with the responsibility to act in the interests of social justice and, more negatively, with cultural imperialism.

The literature reviewed on globalisation and the internationalisation of HE has been important in providing important theoretical perspectives in the specific context of the study. It has also pointed to why there is a need for focused, discipline-specific research into student transition.

HE is 'laden with theorising about internationalisation and globalization', however 'there continues to be little research into the complexities of intercultural encounters and communication in such environments' (Hyland et al., 2008, p.5, 6). Also, whilst individual

students and academics establish the 'deeply embedded values, cultures and traditions' of higher education, critical inquiry rarely focuses on individuals and by implication over generalizes' (Stenasker et al., 2008, p.2).

With these perspectives in mind, I am using empirical, case-based action research methods, applied within a discipline and specific location. The advantages that these bring to the research is that it enables both a holistic approach as well as a focus on individuals, in contrast to general theory. It also provides a way of gathering and analysing rich data and countering the variables within disciplines that may have an influence.

Whilst the starting point for the research was motivated by my own observations and reflections on the experience of transferring from learning in China to the UK, this review of literature informs the study from a range of perspectives. This has had the positive effect of complicating and broadening the investigation, particularly in terms of recognising and dealing with its complexity. Rather than approaching the topic of student transition in accordance with binary viewpoints of cultural differences between Chinese and 'Western European' learners, some of the literature reviewed gives emphasis to how different educational traditions impact upon the international students' learning experiences, which indicates a generalisation and cultural stereotype are preconceived towards Chinese students group (Biggs, 1996; Davey, 2016; Pingel, 2016). I have decided to explore the student journey of internationalisation as multifaceted and constantly evolving. The approach I am taking is informed by the reality of my own experience as a student and through the variable perspectives and concepts identified through this review. For example, Berry (2005, p.698) discusses how 'intercultural contact involves 'both parties' ('home' and 'international students') and how there are 'large group and individual differences in how people (in both groups in contact) go about their acculturation.[2]'. This viewpoint exemplifies how the literature review has complicated my research topic. Although the topic is focused on the journey of Chinese students, according to Berry, it is important to address student transition from a range of subject perspectives. In other words, the people who are the subjects of my research should include Chinese students and those from other countries, including the UK. Thus, the overarching aim of this investigation should be to enhance the

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[2] Berry (2005, p.698, 699) provides a definition on acculturation:

> *'Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioral repertoire.'*

student learning experience holistically. This and other perspectives, which are discussed in Section 2.2: Research framework, below, have positively informed the investigation.

It is worth noting, there are questions raised in relation to definitions of the terms 'home' and 'international students'. Hyland et al. (2008) in the HEA project (see page 11) address the need 'to hear from the ground, how staff and students viewed internationalisation' (p.3). They argue that the internationalisation of the curriculum in HE should be seen as different to the 'increasing number of international students' (Ibid, p.6). They (Ibid, p, 4) further suggests that,

> [A]s European societies become increasingly multicultural, cross-cultural capability can be developed by students (and staff) 'at home'.

That is:

> [T]he majority of students (and staff) are not mobile thus the opportunities for cultural capability will not be gained by travelling to other countries for study or work.

The authors (Ibid, p4) further argue that:

> In many ways IaH is much more inclusive than 'internationalisation' as it focuses our attention on "academic learning that blends the concepts of self, strange, foreign and otherness" (Teekens, 2006; 17, original emphasis) and is congruent with the perspectives of those such as Appadurai (2001), Haigh (2008) and Sanderson (2007) who foreground the importance and value of personal awareness in intercultural encounters in higher education. Appadurai (2001) speaks of the personal journey of internationalisation, Sanderson (2007) calls for the 'internationalisation of the academic Self', while Haigh (2008, p.432) suggests that the "best approach is to build from the assumption that most students are 'international'.

For them (Ibid, p.4):

International students are no more a homogeneous group than any other group of people or students, for example, home students, yet the terms are often used as if they were descriptors of homogeneity.

Although the authors acknowledged that the terms 'home' and 'international students' are problematic, for the purposes of the HEA project, 'international students were defined as those studying full-time and who are not resident ordinarily in the UK' (Ibid, p.4).

Whilst my study, in the same way, uses the term international students as 'those studying full-time and who are not resident ordinarily in the UK' (Hyland et al., 2008, p.4), it considers the question raised by Hyland et al. It does this by focusing on individuals and the complexities of actual intercultural encounters[3].

My research takes the meaning of intercultural encounters in an education context as a phase of the student experience that takes place during their study in a foreign country. By comparison, transcultural approaches[4] involving more than one culture, are more than a phase – students can develop and take with them worldviews, competencies and attitudes beyond their formal education. This research aims to contribute to transcultural approaches within its specific context.

The investigation, which centres on the subject of jewellery design at Master's level, will be mainly undertaken through case-based study at the School of Jewellery (SoJ) in Birmingham City University (BCU). As a student on this course (2009-2010), my position in the investigation is as objective researcher and part of the subject of the research. This is discussed in relation to 'action research' in Section2.1.3: The practical approach of this study.

In order to practically address the complexities of the research topic, as this literature discusses, the investigation includes group activities, workshops, individual tutorials, mentoring, group and individual interviews.

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[3] 'Intercultural encounters' here refer to all the students and academics who are involved in intercultural teaching and learning environment.

[4] Ryan (2011, p.631), in her article 'Teaching and learning for international students: towards a transcultural approach,' states that '[a] new approach (transcultural approach) is needed that positions international students not as 'problems' to be solved but as 'assets' to internationalisation and the generation of new knowledge and new ways of working in the academy.'

The research addresses the need to design and develop new pedagogical interventions in jewellery design education with the capability of enhancing the student journey of internationalisation. It further aims to embed outcomes of the research within the jewellery design curriculum and to be useful to future researchers in the field of practice-based study at Master's level.

With its focus on the subject of jewellery design, the investigation explores the student journey of internationalisation through social, academic, language and psychological frameworks. The literature reviewed in the frameworks section below has three parts. It starts with a broad context setting overview of world and UK perspectives and trends connected to the internationalisation of HE and globalisation. This is followed by discussion on specific UK contexts: mainly drawn from the UK HEA publications. The final part addresses the UK Art and Design (A&D) HE. This part discusses aspects of practice-based A&D education in general terms and in ways specific to jewellery design and contemporary approaches to this subject.

Connections between these frameworks and the central theme of the study – the Chinese student experience during the early stage of their journey from Bachelor's level learning in China to Master's level in the UK – are discussed throughout these three parts.

The selection of these frameworks and their order aims to develop an understanding of how concepts and practices, drawn from different academic fields, can contribute to improving the student learning experience, for Chinese students and for all students involved in practice-based study at Master's level in the UK.

2.2   Research framework

2.2.1   International, Intercultural and Transcultural Education

This section provides an overview of key international and global concepts and contexts. It considers a range of theoretical and academic perspectives. These are mainly drawn from academic journals, covering the period from the 1970s to 2016.

2.2.1.1 Introduction to key concepts and contexts

Altbach and Knight (2007) have written influential research papers on the international dimensions of HE, encompassing institutional, national and international levels. They described the '[t]he international activities of universities' as having 'dramatically expanded in volume, scope, and complexity during the past two decades' (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p.290). Similarly, Brandendurg and De Wit (2011, p15), characterise the increasing centrality, for universities, of the internationalisation of higher education: 'over the last two decades, the concept of the internationalization of higher education has moved from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core'.

Brandendurg and De Wit (2011, p15) go on to describe how, apart from joint international research, from the late 1970s up to the mid-1980s, internationalisation activities were relatively 'isolated and unrelated' only increasing in importance in the late 1980's – and they indicate that 'in the past two decades, new components were added to its multidimensional body, moving from simple exchange of students to the big business of recruitment and from activities impacting on an incredibly small elite group to a mass phenomenon'.

In an earlier paper 'New Rationales Driving Internationalisation', Knight argues that the 'changes and challenges facing the international dimension of higher education in a more globalized world', call for 'clearly articulated rationales for internationalisation' (Knight, 2015, p.3). According to Knight, the rationales that have traditionally driven internationalisation 'have been divided into four groups: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic'. She proposes that although these 'generic categories remain a useful way to analyse rationales … there are new and emerging rationales that cannot be neatly placed in one of these four groups' (Ibid, p.4). These are numerous and multifaceted and include: National Level Rationales, Nation Building, Human Resources Development, Strategic Alliances, Commercial Trade, Social and Cultural Development, Institutional-Level Rationales, International Profile and Reputation, Student and Staff Development, Income Generation and International Profile and Reputation and Research and Knowledge Production. In critiquing many of these rationales, Knight (2015a, p.4) sees tensions between social and cultural development and economic development. For example, in relation to the Social and Cultural Development:

> *The social/cultural rationales, especially those that relate to intercultural understanding and national cultural identity are still significant; but perhaps their importance does not carry the same weight in comparison to the economic and political rationales listed above.*

In contrast to this view of the greater influence of economics and politics over social and cultural development, Knight (2015a, p.4) proposes that:

> *International and interdisciplinary collaboration is key to solving many global problems such as those related to environmental, health, or crime issues. Institutions and national governments are therefore, continuing to make the international dimension of research and knowledge production a primary rationale for internationalization of higher education.*

Through examples such as these and in other parts of her paper (2015, p.5), 'The New Rationales Driving Internationalization' demonstrates the complexity and multifaceted character of this framework - the internationalisation of HE in a globalised world.

> *Differing and competing rationales contribute to both the complexity of the international dimension of education and the substantial contributions that internationalization makes to higher education and the role it plays in society.*

The complexity and range of this framework, as mentioned in the introduction to this review, requires focused, discipline-specific research into student transition. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute to pedagogical development and intercultural understanding. This is expanded upon in Section 2.1.3: The practical approach of this study.

In order to address the transition experience of students, including their overseas study expectations, it is necessary to understand the concepts of international education, intercultural education and their interrelationships.

Globalisation and Internationalisation

According to Leask (2008a, p.10), 'it is almost impossible to talk about internationalization without referring to globalisation and indeed there is much to be learned about internationalisation from its relationship to globalisation.'

The terms globalisation and internationalisation have been discussed and interpreted by interested actors within different contexts and in relation to a changing global environment. As a result, a diversity of interpretations has been developed related to these terms or concepts (or interconnected phenomena), including perspectives that increasingly recognise the diverse and complex ways in which they affect the higher education sector (Knight, 1997).

These terms are the subject of constant debate. They have been interpreted and developed by many universities across the world, with differing definitions being developed over recent decades (since the 1970s) and for 'for a century or more' by the universities that have longer histories of participation in international activities (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p.293).

Altbach (2015, p.6) defines globalisation as:

> [T]rends in higher education that have cross-national implications. These include mass higher education; a global marketplace for students, faculty, and highly educated personnel; and the global reach of the new Internet-based technologies, among others.'

For the purposes of this study, it is proposed to define globalisation, in general, as 'the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas across borders' (Knight, 2015, p.290).

In this global context, it is appreciated that countries will respond differently to globalisation due to their individual histories, traditions, cultures and priorities (Burnett, 2008; Liu, 2009). As mentioned earlier, globalisation and internationalisation are interconnected but they have different meanings. Knight's (2015a, p.4) definition of internationalisation (1994 - updated 2003) was that:

> Internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of (postsecondary) education.

According to the International Association of Universities (IAU), this definition proposed by Knight, which was adopted by the IAU in 2015, 'is intentionally neutral and does not specify the rationales, the positive or negative consequences, or type of activities and actors associated with internationalisation'. More recently, Hudsik (2011) proposed new definitions of internationalisation, which expanded on Knight's. The following definition was adopted by NAFSA (2011, p6) as 'one of its central concepts of internationalisation' (IAU doc, 2015).

> *Comprehensive Internationalisation is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it is embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units.*

Finn and Darmody (2016, p.546) address the need for more research into the factors that shape the experiences of international students – 'how satisfied international students are with their study abroad'. They suggest that 'the term 'internationalisation' is best seen as a series of strategies and polices moving towards closer cooperation between academic institutions'.

However, Knight (2015a, p.5) argues that, 'this strategic approach seems still out of reach for most institutions.' In calling for the 'collective global teaching and learning community to identify new pedagogies,' Hellsten and Reid (2008, p.2) propose that many well-designed international pedagogical methods have not yet been recognised. They also consider that international students are confronting uncertainty when facing their new educational environment. According to Knight, 'the key barriers [to internationalisation]' were viewed as lack of expertise in the international office and lack of faculty interest, involvement, and international/intercultural experience' (2015 b, p.6). More recently the key focus has become the insufficiencies of intercultural awareness; and related teaching and learning approaches (Hellsten and Reid, 2008).

It seems that it is necessary to identify new pedagogies within the international and intercultural contexts, then compare and integrate with established academic traditions to enhance the educational effectiveness.

Referring to the increasing importance of internationalisation in the late 1980s and the subsequent development from the 'simple exchange of students to the big business of recruitment' in the 1990s and 2000s, Brandendurg and de Wit (2011, p.15) called for 'a critical reflection on the changing concept of internationalisation'. In the context of the internationalisation education, now a mass phenomenon, and critical of the 'loss of real mobility and the commercialisation of higher education in general and its international component in particular' they propose a number of points. These include the need to: 'move away from dogmatic and idealist concepts of internationalisation and globalization', apply a 'greater sense of reality', and rather than focusing on to the 'instruments and means of internationalisation' to invest a lot more time into questions of rationales and [meaningful] outcomes (Ibid, p.16).

In summary, internationalisation has been defined as a constant process, related to globalisation. In the context of HE, this process involves national, sector and institutional levels and embodies the social and cultural values of universities. Internationalisation also supports the whole enterprise of HE (Hudsik, 2011), including the economic strategies of universities.

As proposed above, for the purpose of this study, globalisation is defined, in general, as 'the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas across borders' (Knight, 2015 c, p.2), and with its focus on the transition experience of students, Knight's emphasis on social/cultural view of internationalisation as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension' (Knight, 2015 c, p.2) into higher education, will guide the direction of the investigation.

International student(s)

For the purpose of collecting academic mobility data more precisely, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics' Global Education Digest (2006, p.178) defined an 'international student' as a student who 'has left his or her country, or territory of origin, and moved to another country or territory with the singular objective of studying'. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Education at a Glance (2006, p.46) document also supported this definition and made a further distinction between 'international students' and 'foreign students.' The term 'international students' refers to 'students crossing borders for the specific purpose of studying', and the term 'foreign students' refers to 'non-citizens enrolled

at an institution of education outside their home country, but who have not necessarily crossed a border to study (therefore not strictly mobile, and cause an over-count of actual mobility figures)'. In general, international students as a student cohort, according to Al-Quhen (2012, cited by Sue and Clare, 2014, p64), are defined 'as students that are enrolled in an institution of higher education in a country where they are neither citizens nor refugees nor immigrants.'

For this study, the term 'international student' is interpreted more broadly than the above organisational citizen and immigration definitions. According to Montgomery (2013, p.82), 'contemporary perspectives on cultures and communities of higher education acknowledge the blurring of boundaries between the academy and the community beyond.' Montgomery (2013, p.83) also argued that:

> *[t]hese new perspectives on the cultures and communities generated by internationalisation depict contexts where intercultural interaction enables all participants (students and staff) to question their own beliefs and positions and develop the criticality so highly prized in higher education.*

The British Council (2014, p.3) in a related way further broadens this (more inclusive?) concept of internationalisation, proposing that although 'much research has been conducted on institutional responsibility with regards to the integration of international students little has been done in the way of understanding the sentiment of home students.' Based on these viewpoints it is clear that more attention needs to be given to the learning experience of the academic community as a whole (Montgomery, 2013) and to conceptualise and debate the internationalisation of education and factors influencing the 'international student' beyond restrictive organisational definitions.

It is evident that the process of internationalisation of HE has already brought students, staff and institutions into a global level of activity or relations and that internationalised universities have increased intercultural contact and developed related education strategies. However, the literature reviewed also demonstrates that more can be done in the way of making the 'home' student learning experience more internationalised.

In this regard, Appadurai raises the point of view of the 'personal journey of internationalisation' (2001, cited by Hyland et al., 2008, p.432). Accordingly, Haigh

suggested that the 'best approach is to build from the assumption that most students are 'international'' (2008, cited by Hyland et al., 2008, p.432).

Intercultural and transcultural education

According to UNESCO (2007, p.18)

> *Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups.*

The term 'intercultural' has been discussed and interpreted in a number of ways and in relation to different contexts. Knight (2015c, p.2) defines the term intercultural as 'relating to the diversity of cultures that exist within countries, communities, and institutions.' From a theoretical perspective, cited by Marotta (2014, p.93) Ariarajah (2005) suggests that this concept could be understood through the 'lens of intercultural hermeneutics'. Marotta (2014, p.93) further indicates that 'such a perspective entails a theory and method of understanding that occurs crossculturally; it entails willingness and, one would assume, an ability to move across cultural boundaries.'

Fantini and Tirmizi (2006, p.12) support Ariarajah's interpretation of intercultural, which they see as an ability to act 'effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.' UNESCO (2009, p.118) defines the term intercultural, in its report 'UNESCO World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue', as 'part of a broad toolkit of worldviews, attitudes and competences that young people acquire for their lifelong journey.' More recently, according to Christina, Maria and Mihail (2014, p.632), in the context of globalisation and internationalisation of HE, the term intercultural indicates:

> *[A]ction and communication between individuals, groups and institutions belonging to different cultures. It looks for the relationships between relatively equal cultures (seen not as dominated and dominant) who freely seek to meet, know and understand each other better for a political project on long term.*

For Pachuau (2015), the act of communication and interpretation across cultural

boundaries has to be conceived as a two-way or a multiple-way activity. Gesche and Makeham (2008, p.242) view these and the many other interpretations as inadequate in the context of 'expanding international relations and global interconnections.' They argue that 'implicit in all [of these interpretations] is the assumption that one's own cultural orientations remain relatively unchanged' (Ibid, p.242).

Lo Bianco, Liddicoat et al. (1999, p.13) address intercultural engagement in relation to identity and cultural difference – how the process 'involves students and staff moving into a 'third place' a meeting place between different cultures where there is recognition of the manifestation of cultural difference'. Regarding this concept, Papademetre (2003) offers a similar interpretation – 'intercultural education strives to develop critical engagement, self-reflection and sensitivity towards any aspect of interaction and communication between 'self' and 'others'' (p.13).

These perspectives build upon the understanding of the 'in-between cultural subject', which according to Marotta (2014, p.1) belongs to a tradition of studying the cultural attitudes and characteristics as an 'in-between subject' that go back to the early 20th century (Park, 1919; Reuter, 1917; van Gennep, 1960). What is problematic however, in relation to this study, is that the inadequacy of the interpretations to the intercultural still exists. The recognition of subtle balancing between cultural similarities and differences still remains less discussed. The standpoint theory of this critique represented by Bernstein (1991, p.74), as that 'we are sensitive to the sameness of 'the other' with ourselves and the radical alterity that defies and resists reduction of the 'the other' to 'the same''. According to this, Marotta (2014, p.8) in his paper 'The Multicultural, Intercultural and the Transcultural Subject' the notion of 'sensitive to the sameness of 'the other'' could be the foundation for dialogue across intercultural relations where maintaining difference could sustain boundaries between 'the same' and 'the other'. On this position, Mall (2000) argues that this notion of difference promotes an 'identity model of knowledge' in which, cited by Marotta (2014, p.8), 'only insiders can comprehend the insider's worldview and accepts that difference is insurmountable due to the incommensurability of cultures'. On another word, Epstein (2009, p.327) argues that as an insider, it is only necessary to access to the 'essence of a given culture' through the viewpoint of another, rather than to fully understand one's own culture. This position, which is reminiscent of the situation which Chinese postgraduate students encountered in their early stages of studying in the UK in which they were very likely only focusing on the knowledge of subject relations, and that can only be identified by their tutors, native peers or the professionals. However, as Epstein (2009) states, very few

opportunities have been given to them through others to see the 'real appearance' from the constraints of cultural viewpoint.

Based on the literature reviewed, there is clear evidence that:

- Intercultural engagement is central to the process of internationalisation of HE (Leask, 2007; Gesche and Makeham, 2008; Riley and Li, 2015; International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), 2016);
- Universities are central to developing intercultural skills (18) (UNESCO, 2006, 2009, 2013);
- Developing from Hofstede's (1997) influential concept of (inter-)cultural dimensions and Gudykunst's (1997) theory of intercultural communication 'intercultural pedagogy' is broadly perceived as critical to developing and implementing effective internationalised learning and teaching approaches;
- According to the LSE and CFE[5] 2014 report for the British Council, the benefits of an international education experience relate to the development of intercultural learning and teaching skills – a set of 'cognitive, affective and behavioural skills' that can support effective and appropriate interaction in an international and intercultural education context.

However, this review also discusses the ways in which intercultural engagement within HE is complex and why there is a need for practical interventions.

The literature reviewed also evidences an increasing emphasis on the transcultural nature of cross-cultural encounters (Epstein, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Machado-Taylor, 2011; Song and Cadman, 2012; Montgomery, 2014). Gesche and Makeham (2008, p.243) citing Welsch (1999) and Flechsig (2000) promote a wider transcultural competency, described as:

> [W]here participants recognise, reflect upon and embrace difference; crucially however, they … search for commonalities in cultural practices which can be synthesised into new hybrid forms.

This form of cultural hybrid, which interconnects and integrates various cultural forms, is also promoted by Marotta (2014, p.14). Gesche and Makeham (2008, p.243) describe, transcultural competencies as 'recursive, dynamic, fluid and evolutionary, and characterised by constant renewal and adaptability to change'. In the context of globalisation, Marotta (2014, p.15) states that the transcultural represents 'the freedom from one's own culture' and, according to this notion of 'freedom', transcultural could be able to transcend the cultural borders and diffract the commonalities of various cultures (Welsch 1999; Epstein, 2009; Marotta, 2014). Epstein (2009, p.330, 335) goes further by referring to a 'supracultural creativity' – transcultural:

> The transculture lies both inside and outside all existing cultures ... the transcultural world is a unity of all cultures and noncultures, that is, of those possibilities that have not yet been realized.

Gesche and Makeham (2008, p.243), acknowledge that the 'transcultural process is an ideal and a life-long journey. It is unlikely to be achieved during a few years of formal education'. In this respect, it would seem that the transcultural process within a higher education programme of study, may be confined to enabling the student to be prepared with the requisite skills and attitudes, which could assist their international competencies for their future life and careers.

In summary, the concepts of intercultural and transcultural processes and related competencies, and how these may be developed through an internationalised curriculum, provide an important theoretical framework for this study. In particular, the distinction proposed between these two processes in terms of the learning outcomes that can be realistically achieved within the timeframe of a Master's programme, has the potential to usefully inform the study toward developing a better understanding of how teachers and students can be supported during the student experience of transition.

2.2.1.2 Complexity and challenges of cross-cultural relations in international education

As this review has discussed, the internationalisation of HE brings opportunities for knowledge exchange and integration as well as challenges connected to the complexities of internationalised education environments. For example, Trahar (2007, p.4) encourages academics 'to reflect on those dimensions of cultural diversity' that often argued

uncomfortable and contentious.' However, despite any difficulties, based on the literature reviewed, there appears to be sufficient evidence that intercultural and transcultural relations and pedagogies should continue to be developed.

In the context of this study's aim of enhancing the transition experience of Chinese students, it is proposed that intercultural and transcultural relations could be synthesised, which Marotta (2014, p.16) refers to as a 'double perspective'. This would have the ability to 'access to those immersed in their essentialist particular/local or global/universal frameworks' (Ibid). This perspective could encourage an alternative view of cultural realities that is not available to both insiders and outsiders, and develop an intellectual mindset that transcends the different 'space and time'[6] (Marginson and Sawir, 2011, p.8); and thus, move beyond the cultural boundaries.

CFE and LSE (2014, p.5) consider that 'the experience of other cultures' is the key factor of developing intercultural skills. However, according to their research findings, 'there is a lack of data collection and research on the scale and impact of international experiences, at both national and international levels. The most evidenced topic is international higher education, which is also the largest area of activity'. In the preface to the book 'Ideas for Intercultural Education', Marginson and Sawir (2011), introduce the approaches they intend to use in addressing this topic. In this book, they argue that, more specifically, 'intercultural relations are always contextualized' and that an approach to solving problems through fixed perceptions of cultures is inadequate. Therefore, the use of formulas, cultural stereotypes and abstract ideas cannot address the problems we observed in the 'practical domain of intercultural education' (Ibid, p.9).

Marginson and Sawir also argue that when education relates to 'Others' the process is always located in 'space and time'. It is evidenced that the benefits of international education are associated with the duration of the learning experience. For example, Zarnik (2010) suggests that postgraduate (Master's) courses, which are normally studied over one or two years in the UK, have much less impact on the development of intercultural sensitivity than an undergraduate programme. This is because undergraduate programmes, which are normally studied over three years in the UK, provide the student with more time to adapt. However, Zarnik found that short-term programmes, such as Master's, can have

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[6] 'Space and time' is a key concept in cultural studies – different time-space representations - relationships between space (place) and identities formed through movement of people – often relates to post-colonialism (Gilroy)

a positive impact on intercultural development. It is important to acknowledge the complexity of this situation relating to the diversity of disciplines, the various stages of programmes and the learning styles and approaches of individual learners. This latter point is discussed further in the section below – the personal variables as specified by Deardorff (2006) and Section 2.1.3: The practical approach of this study.

Bennett's (1986/1993) 'Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)' presents the 'experience of cultural difference', developing in linear stages from 'ethnocentricism' to 'ethno-relativism'. Bennet proposes that intercultural competency is developed through the experience of cultural difference, rather than by international travel by itself. In this way, Bennett suggests that the greater the cultural difference experienced during an international activity, the greater the opportunity for intercultural development.
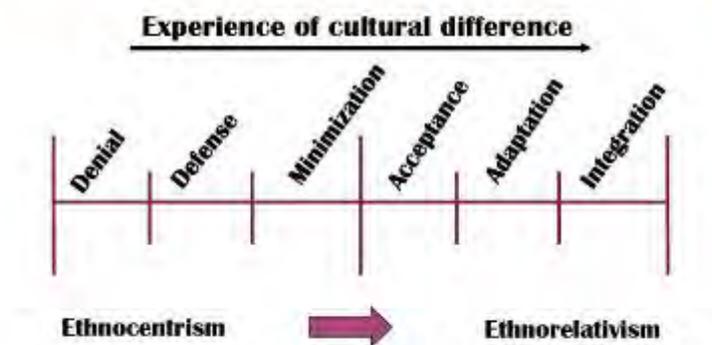
Figure 2.1: The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Source: Bennett, 1993).

A more recent alternative model has been developed from the findings of a doctoral research project on the assessment of intercultural competence by Darla K. Deardorff (2006). This 'pyramid' model of intercultural competence shows how stages of interaction between the 'Personal variables: Intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes' and the 'Quality of Contact' (understood as intercultural contact) build toward the development of intercultural competence. In contrast to Bennett's model, Deardorff's acknowledges the 'variables' and/or complex formation of student cohorts.
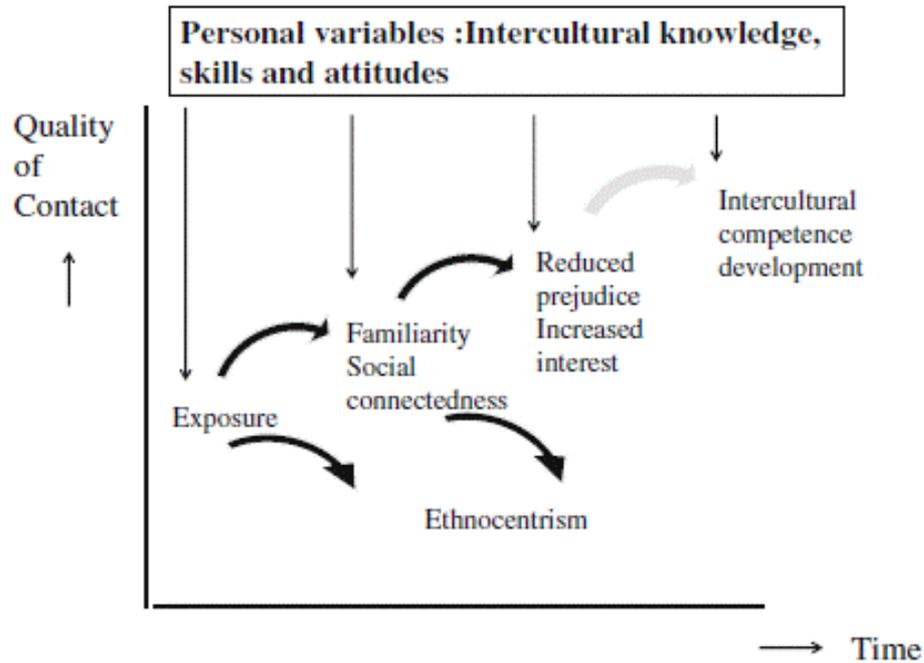
Figure 2.2: The extended contact hypothesis model for intercultural competence development (Source: Deardorff, 2006).

Bennett's DMIS model, published in the period of increasing international student recruitment, suggests that a short-term study experience can enable a student to develop 'intercultural sensitivity' – 'ethnorelativism'. According to this model the process involves six stages. In this respect, Medina-López-Portillo (2004, p.196) recognises that 'it may take more than one such experience to fully develop intercultural competence to the stage of ethnorelativism, … students also need help understanding … that their journey toward ethno-relativism may just be beginning when they return home.' Zarnik (2010) also suggests that a short-term programme may not be long enough to positively enable substantial changes in intercultural competence.

Deardorff highlights that intercultural competence can be developed as a result of interaction over time but, as found through earlier research, this will also be dependent on the type and perceived quality (satisfaction) of the contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and the personal variables, described by Deardorff (2006) as intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills.

In summary, it is suggested that Deardorff's 2006 model and the perspectives of Berry (2005, p.6), Knight (2003, p.16), as cited above, differ distinctly from Bennett's 1993 model in a way that is critical to this study. The key difference, it is proposed, is that Bennett's model implies the existence of binary categories of student groups and clear-cut or

unambiguous 'cultural difference', whereas Berry, Knight and Deardoff present a spectrum of situations, which more accurately reflect how international student cohorts, including 'home' students, comprise individuals who come from a range of cultural backgrounds and bring with them group and individual differences. These latter perspectives significantly support the aims of this study as they indicate that time, that is the duration of a programme of study, is not the only factor that could place limits on or positively enable the ability of a student to develop intercultural competence. This also means that it is realistic for the study, as it is intended, to concentrate on the early stage of the Master's programme.

2.2.1.3 The practical approach of this study

Both Bennett's DMIS model and Deardorff's 'pyramid' model are cited widely amongst the literature on international education research. However, according to CFE and LSE (2014, p.14), although both models were developed based on findings from empirical research, 'the validity of the models themselves has yet to be tested.' In addition, Marginson and Sawir (2011) argue that the development of intercultural competence is a process of self-formation, led by the students themselves.

As discussed previously, intercultural experience varies across the different 'sites and programs' and transcends different 'space and time' (Marginson and Sawir, 2011). Thus, intercultural issues cannot be simply categorised, according to general principles (such as openness and responsiveness) as solutions in all sites. According to the findings of a research report conducted by CFE and LSE (2014), it is suggested that practice-based approaches could be applied toward understanding what impact a study experience has on an individual student; and how factors such as the length, location or the actual course may need to be modified to improve support for students in their development as interculturally sensitive individuals for the globalising world. The CFE and LSE (2014) report also discusses the importance of controlling the location of education research by concentrating on participants operating at one site or on a specific group of participants, for example at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, in order to narrow the focus of the evaluation. Therefore, according to the CFE and LSE (2014) report, international education researchers may need to develop their own particular context to explore questions and develop interventions that are most appropriate for the reality of the participants.

In this context of the practical approach of this study, Swann's (2002) influential paper 'Action Research and the Practice of Design', provides a useful explanation of how 'action

research' methods, are suited to the interpretive nature of A&D. Citing Donald Schon's (1983) 'The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action', Swann (2002) explains that reflection 'in action' and reflection 'on action' are key terms connected to the processes involved in A&D practice and that this results in what is understood as 'action research' (p.59). Reason and Torbert (2001), who cites Macmurray (1957) and Polanyi (1958) highlights how 'knowledge is always gained through action and for action.' Reason and Torbert further claim that 'this has been recently argued to be true' (p.8).

In relation to education research, Stenhouse (1981) introduced the concept of 'the teacher as researcher', through which he differentiates between 'research on education' and 'research in education'. This concept contributed significantly to the development of 'action research' and 'case study research' in educational settings (Trahar, 2007). However, Trahar argues that there is little evidence of 'university teachers researching their own practice' (Trahar, 2007, p.9). Brunner also argues that 'it is even rarer to find practitioner researchers reflecting critically on the impact of diversity on their practice and indeed on themselves' (Brunner, 2006; cited by Trahar, 2007, p.9).

Based on these viewpoints, there is an opportunity for further research, generated, as suggested by Marginson and Sawir (2011, p.9), by 'problems … observed in the practical domain of intercultural education'. As introduced earlier, this study centres on a UK jewellery Master's programme and uses a case-based research approach in order investigate the intercultural experiences of Chinese international students (individuals and groups) during the early stages of their Master's study. In this way, it aims to address the need for practice-based study. Also, through the discipline- and level-specific investigation, the study further aims to counter balance the tendency for research on this topic to consider UK HE in more general terms (Marginson and Sawir, 2011; CFE and LSE, 2014). The theoretical frameworks of this review provide useful insights into the multifaceted factors that may, in a variety of ways, influence Chinese international students, but key to the practical (and problem-solving?) approach of research, is how findings from review can contribute to addressing the specific aims of the investigation and result in the generation of new ideas and improved practices.

2.2.2   Internationalisation of Higher Education: UK perspectives

This section begins with an overview the internationalisation of UK HE and explains why there is the need to conduct discipline-specific research at Master's level.

2.2.2.1 An overview of the internationalisation of UK higher education

According to CFE and LSE (2014, p.26, 27):

> *International students are a significant part of the UK HE system, and they make a substantial contribution to the economy. The higher fees that international students pay contributed a total of around £2.2 billion to the value of UK education exports in 2008/09.*

International students have become financially vital to universities in the UK (Guo and Chase, 2011). Chinese students, according to the OECD report (2014), form the largest group of international students in the UK (11%), compared to 28% in the USA.

In relation to the economics of universities, UK universities can maximise economic benefits from international student recruitment through creating a favourable 'brand' in the marketplace (Haigh, 2002; Caruana and Hanstock, 2003; De Vita and Case, 2003; Koutsantoni, 2006).

According to Deem (2001, p.8):

> *Globalisation is a fashionable theoretical stance but care needs to be taken in applying it to education … because social theorists cannot agree on definitions and implications.*

Some researchers have realised this factor very quickly and turned their concern primarily to the 'Education for Sustainable Development' in which, 'Equality and Diversity' are seen as a significant facets or priorities in making a connection with the 'global dimension' of the internationalisation of HE (Bennell, 2005; Caruana and Hanstock, 2005; Haigh, 2005; HE Academy, 2005, 2006; HEFCE, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Maxey, 2006).

However, according to Knight (2011, p.14), another myth related to the 'internationalisation of higher education', is that 'more foreign students on campus will produce more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum', resulting in universities believing that 'the increase in the quantity [of international students] is often equated with growth in quality' (Abermann and Gehrke, 2016, p.1). In other words, universities believe that, as a

result of the increasing number of international students, the English 'classroom' will automatically form an intercultural learning environment and lead students and staff to a higher intercultural competence level without changing domestic educational traditions. However, according to Deardorff's (2006) 'Process Model of Intercultural Competence', 'intercultural competence does not just happen for most people instead, it must be intentionally addressed.' (Berardo and Deardorff, 2012, p.47).

There is evidence from some studies that international students underperform across a wide range of academic disciplines in the UK's HE (Morrison et al., 2005; Iannelli and Huang, 2013). It has been proposed that Chinese students are the most underperforming among this group and that the reason for this is strong educational cultural conflicts (Lannelli and Huang, 2013; Swain, 2014). Crawford and Wang (2014), who also support this evaluation, evidenced through their research that Chinese undergraduates significantly underperformed from the second year onwards in their UK university studies. Writing in 2015, these authors claimed that '[u]ntil now, research on Chinese students has yet to consider the impact of different degree study modes on their academic results from entry to graduation' (Crawford and Wang, 2015, p.569). Based on the evidence of this review, it is clear that there is a need to conduct the same type of research into the impact of Master's level study approaches which, as this review has discussed, for most students involves a one-year programme of study. This study proposes that this requires particular attention to be given to the early transition stage, which for Master's students is much shorter than at undergraduate level.

2.2.2.2 Transnational education

Mellors-Bourne et al. (2014, p.1) indicates that 'transnational education has grown rapidly to become an important element in the internationalisation of UK higher education and the UK's education export portfolio.'

According to Higher Education Academy (2014a, p.3):

> [T]ransnational education (TNE) or multimodal programmes generally involve students enrolling in a UK university programme while staying in their own country.

UK universities offer a range of transnational education (TNE) programmes of study through different modes of operation, including distance-learning, franchising a programme

to a partner university in the host country and a UK university establishing an 'international branch campus' (Healey, 2014). According to Ratcliffe, writing in 2013, the number of TNE students who chose to study in their own country outnumbered the number of international students who left their home country to study within the UK.

In the preface to their book, 'Perspectives in Transnational Higher Education', Francois et al. (2016, p.8) seem to question the ability of a TNE to offer an alternative to 'global education', or perhaps internationalised education:

> *Transnational higher education is supposed to be an alternative to global education by using an approach that considers the local and global as part of a mix, in which they are not mutually exclusive'.*

In a similar way, Jean Francois (2015) argues that global symbiosis is not necessarily reflected in current TNE practices. For Francois, Avoseh and Griswold (2016), TNE may not necessarily involve both countries as part of a holistic process in relation to policy making and pedagogical delivery, and according to Hyland et al. (2008), TNE students might not be able to gain the opportunities for developing intercultural competence by travelling to other countries for study.

However, it may be useful to highlight that some UK universities have established and operate TNE programmes across partner universities, for example four-year Bachelor programmes, which offer students the opportunity to study 'at home' for two years and to then transfer to a UK partner university to complete their third and fourth years of study. For students choosing to study on TNE programmes designed in this way, contrary to the viewpoints of (Hyland et al., 2008), opportunities for developing intercultural competence by travelling to other countries for study would be available to them.

Based on the literature reviewed there is evidence that TNE provides alternative study opportunities for students and enables universities to broaden their reach and develop alternative strategies for partner universities to widen access to HE (Knight and McNamara, 2015). Different TNE modes, such borderless education, cross-border education or offshore education (Healey, 2015) could be considered, but this would go beyond the scope of this review. The important question this raises, perhaps for future research, is how and to what extent can educational research maintain or sustain relevance to constantly developing and diverse internationalisation activities, such as TNE. For example, in

connection with partnerships, which enable students to study for their Bachelor's degrees in China and the UK, how might this impact on the issues raised in this review regarding cultural difference and the challenges of transition? One of the dimensions of the internationalisation of HE, which relates directly to this study, is 'Internationalisation at Home' (Wachter, 2003; Koutsantoni, 2006; Knight 2008; Caruana,2008; Engel et al., 2015). Yet, these perspectives can lead the way to explore the possibilities of development of internationalisation and intercultural competition from diverse dimensions. One of the dimensions, which relates to this study, has emerged from some discussion in the literature of the notion of 'Internationalisation at Home' (Wachter, 2003; Koutsantoni, 2006; Knight 2008; Caruana, 2008; Engel et al., 2015).

2.2.2.3 Internationalisation at home

As this review demonstrates, the internationalisation of HE has become more multifaceted. Thus, a number of authors who have written on this topic have called for a broader theoretical framework through which to address developing international perspectives and intercultural competencies throughout HE, including the concept of internationalisation at home (Nilsson, 1999; Wachter, 2003; Teekens, 2007; Knight, 2008; Engel et al., 2015; McGrath, 2016; Baldassar and Mckenzie, 2016).

According to Beelen and Jones (2015a), this approach to some degree contrasts the previous emphasis on the mobility of students or programmes, as:

> *… it is increasingly clear that mobility can bring substantial benefits to participants, and countries around the world are seeking to increase the number of students taking part.*

While Beelen and Jones (2015a), acknowledge the benefits of mobility, they also, recognise 'that mobile students will continue to make up a relatively small proportion of the student body …' and therefore propose that a better strategy, which focuses attention on teaching and learning experience that 'blends the concepts of self' and 'otherness' is needed (Teekens, 2006; Sanderson, 2011; Haigh, 2014).

These approaches were initially adopted by Nilsson (1999) and Wachter et al. (2000) who proposed the concept of 'Internationalisation at home' (IaH). This refers to any international activity, programme and/or research, with the exception of outbound student and staff

mobility. Wachter (2003) warned against restricting IaH into a simple rigid definition, rather than allowing the concept to develop. Thus, Nilsson (2003, p.29) offered the following definition– IaH is:

> *[A] process of enriching the lives of domestic students and staffs with the engagement of international students, which IaH becomes more convenient term to designate internationalisation activity aimed at the all the participants and countries.*

Here, Knight (2008, p. 5) provides a further detail on the aims of IaH:

> *[IaH gives] greater prominence to campus-based elements such as the intercultural and international dimension in the teaching learning process, research, extra-curricular activities, relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups, as well as the integration of foreign students and scholars into campus life and activities.*

However, Baldassar, and Mckenzie (2016) suggest that beneath these definitions there is an assumption that the benefits of IaH will be gained automatically, by students 'just being there'. However, according to Baldassar and Mulcock (2012) and Jackson (2012), in reality 'home' and 'international students', apart from formal course requirements and activities, often demonstrate less interaction than the concept of IaH would expect or aim for – the students are 'inhabited by quite separate worlds'. In response to these challenges and with the aim of promoting international perspectives and enhancing intercultural competencies, most HE programmes aim to provide curricula that contextualises internationalised learning across disciplinary areas (Donohue-Bergeler, 2011; Baldassar and Mulcock, 2012; Beelen and Jones, 2015a).

In this respect, Beelen and Jones's (2015b, p.69) definition of IaH combines the two aspects of formal and informal curriculum:

> *Internationalisation at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments.*

Beelen and Jones (2015a) suggest that 'adding or infusing random internationalised elements or electives would be insufficient to internationalise a programme'. Thus, they propose purposefully embedding international and intercultural learning within curriculum. They also emphasise that enabling students to acquire international perspectives and intercultural competencies does not always just rely on mobility. In addition to highlighting internationalising specific disciplinary contexts, the above Beelen and Jones (2015a) definition also suggests that IaH can extend beyond the university campus to include other positive intercultural/international learning opportunities within the local community. The above discussion on IaH supports the viewpoint[7] of Berry (2005, p.698), as mentioned in the introduction to this review, that 'intercultural contact involves "both parties" ("home" and "international students")' and the approach of the research, which aims to investigate student transition from a range of student perspectives.

2.2.2.4 Internationalising the curriculum: International perspectives

According to the UK HEA (2014b, p.3), 'the ultimate aim [of the internationalisation] is to better equip students with the knowledge and skills they will need in their future careers as well as to generate and pluralise knowledge.' By taking Foster's words (2015, p.1), however:

> *We are on the journey of our understanding of internationalised curriculum where the complex nature of IC is only just beginning to be grasped by theorists and practitioners.*

Since Harari (1989)[8] proposed that the curriculum is central to the internationalisation of the HE, a broad concept of internationalising the curriculum (IoC), has been widely accepted by universities across the world. This concept gives emphasis to encompassing aspects of learning and teaching at formal, informal and hidden levels (Kemmis and

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[7] For example, Berry discusses how "intercultural contact involves "both parties" ("home" and "international students") and how there are "large group and individual differences in how people (in both groups in contact) go about their acculturation[7]" (Berry, 2005). This viewpoint exemplifies how the literature review has complicated my research topic. Although the topic is focused on the journey of Chinese students, according to Berry, it is important to address student transition from a range of subject perspectives. In other words, the people who are the subjects of my research should include Chinese students and those from other countries, including the UK.

[8] As cited in Taylor, F., 2000, Canadian University Efforts to Internationalize the Curriculum, AUCC. '*The heart of the internationalization of an institution is, and will always remain, its curriculum precisely because the acquisition of knowledge…is what a university is all about' M. Harari, Internationalization of Higher Education, 1989.*

Fitzclarence, 1991). Academics and policymakers who promote the concept of IoC in principle (Dunne, 2011), perceive it as having the potential to connect broader institutional agendas focused on the internationalisation of learning and teaching and for all the participants (Leask, 2014). However, IoC has also been viewed as problematic in terms of how it may be applied practically in real student learning environments and specific disciplines. In this respect, according to Dunne (2011) and Leask (2014), IoC is not clearly explained (Dunne, 2011; Leask, 2014) and for Bell (2004, p.51) this lack of clarity is partly because 'internationalising the curriculum is a construct, not a clearly defined set of ideals or best practice'.

Although the concept of IoC may remain unclear in practice, 'concrete models' exist (Bell, 2004; Eisenchlas and Trevaskes, 2003, 2006). These include the early 'additive approach' (Banks, 1999), which introduces international elements into a curriculum through case studies. An alternative approach focuses on student interaction and intercultural awareness through the use of scenarios, which reflect situations and show how things might look from student's perspective, as an essential part of IoC (Yershova, DeJaeghere, and Mestenhauser, 2000; Olson and Kroeger, 2001). Although these approaches, are perceived as valuable from some perspectives, Eisenchlas and Trevaskes (2007, p.177), argue that they are at an early stage of development and inadequate:

> [T]hey are only a 'first step' in acquiring the competences and skills needed to become effective intercultural communicators, as they do little to promote understanding and give local students experience in authentic intercultural interactions.

In a similar way, Caruana (2007, p.6) argued that the concept of IoC is 'very much a new and often quite unfamiliar phenomenon' to institutions, discipline groups and academic staff and as this review has discussed, is complicated by the ambiguity of the terms home and international student.

According to Caruana (2007, p.6):

> [IoC] presents particular issues of conceptualisation since its emergence coincides with a period of rapid and complex change in HE and its meaning in practice tends to be blurred by the traditional distinctions drawn between the home and international student experiences.

According to Clifford (2013, p.1), although '[u]niversities in many parts of the world have been 'internationalising' for a number of decades' and 'internationalisation … is now generally understood, 'the concept of internationalising the curriculum (IoC) still causes consternation' (Clifford, 2013, citing Clifford, 2009; Green and Mertova, 2011). Further concerns are the focus on IoC in practice. For example, Magne (2015) suggests that IoC can create a tension for a teacher who may initially be less confident when going beyond their expertise and professional experience, and according to Welikala (2011) teaching Chinese international students can be especially challenging as Chinese academic cultures conflict with 'western ways of knowing' (Welikala, 2011). In contrast to these concerns, cited by Clifford (2013, p.2), Andreotti (2011), argues that the 'context of the curriculum … needs to move beyond Western-Eurocentric topics and views to incorporate a range of perspectives and ideas.' For Caruana (2007, p.7), a global perspective is regarded as 'the ethical underpinning and values-based ethos for a focus on cross-cultural capability[9]' and of particular relevance to this study, Clifford (2013) proposes that IoC needs to occur or happen within specific disciplines.

Clifford's (2013, p.1) in the paper 'The Elusive Concept of Internationalisation of the Curriculum', cites Schoorman's (2000:5) definition of internationalisation:

> *Internationalisation is an ongoing, counter hegemonic educational process which occurs in an international context of knowledge and practice where societies are reviewed as subsystems of a larger inclusive world. The process of internationalisation at an educational institution entails a comprehensive, multifaceted program of action that is integrated into every aspect of education.*

Clifford explains that this approach, which contrasts Bell's early 'additive approach, exemplifies the more recent increased interest in 'fundamentally rethinking curriculum so that graduates are equipped to live and work successfully in our interdependent, multicultural world (a transformative approach)' (Clifford, 2013, p.1).

Clifford further highlights that 'Schoorman's definition is embedded in critical pedagogy which makes it necessarily counter-hegemonic' and, citing Aronwitz and Giroux (1991), she explains that '[c]ritical pedagogy critiques the use of education to support current economic

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[9] The term relates to a set of skills to operate in diverse cultural environments, which often labelled 'intercultural competencies' or 'cross-cultural capabilities' (HEA, 2014).

systems, the offering of a limited range of cultural perspectives and use of a teacher-centred pedagogy' (Clifford, 2013, p.2).

Bourn (2008, p.3), in his HEA paper, sites Shiel and Jones (2004) also propose moving away from adding internationalised elements to the curriculum, toward a 'shift in approach, rather than a radical change of content'.

More recently, as one of the leaders in the field of IC, Leask (2015, p.9) proposed an updated definition in her book 'Internationalizing the Curriculum':

> *Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study.*

Leask argues that 'too often we focus on international students rather than on broader questions of how subject specialists conceptualise and teach their subject in a way that supports all students to develop 'graduate capabilities, global citizenship and intercultural competency'' (Leask, 2015, p.53, as cited by Bovill, 2015, p.55). This approach connects to Haigh's (2008, p.432) suggestion that the 'best approach is to build from the assumption that most students are 'international''. Based on these assessments, IoC may be understood as integrating the two aspects of transnational education and 'internationalisation at home'. In relation to this study, this approach creates broader dimensions for research and practice within the specific discipline and international context of the Master's programme. In this way, it is proposed that the perception of opposition between intracultural (or monocultural) and intercultural can be replaced by a conceptual spectrum plotting degrees of 'interculturalness' (Kim, 1988) based on the cultural distance which exists between parties, be it perceived or empirically measured according to some predetermined criteria.

According to Gorgorio´ and Planas (2005, p.65), this concept of cultural distance can be understood as:

> *[T]he distance between how different individuals interpret the same fact, situations, person, event or norm, resulting from living and experiencing them from the perspectives of the different cultures to which they belong.*

In practical terms, this perspective highlights that, in educational contexts, neither international students nor 'home' students constitute homogeneous groups. Instead, each student enters the learning environment with diverse ideas, values, experiences and behaviours, all of which comprise their unique 'cultural capital' (Zepke and Leach, 2005). Each individual may therefore constitute what Daniel (2001, p.4) terms 'an idioculture of one.'

Linking back to the idea of an intercultural curriculum, if it is the case that each individual is culturally unique and that learning (or the curriculum) constantly involves the exchange of information between individuals, it could be argued that learning (or the curriculum) will always, to different degrees, be inherently intercultural. The degree to which a curriculum is determined as intercultural may be dependent on the dominance within the curriculum of one cultural perspective over others. This may hamper inclusivity and inhibit the realisation of positive educational outcomes which cultural diversity offers, but does not guarantee. This aspect is revisited in further detail later in Section 2.4.1.

2.2.3   Subject specific intercultural education

In order to investigate the learning experience of Chinese international students within a specific discipline and to guide the direction of the study's empirical research, the following section, compares practice-based A&D disciplines – between HE in China and the UK at Master's level – firstly across disciplines and then focused on the subject of contemporary jewellery.

2.2.3.1 Art and Design – Practice-based Higher Education at Masters level

According to Drew et al. (2002) educators in A&D disciplines 'have adopted terms such as 'deep' and 'surface' learning' and developed 'interpretations of what these concepts mean with regard to their teaching methods' (p.179). Dineen and Collins (2005) describe models of learning and teaching practice in Western A&D HE that use experiential project approaches. Through these approaches, with use of practical 'workshops and demonstrations, group work and peer critiques' (Dineen and Collins, 2005, p.46), the tutor facilitates and encourages independent learning. According to Austerlitz et al. (2009), Chinese international students encountering these models of practice for the first time often

seek 'clarity', 'but a central, although largely unspoken, tenet of (western) A&D pedagogy would appear to be the centrality of 'ambiguity' to the creative process' (p.1).

In general, UK practice-based A&D courses 'often commence with a structured phase of material-based experimentation' (Davey, 2016, p.379), and in the design disciplines, a process or series of phases, which include 'specifying, researching, making, testing, refining and evaluating' (Dillon and Howe, 2003, p.290). Davey (2016, p.379) further describes the learning method and approaches as ''open format', 'self-directed, facilitated by one-to-one tutorials and group critiques', and details how the learning skills within this framework largely depend on synthesis, independent thinking and taking risks. Also, the student is expected to finally produce innovative outcomes and embrace an attitude of positive uncertainty (Davey, 2016). Although these methods and approaches represent the values of Western (UK) A&D courses (Austerlitz et al., 2009), 'the fact that these values are implicit rather than explicit in [UK A&D] teaching practices creates vagueness and insecurity for many of our first-year (BA) students[10] (including Chinese students) who have expectations based on the concrete and the certain' (Austerlitz et al., 2009, p.1).

According to Davey (2016) there is an inherently contradictory logic between UK and Chinese approaches to A&D HE. In contrast to the student-centred, independent learning, exploratory and risk-taking characteristics of UK A&D described above, there is the general perception that A&D courses in China give emphasis to technical mastery and repetitive exercises used to develop traditional skills. Davey (2016) further indicates that 'the high level of technical ability in drawing and painting demonstrated by very young children in China is often invalidated by Western teachers as merely a result of the Chinese teacher-centred approach' (p.380). This emphasis on students acquiring technical skills relates to the entry requirements and examinations for entry to Chinese A&D HE courses (Fung and Choi, 2001).

Although there is evidence that some Chinese A&D HE institutions have made curriculum adjustments within the context of internationalisation, which move toward more openness

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[10] According to Austerlitz et al. (2009, p.1),
> There are a series of transitions that art and design students must negotiate as they move between the compulsory and post compulsory education sector and between higher education and employment within the creative industries sector. These transitions are key points where gaps in expectations become evident and where we as educators need to undertake further work to support our students as they enter and exit further and higher education.

Austerlitz et al. see the values of the A&D course as one of the points need a negotiation during students' transition. In the UK, most of A&D MA courses are consist as a one-year course, which, comparing of the three-year BA course, means MA students have to take much a short period time to finish this 'negotiation'.

in learning and teaching, the dominant approach remains strict (Fei, 2014, cited by Eichler, 2014). This means students are directed toward a 'predefined aesthetic' and a 'pre-existing goal' established by their tutor (Fei, 2014, cited by Eichler 2014). By doing this, students acquire the necessary skills through instruction and repeating practices.

Eichler (2014) also acknowledges that A&D course in many Chinese universities concentrate on 'technical skill-building employing rote methods'. According to Eichler, A&D students in China learn through 'practicing for endless hours, following step-by-step instructions or copying masterworks until reaching perfection'.

The above brief summary of selected accounts of the fundamental differences between A&D HE in China and the UK provide an important context for this study. Depending on their accuracy, they would mean that the skills valued and expected in the UK, such as critical and creative thinking, and independent learning through 'reflective practice', or 'experiential learning' would be unfamiliar to the majority of Chinese students when first entering a Master's course.

The book, 'Building Bridges' by Marjo Räsänen was published in 1998; founded on the author's research project, named 'experiential art understanding', the empirical part of the research was conducted at a Finnish High School. The research and subsequently the book, concern 'experiential art interpretation', which Räsänen (1998, p.5) defines as combining and using:

> *methods from the disciplines of art history, aesthetics, and criticism, and [connecting] them to the experientially-based processes of reflective observation, conceptualization, and production*

Räsänen 's model of art interpretation, which follows Kolb's 'experiential learning model', is based on the view of 'art understanding' enabling the 'bridging [of] social and personal knowledge' (1998, p.5). According to Räsänen (1998, p.5):

> *the process of art interpretation is understood as a series of events where the viewer's past and present experiences are the basis for constructing new knowledge.*

The author goes on to describe tensions between personal and social knowledge and how these categories of knowledge occur 'through the different, coequal forms of grasping and transformation'.

This model provides an important conceptual framework for this thesis. Of particular relevance to the study is Räsänen 's (1998) explanation of the model's relationship to processes of negotiation between 'past and present experiences' and 'coequal forms of grasping and transformation'. For the purposes of my research, 'past and present experiences' relate to the learning journey of Chinese students, and 'coequal forms of grasping [knowledge] and transformation' are understood as Chinese students acquiring new knowledge and negotiating between personal and social knowledge through their learning experiences in different environment. Also, of importance to my study is Räsänen 's (1998) emphasis on 'the process of interpretation' through personal experience and her proposal that 'it is not meaningful to present new knowledge before getting aware of the viewer's preunderstandings'. Although this proposal relates to art interpretation at high school level, it informs a central theme of my study: how processes of conceptual translation and negotiation can improve the learning experience of Chinese jewellery design students as they move from studying at Bachelor's level in China to Master's level in the UK. This theme is explored throughout this thesis, especially in relation to the empirical work of the study in Chapters 5 and 6, which interprets key findings from the empirical work.

2.2.3.2 Challenges: UK A&D Higher Education within an international context

Radclyffe-Thomas (2011, p.9) states that

> *[W]estern art and design education promotes the creative process and Western models of creativity value experimentation and innovation; art and design education in (Eastern cultures) focuses on the creative product and values technical mastery. The majority of creativity research has been undertaken in the West yet Western notions of creativity are often assumed to be universal and so communicated tacitly leaving students shocked at the degree of independent study and the strong theoretical slant of a UK art education, and surprised their skills are not valued more. Thus, the greatest barrier facing international students seeking an art and design education in the UK is becoming … a lack of guidance or awareness about differences in theory and practice between their home and UK learning cultures may*

> *mean international students fail to embrace Western design models and resort to maintaining their ethnic aesthetic thus negating a primary reason for studying abroad.*

According to the above, the 'greatest barrier facing international students' in UK A&D HE is 'a lack of guidance or awareness' regarding cultural differences. With this emphasis, the above text reflects the tendencies of some writers on internationalisation and international Chinese students to approach the topic in general terms, for example related to homogeneous ethnicity-based learning styles following cultural stereotypes such as Confucian heritage cultures (Biggs, 1996). Davey (2016, p.378) refers to a 'pervasive deficit model', based on:

> *[M]isconceptions of … the international student's ability to learn, based upon a pervasive deficit model within which they are characterised as lacking adequate critical thinking and independent learning skills (Ryan 2011).*

For Davey (2016), 'such misconceptions uphold beliefs that international students need to adapt to 'our' methods, approaches …' (p.378). Here, Davey's viewpoint strongly contrasts that of Radclyffe-Thomas (2011) who seems to assume that the education aim for all 'international students' is to 'embrace Western design models' and by implication, that if students maintained 'their ethnic aesthetic' this would be a negative outcome (p.9). This, Western-centric perspective is also significantly different to a number of the findings of this review of literature, two examples of which are: (i) Berry, Knight and Deardoff, as discussed above (see Page 31), who refer to international students, including 'home' students, as individuals who come from a range of cultural backgrounds and bring with them group and individual differences, and (ii) the definition of internationalisation proposed by Hudsik (2011) (as previously cited on Page 20) – '[c]omprehensive Internationalisation is a commitment … to infuse international and comparative perspectives.'

A related debate in A&D concerns the perceived dominance of works, which belong to a Western global aesthetic compared to non-Western works, which are often cast as 'other' (Austerlitz et al., 2009; Kondo, 2010; Radclyffe-Thomas, 2014; Davey, 2016). This may influence the perceptions of Chinese students who made decision of studying in the UK based on the purpose of achieving an educational experience in the West that will help them gain 'cultural capital' (Waters, 2006) and make them competitive for future careers (Kehm, 2005; Li and Bray, 2007; Marcotte et al., 2007; Teichler and Janson, 2007). Subject

to evidence of these two interrelated aspects of Western dominance, Davey proposes, in a critical sense, that 'international students need to adapt to 'our' methods, approaches and values' so that they can be understood (Davey, 2016, p.278).

These factors are also considered 'dichotomous' in the context of assessments of 'Western and Asian cultures' propensity to creativity' (Gardner 1989a, 1989b, cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.27); and the use of 'Western measures often relying on static understandings of how Western individualist and Eastern collective societies operate at both societal and individual levels (Rudowicz, 2004; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.27). A further 'dichotomy' is the unfamiliarity to Chinese students of 'the advantages of taking the risks' and how 'uncertainty feels far from a necessary' (Davey, 2016, p.279). Davey also argues that for international students, 'these implicit values can be met with confusion and diminished confidence (2016, p.279)'.

Through the process of gathering materials for this review, a number of interconnected factors have been identified, each of which can be seen to impact in a variety of ways and to different degrees on the experience of Chinese international students for the first time studying in the UK. This section of the review demonstrates that despite various pluralistic interpretations of internationalisation, tendencies to over simplify or polarise cultural differences continue to prevail, such as the misconception that 'international students need to adapt to [UK] methods, approaches' (Davey, 2016, p.280). Whilst such debates are important, it is clear that what is needed is empirical research into Chinese students' learning in UK A&D HE that focuses on specific A&D disciplines and takes account of different levels of study, in the case of this study Master's.

2.2.3.3 Jewellery Higher Education at Masters level

According to Jessop (2013, p.16):

> *By definition, jewellery is usually associated with preciousness and personal adornment. Historically, jewellery functioned as a carrier for gemstones and precious material; it is commonly perceived as a signifier of wealth (Dormer and Turner 1985: 24) in the form of small-scale objects attached to, worn by, or related to the wearer.'*

Dormer and Turner (1994, p.7) state:

By the mid-1970s there was an abundant evidence of new and exciting work in jewelry, as well as hundreds of art-school-trained professionals displaying considerable expertise in this field – all very different from the situation twenty years earlier, when the number of innovative jewelers throughout Europe and America was small.

The 1970s development from the association of jewellery with preciousness and personal adornment toward 'innovative' and 'contemporary' approaches through the experimentation and use of non-traditional jewellery materials, contrasted the conservative design of 'most jewelry sold by large retailers' and reflected the approaches of influential jewellers such as Emmy van Leersum and Gijs Bakker, who 'wanted to break with the past' (Dormer and Turner, 1994, p.7).

Since the 1970s, jewellery as an art form, similar to contemporary art, began to be referred to as 'contemporary jewellery' (Jessop, 2013) and during this same period practice-based 'contemporary' jewellery methods were adopted by Western art schools. However, as Harris (2006) highlights, the term 'contemporary'

[i]n this recent usage – since the 1970s – means more or less the same as 'now' or 'in the present', and, although the contrast with a past (completed, finished) modern moment is clear, the term remains itself ambiguous.

The meaning of contemporary jewellery methods may therefore also be understood as still lacking an established definition.

In summary, the traditional concept of the skill-based goldsmith employing precious materials contrasts the practices of technological development and material investigation involved in the new forms of jewellery (Jessop, 2013). Thus, Jessop (2013) suggests a concept of a 'gray' area[11], as referred to in the 2010 'Gray Area' symposium, to illustrate contemporary context of jewellery. Jessop suggests (2013, p.23) that:

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[11] 'Grey area: [grey air-ee-uh] an intermediate area; a topic that is not clearly one thing or the other. A grey area is a term for a border in-between two or more things that is unclearly defined, a border that is hard to define or even impossible to define, or a definition where the distinction border tends to move; something that is open to interpretation' (*Gray Area* symposium 2010, cited by Jessop, 2013, p.23).

The grey association here signifies a subject without a clear structure and with an ambiguous identity, and is symbolic of jewellery's interdisciplinary involvement with a diverse range of subjects, techniques and materials.'

For Davey (2016), the potential for ambiguity or lack of clarity is even greater within the A&D 'disciplines' that associate with contemporary art.

In contrast to the West, the concept of 'contemporary jewellery', in general, is quite new to China – 'it was essentially just getting off the ground' in the early 21th Century (Satok-Wolman, 2014). Although an art jewellery market has developed in recent years in China, according to Satok-Wolman (2014), this market:

[I]s still lacking of the organizations, communities, and infrastructure needed to catch up with the 'West'.

The Chinese jewellery market, and jewellery education in Chinese A&D institutions and universities are both relatively new developments. There are only around ten higher education institutions in China with jewellery departments and these were established approximately ten years ago. Initially, there was a lack of teaching resources and public support for Chinese jewellery education and this resulted in increasing numbers of Chinese international students studying for Bachelor's and Master's jewellery design degrees at Western universities. Many of these students were interested in acquiring a high level of design and making skills. This relates to the questions raised through this review of literature concerning the perceptions of Western-dominated jewellery and related HE practices. Further investigation would be needed to provide evidence of the extent to which these perceptions could be upheld or contested. This would take the research beyond its scope. However, for the purpose of this review, it is argued that perceptions that rely on generalisations of cultural difference and situations contribute to the misconceptions (Davey, 2016), in particular, has drawn attention to.

2.3   Conclusion

This literature review has explored the student journey of internationalisation within the frameworks of globalisation and the internationalisation of HE, It has given particular attention to the experiences of Chinese students, who have successfully completed a Bachelor's degree in mainland China, and proceeded to Master's level study in the UK,

especially during the early transition stage of their journey in the UK. The review of literature was initially based on the premise that Chinese international students encounter certain obstacles to effective learning and adaptation. However, the review has introduced a broader range of multifaceted material and this has both informed the study from different, and at times, significantly contrasting perspectives and helped to further consider and develop the research questions.

In particular, the review has demonstrated: (i) a range of variable theories and related viewpoints and how, overall, they complicate the study, reflect 'dichotomies' and result in 'misconceptions' and ambiguities (Davey, 2016). In this respect, the review has identified that within the 'mass phenomenon' context of the internationalisation of HE, there is a clear need for case-based empirical research focused on a specific discipline.

Based on the findings of the review, the research then commences with a national set of questions:

> **Question 1**: What are the learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles that most commonly operate in HE relating to the subject of jewellery in both China and UK?

> **Question 2**: To what extent is it possible and meaningful to identify and classify (a) learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles, and (b) differences in approaches to learning across the two countries?

> **Question 3**: In what ways and to what extent do notional differences in approaches and styles influence Chinese postgraduate taught (PGT) students' learning experiences and perceptions with respect to their jewellery education?

> **Question 4**: What are the perceptions of Chinese PGT students with respect to UK jewellery pedagogical styles, and in what ways do they influence students' preparedness or readiness for their transition from Bachelor's study in China to PGT study in the UK?

> **Question 5**. What provisions have been made in the UK School of Jewellery (SoJ) system to support Chinese PGT students in accommodating and adapting to learning in the UK HE context?

Question 6: To what extent are adaptation methods and techniques in the UK HE jewellery sector, and particularly the SoJ, adequate and effective? Is there more that can be done to improve the student experience of transition from one learning culture to another?

Chapter 3   Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology associated with the research. It provides the overall philosophical rationale for the study, linking this closely with the research questions that underpin the work. The study was designed from the outset to be exploratory, fundamentally inductive and action-oriented in nature. The questions at its core are ones that have previously received little attention and it was necessary to scope the apparent 'problem' and to engage with and understand – in a granular way – the experiences of past and current Chinese learners studying in a United Kingdom (UK) jewellery context. It was also necessary to include an 'action' component as a means of working to transform a notionally less than satisfactory situation. The exploratory orientation shaped the research design and a qualitative approach was selected as an appropriate one for the topics at hand. The adoption of a qualitative stance in itself shaped the development of a range of research tools configured to generate rich data relating to personal experience, understanding and situational and shared sense-making.

The chapter begins with the consideration of relationships between the research questions and research design, giving an outline of a range of qualitative approaches adopted. It also addresses ethical issues and the robustness of the methodology and alludes to issues of validity of data, reliability of research processes and generalisability of results.

This chapter deals mainly with issues of research design and research philosophy, and the relationship of these with situated practice. However, some allusions are made here to issues of procedure and process, though greater explanation of these elements is included in subsequent chapters that feature a detailed explanation of empirical work. In these later sections, the reader will find full details relating to strategies for investigation and for selection of appropriate research tools. In addition, the sections will explain the trajectory of the research 'detailing access to the research setting, informants, participants, the data collection and interpretation' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.37).

3.1   Research design

The research questions appear at the end of the Chapter 2 (see Page 52-53): according to Merten (2010, p.228) 'the nature of the research question itself can lead a researcher to choose [its relevant] methods'.

After considering the types of research questions associated with qualitative methods, as identified by Patton (2002), the nature of this research was identified as exploratory and inductive and thus a qualitative methodology was believed to be appropriate. The majority of the research takes the form of a qualitative empirical study seeking to develop detailed knowledge about the challenges encountered by Chinese students, UK teachers and UK art and design (A&D) higher education (HE) institutes (Patton, 2002) through a process of inductive data analysis (Thomas, 2006). Although, 'it may be enlightening to know the percentage of stakeholders that hold various views' about challenges (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.38) statistical representativeness, is not the aim of this study.

The research also adopts first- and second-person action research approaches with the aim of developing interventions based on the progression of the Learning Enhancement Programme (Marshall, 2011). As part of the empirical study, the action approach is based on a belief that the understanding of pedagogical nature in dealing with the challenges helps to 'generate practical improvements' for learning and teaching 'in the particular setting' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.38). Apart from these benefits, the application of first- and second-person action research approaches also aims to 'facilitate understandings of the wider population to which the specific case belongs' (Basit, 2003; Wolcott, 1994; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.38). In addition, first-person action research involves the researcher's self-initiated process of enquiry, 'seeking to behave awarely and [responsively] in the given context' (Marshall, 2011, p.245). It thus adds further layers to the nature of the research where the quality of flexibility and responsiveness is embedded (Eden and Huxham, 1996).

It is also worth noting that, as mentioned previously in Section 1.2, the researcher commenced this study with a notional set of research questions. Being driven and shaped by the data collected over time, the first four questions are addressed via scoping research, and these remain important in setting the theme of the study. However, questions five and six have morphed into something else, due to a realisation that (on the basis of evidence), deeper questions are in play and these need to be addressed. This evolution in development of research questions is demonstrated in the following chapters, and again reflects the nature of the study as an inductive piece of work.

3.2   Qualitative research

Via the first four research questions, the research seeks to ascertain:

- What are the educational experiences of stakeholders' in the UK A&D HE context?
- To what extent these experiences are perceived as 'challenges'?
- How do such challenges present themselves in stakeholders' day-to-day learning and teaching practices?
- How do stakeholders perceive and react to the challenges that they experience?

To obtain answers to these questions, the research required a deep exploration that involved credible and indicative samples (Brikci and Green, 2007). Qualitative methods, according to Mertens (2010), can 'provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting' (p.225). A qualitative researcher is 'an instrument in qualitative research utilising interpretative practices to explore the complex implicit meanings informants hold about their lived experiences' (Basit, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Dick, 2005; Ely et al., 1997; Hammersley, 1998; Janesick, 2000; Stockrocki, 1997; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.39). Qualitative 'researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Mertens, 2010, p.225); they use methods that 'speak to quality, that is, nuances, perceptions, viewpoints, meaning, relationships, stories, and dynamic changing perspectives (Swanson, Watkins, and Marsick, 1997, p.89). So, adopting a qualitative research methodology was perceived to offer a means within the current study of accessing very rich and in-depth explanations with respect to the research questions.

Researchers and theorists (for example, Huberman and Miles, 1994; Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2014) outline a range of approaches that are used in the prosecution and practice of qualitative research. Different methods are perceived to 'makes the world visible in a different way' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.4), whereas 'no single method is privileged over another' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.39). Employing an overarching qualitative methodological approach, and also considering the complexity of the context of the study, the research was based on carefully selected methods and tools that would permit sense-making in relation to the situation 'without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomena under study' (Mertens, 2010, p.225), that is the inductive in nature.

The research therefore adopts – as part of the toolkits for, and in some sections of the study – an ethnographic research methodology[12]. That is, the orientation to the collection of

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[12] According to Reeves, et. al. (2013, *p. 1367*),

data is based on the privileging of both observation and interview approaches. This allows the data to be collected 'with the potential to yield detailed and comprehensive accounts of different [sociocultural and educational] phenomenon' (Reeves, et. al., 2013, p.1365); and further allows 'the categories of analysis to emerge from the data as the study progresses' (Mertens, 2010, p.225). Also, the study adopts a first- and second-person action research orientation (see Section 3.4) to the development of research tools, and to analysis and interpretation of the latter.

3.3   Interviews and observations

Central to qualitative research, interviews allow access to a diverse range of informants and experiences (Bryman et. al., 2001) through which the research takes advantages of 'large quantities of data-gathering' (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Robotham, 2004, cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.39). A carefully prepared and constructed interview also 'has the potential for providing rich and highly illuminating material' (Robson and McCartan, 2015, p.286). This research seeks to develop 'rich, holistic insights' into stakeholders' 'views and actions' toward challenges, 'as well as the nature' of the educational traditions they inhabit[13] (Eshuchi, 2013, p.25). Thus interviews, which are exploratory in nature (Patton, 2002), can constitute 'a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out' (Robson and McCartan, 2015, p.286). However, 'the validity of interview data has been queried' (Ibid, p.285) as, for example, Houtkoop-Steenstra (2000) suggests that interview results cannot be the unmediated expressions of respondents' real opinions; Robson and McCartan (2015) indicate that 'interview responses are notorious for discrepancies between what people say that they have done, or will do, and what they actually did or will do' (p320). That is, trying to explore what is happening in a given context, it is inadequate to adopt interviews as a sole method of data-collection.

Ethnography is a research methodology and as such it has a strong foundation in empiricism and naturalism (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007) – collectively these approaches emphasize the collection of data in naturalistic social settings. Like other forms of qualitative research, ethnography differs from positivistic inquiry, as ethnographers neither hypothesize about their research, nor does the ethnographic method set out to test hypotheses. Instead, ethnographic rese arch is exploratory in nature. This approach means that the ethnographer goes into the field to explore a cultural group and/or explore certain social interactions. The research questions are therefore not necessarily specified at the beginning of this endeavour, instead this approach facilitates an inductive and iterative approach whereby thick description leads to the development of research questions as the social phenomenon is being studied.

[13] According to Eshuchi (2013, p.25)

The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature (that is, sights, sounds) of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews.

Hammersley (1985, p.152) states, '[t]he task [of ethnographers] is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices, of the people in these settings. The aim is to 'get inside' the way each group of people sees the world'. Apart from the use of interviews that might support the achievement of this goal, 'a major purpose of observation is to see first-hand what is going on' and 'the purpose of observational data is to describe in depth and detail the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed' (Patton, 2002, p.512). The literature also suggests that an ethnographic study is necessary to consider the combination both of interviews and observations methods for data-gathering (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Reeves et. al., 2008; Robson and McCartan, 2015). As such, the research develops the protocol of data collection, with the main effort devoted to qualitative interviews through which the participants were asked about their past and current educational experiences in A&D (jewellery) HE in order to identify the factors that are perceived as challenges of UK study; as well as to observations that are used as 'a supportive or supplementary method to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by [interviews]' and 'to validate or corroborate the messages obtained by [this means]' (Robson and McCartan, 2015, p.321).

An interview strategy was chosen following careful consideration of 'the balance between structure and flexibility – an element of control enables investigation of topics of interest to the researcher, whereas flexibility allows informants to guide the interview' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.41). Thus, the first section of each interview adopts a structured format in order to obtain details relating to informants' personal, socio-cultural and educational backgrounds. It then takes on a semi-structured style, which applies both open-ended questions and prompts, to enable data with both breadth and depth to be collected (Fontana and Frey, 2000). The responsiveness to emergent issues through semi-structured interviews has been widely seen as an appropriate format to suit flexible research design (Robson and McCartan, 2015) as it 'enables the researcher to establish the interview focus yet allow the flexibility to react to informants' testimony' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.41). Whilst, the interview strategy – structured yet conversational – is 'in conversing on a topic of mutual interest researcher and informant co-produce research outcomes' (Ibid, p.41), as such 'knowledge emerges through a dialogue' (Kvale, 1996, p.125).

Observations, as the other technique of data-gathering in this study, have the major advantage of directness (Robson and McCartan, 2015). The direct observation approach is applied as a 'supportive method' (Ibid, p.321) to 'learn things that people would be unwilling to talk about in an interview' (Patton, 2002, p.515). In addition to the value of direct observations of a setting through this study, 'the inquirer is better able to understand and capture the context within which people interact—for understanding context is essential to a holistic perspective' (Ibid, p.513). In addition, the research also applied the participant observation approach that is defined by Schensul et. al. (1999) as 'the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting' (p.91).

In order to apply the participant observation approach, I took part in the experiment workshops, not only as facilitator but also as a participant observer, in order to 'understand nuances of meaning; appreciate variations in participants' experiences; capture the importance of what happened outside formal activities [before the beginning of the workshops, during breaks, or after the workshops] - nothing could have substituted for direct experience with the program' (Patton, 2002, p.512). According to Kawulich (2005), this enables 'researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities' (p.2), while further qualitative data collection follows.

3.4   Action research

'[S]imply observing and interviewing do not ensure that the research is qualitative' (Janesick, 2000, p.387), the data needs to be mediated by researchers in order to develop its further meaning (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2000). Driven by its inductive nature, this research not only looks at the factors perceived as challenges but also seeks to develop interventions and test the impact of them, thus it is experimental in nature. Without understanding the nature of the intervention by personally experiencing it, I would not have been able to meet this aim – that is, as described by action researchers: 'learning by doing' (O'Brien, 1998).

Action research is beneficial as a holistic approach when the study aims to solve certain problems (O'Brien, 1998), whereas 'the term is sometimes used rather loosely' (Eden and Huxham, 1996, p.75) as being 'applied to a richly diverse range of approaches' (Marshall, 2011, p.245). The different interpretations of the term can sometimes be a cause of it being

misused (Eden and Huxham, 1996), hence, it has been criticised for its lack of rigour and sustainability. Despite this, good quality research, as argued by Eden and Huxham (1996), can also 'emanate from these situations if attention is paid to ensuring [action research] happens' (p.76). For example: Marshall (2011) indicates that there are attempts to map the diversity of action research, one of which 'is a framework considering approaches as contributing to different territories of action – as being first-, second- or third-person action research[14], or, more commonly, some combination of these' (Reason and Bradbury, 2008a; Reason and Torbert, 2001; Chandler and Torbert, 2003; cited by Marshall, 2011, p.245); O'Brien (1998) also suggests that 'what separates this type of research from general professional practices, consulting, or daily problem-solving is the emphasis on scientific study, which is to say the researcher studies the problem systematically and ensures the intervention is informed by theoretical considerations' (p.3).

Chandler and Torbert (2003), develop the idea of first-, second- and third-person inquiry and offer 'a conceptual step forward by pointing to the temporal dimension – inquiry can be concerned with past, present, and future' (Chandler and Torbert, 2003; cited by Reason and Bradbury, 2007, p.6). Reason and Bradbury (2007, p.6-7) further explains this temporal dimension as:

> *[it] must go through a process of (first person) self-inquiry in order to fully understand how to facilitate self-inquiry and self-initiatives in others. They may benefit by joining with others in (second person) collective inquiry for support and challenge in developing their experiences and skills. All this in the service of the wider (third person) purpose of human development and for 'downtrodden people to create their own history [and] their own science'.*

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[14] Reason and Bradbury (2007, *p.6*) define that

> *First-person action research skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act choicefully and with awareness, and to assess effects in the outside world while acting. First-person research practice brings inquiry into more and more of our moments of action – not as outside researchers but in the whole range of everyday activities.*

> *Second-person action research/practice addresses our ability to inquire face-to-face with others into issues of mutual concern – for example in the service of improving our personal and professional practice both individually and separately. Second person inquiry starts with interpersonal dialogue and includes the development of communities of inquiry and learning organizations.*

> *Third-person research/practice aims to extend these relatively small-scale projects to create a wider impact… Third-person strategies aim to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (say, in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal quality. Writing and other reporting of the process and outcomes of inquiries can also be an important form of third-person inquiry.*

This idea fits properly with the inductive nature of this study, though considering the scope of the work, it is less possible to develop 'a wider community of inquiry' in terms of the time scale and and resourcdes available for PhD research. So, the research adopts this idea and considers the essentiality of developing both first- and second-person action inquiries as an approach to intervention and change as responding to perceived challenges of stakeholders in UK A&D HE context (Marshall, 2011). Some initial stance is adopted in regard to the 'problem' based on the interpretation of primary data collected from the interviews and observations. A plan is then formulated and an intervention is carried out; time is spent on refining and developing research tools to suit 'the exigencies of the situation'. Data is then collected, and analysed, reflections will flow, and hence, further strategies are developed in an ongoing, cyclical basis and an iterative fashion (O'Brien,1998; Rawal, 2006). In addition, as suggested by Reason and Bradbury (2007) 'attempts at third-person research which are not based in rigorous first-person inquiry into one's purposes and practices is open to distortion through unregulated bias' (p.6). This research therefore provides a solid foundation for developing third-person action research within a future research agenda.

Marshall (2011) offers an account of action research 'as a companion language from which to articulate and develop notions of practice in relation to reflection' (p.244). Taking this into account, the study is characterised by an experimental evolution of the approach: the researcher learned throughout the process of undertaking the investigation, then reflected upon and reacted to emerging data, themes and ideas. The research thus adopts Kampenes, Anda and Dybå's (2008, p.3) idea of flexible research design. According to this idea:

> [w]hen applying a flexible research design, the methods of inquiry evolve incrementally in response to the data obtained (Robson 2002). The generation of ideas, designing, data collection, and analysis and writing proceed together or in iterations, rather than in separate stages.

This implies that via reflective analysis in relation to the experimental process, the research approach can be flexed and iterated to ensure collection of appropriate data; the Research Questions, given emergence of new evidence and reflecting upon this (see Section 6.3), are thus evolved and refined to ensure the development of richer and deeper interpretations of findings.

3.5   Transcript and reflection journal

In this study, in order to effectively engage with the research data for interpretation and analysis, several types of research data were produced.   These include: interview transcripts, observation notes from direct observation, video/audio transcripts for participant observations, and a research diary. The act of accessing these types of data will not only 'free the researcher from reliance on memory and enable repeated examinations of [key information]', but constitutes 'an interpretative, theoretically saturated process itself' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.43), that can 'allow the data to drive the research agenda going forward' (Loubere, 2017, p.8).

According to Kvale (1996), 'transcripts are artificial constructions from an oral to a written mode of communication' (p.163). Loubere (2017) suggests that transcription is also a time-consuming process and that the act of verbatim transcription is unfeasible 'due to the pressure from time limitations to move on to the analysis and writing-up stages' (p.8). In addition, Loubere (2017, p.8) argues that:

> *[an] open-ended and flexible research that seeks to interrogate the continuously unfolding dynamics between researcher and research participant, and sees the research project as a co-production, which is replete with different types of meanings and understandings that need to be interpreted critically, reflexively, and iteratively. In a sense, the act of transcription is an inherently positivistic endeavour, and thus unsuitable for much research adopting an interpretivist approach.*

Reflecting on the above issues, I realised that in this study, fully verbatim transcription would not necessarily constitute the optimum method to suit the transformation of 'contextually rich information' (Ibid, p.9) that has been collected into different types of data. Therefore, this study adopted an alternative 'enhancing recall' approach (Werner, 1999; McLellan et al., 2003; Loubere, 2017) – partial transcription and stimulus transcription – to guide selection and transcription of the materials from the interviews and participant observations. It also adopted the reflexive journaling approach (Fasick, 1977) for reducing and refining the data from the records of direct observation and research diaries. The combination of these approaches thus develops 'a systematic set of procedures that would not be seen as overly subjective and insufficiently' (Loubere, 2017, p.9), and that would be

seen as 'more conducive to research conducted by a single researcher working alone' (Ibid).

3.6 Sampling

Sampling strategies should always be determined by the purpose of the research study (Brikci and Green, 2007). The goal of this research is to access, as far as possible, informants' lived experiences to discover from what aspects and to what extent participants show qualitative differences in their educational experiences. That is, the emphasis on 'iterative theoretical reflection is on the statistical representativeness of the sample' (Brikci, and Green, 2007; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.44). Therefore, the sample sizes in this study tend to be small (Punch, 2000). 'Goal-free' evaluation, as described by Scriven's (1991), is consistent with an inductive approach, and it is important that the researcher identifies significant unplanned or unanticipated effects or side effects arising from research program, rather than just planned effects (Thomas, 2006). Therefore, 'sample size is not predetermined' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.44), rather it is guided by merging ideas, concepts or themes derived from raw data. Thus, in this research, a purposive theoretical sampling approach[15] is adopted to align with the iterative strategy, and here the researcher makes the initial decision of sampling by identifying some key concepts and features based on the research context to 'verify the relevance of coding categories' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.44). Through iteratively reflecting on the sample, it is possible to then determine whether further data is needed (Bryman, 2004; Silverman, 2005) and the size and diversity of the sample can be increased.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

'Ethical substance is the way in which the researcher legitimates self morally' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.182). Considering potential ethical issues is also necessary for protecting both researcher and participants away from 'harm, stress and anxiety, and myriad other negative consequences' (Robson and McCartan, 2015, p.205) before conducting a research study. In this study, two key ethical issues – consent and confidentiality – are considered (Brikci and Green, 2007). Actions include: (a) undertaking research practices in

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[15] Horsburgh (2002, *p.31*) states that

> *initial sampling decisions should be purposive, in that selection of participants is made on the basis of their ability to provide relevant data on the area under investigation. Analysis of the data thus obtained should indicate the future direction that sampling should take, in order to develop a theory from data analysis. This, then, entails 'theoretical sampling' (Glaser, 1978).*

relation to observations, ensuring that interviews and intervention experiments at target institutions have been approved by either programme leaders or course tutors; (b) ensuring that informed consent has been used to present and explain the purpose and processes of the research study (Robson and McCartan, 2015), and has been granted by informants based on their understanding of 'the benefits or costs of participation and are able to choose whether or not to participate' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.44); (c) 'informants' voluntary participation' has been 'confirmed prior to the commencement of research' (Ibid, p.44); and, (d) confidentiality has been maintained as necessary by using substitution or pseudonyms to protect the identity of individuals when either contextual detail or direct quotation has been used in reporting findings (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

3.8   Issues raised by the approach to the study

Three key issues that require consideration as the result of the research design are validity, reliability and generalisability.

Validity

As explained by Creswell (2014) in 'Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th Ed.)' the notion of validity is 'one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account' (p.251).

Various strategies have been suggested by the literature to check for the accuracy of research findings and to strengthen the validity of qualitative research. The use of multiple approaches to check the accuracy of findings is recommended by Creswell (2014), as 'it enhance[s] the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy' (p.251). In this research, validity is strengthened by considering the combination of three approaches: triangulation of different data sources of information; rich and thick description of the findings; and clarification of the bias the researcher brings to the study (Ibid).

The approach of triangulating different data sources of information implies that 'themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants' (Ibid, p.251). These include:

1. Interviews with a range of stakeholders:
- Chinese MA students who are studying in the UK
- Chinese MA students who are studying in China
- MA alumnus who have graduated from UK institutions but have returned to China
- MA alumnus who have recently completed their study in the UK
- MA jewellery course tutors from Chinese institutions
- Educational experts and academics from different A&D disciplines in UK institutions

2. Direct observations of MA learning and teaching practices in both China and UK institutions

3. Participant observations of intervention experiments.

That is, these sources of information are deliberately compared and evidence is examined and incorporated into the data analysis 'to build a coherent justification for themes' (Ibid, p.251).

It is notable, according to Creswell (2014), that the use of 'rich, thick description to convey the findings' can also add to their validity (p.251). So, interview data, used in the text of this thesis, is presented as direct quotations to 'illustrate the themes of the qualitative research and give a sense of informants rather than presenting their ideas filtered through the lens of the researcher' (Gruber and Wallace, 1999; Mayer, 1999; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.45). This procedure provides vivid and detailed descriptions of the setting and offers many perspectives with respect to relevant themes: the findings thus become richer and more realistic.

In addition, the nature of reflexivity has been mentioned as an important characteristic of the research. The inductive approach to the study implies 'findings are not merely discovered but verified during each succeeding phase of analysis with new data' (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Freeman et al., 2007; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.45). In good qualitative research, such 'succeeding phase of analysis with new data' (Ibid), suggested by Creswell (2014), 'contains comments by the researcher about how their interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background' (p.251). This self-reflection and response to data 'creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers' (Ibid, p.251).

Reliability

Reliability is frequently viewed as 'a very difficult concept' in qualitative research (Spencer et al., 2003, p.64). Since reliability issues relate to measurements (Stenbacka, 2001), many qualitative researchers have argued that the concept is problematic: qualitative research often neither considers the use of strict 'experimental' controls to ensure 'the standardised methods' (Spencer et al., 2003, p.64), nor considers the replicability of research settings (Golafshani, 2003).

Despite these issues, considering the multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon, some researchers suggest that there exist multiple approaches to understanding reliability, and some of these should be considered in qualitative research (Spencer et al., 2003). For example: Le Compte and Goetz (1982) consider the approach to 'the problem of reliability and distinguish between external and internal reliability' (Le Compte and Goetz,1982; cited by Spencer et al., 2003, p.64). Here the concern is the notion of consistency. Further, Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider the phenomenon in terms of 'auditability, dependability or reflexivity'. Ambert et al. (1995) have suggested the notion of inter-coder reliability. Here, different researchers would not necessarily be assumed to apply or interpret concepts in the same way. However, Sandelowski (1986) suggests that 'if the researcher gives a clear account of how the research was conducted, readers can see how the findings were derived' (Sandelowski, 1986, cited by Spencer et al., 2003, p.65). Similar to this, Morgan and Drury (2003) also state that to ensure reliability in qualitative research, researchers must be required to document 'the succession of moves through the stages of data production, analysis and interpretation' (Morgan and Drury, 2003; cited by Ali and Yusof, 2011, p.35).

Taking account of the above issues, this study acknowledges Morgan and Drury's (2003) suggestion and considers the issues of reliability by providing rich and thick descriptions of each stage of the study (this will become evident in following chapters). In sum, an appropriate level of research reliability tends to be attained when it is clear that other researchers 'would discover the same phenomena or generate the same constructs in the same or similar settings' (Le Compte and Goetz, 1982, p.32).

Generalisability

Referring to Polit and Hungler's (1991) work, Ali and Yusof (2011) state that the word 'generalisability' is typically defined as 'the degree to which the findings can be generalised from the study sample to the entire population' (p.35). Whilst qualitative researchers have found it difficult to achieve this in their studies, generalisability is argued to be 'not the purpose of qualitative research' (Horsburgh, 2002, p.311). On the contrary, rather than generalisability, qualitative research emphasises the value of 'particularity' (Greene and Caracelli, 1997): its value 'lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site' (Creswell, 2014, p.253).

Despite this common rebuke to those that critique the generalisability of qualitative research, there exist some more positive discussions in relation to generalisability (Creswell, 2014), in which it is suggested that there are 'other types of generalisability which qualitative research may still satisfy' (Ali and Yusof, 2011, p.35). These include: representational generalisation suggested by Lewis and Ritchie (2003); analytical or theoretical generalisation suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967); and, empirical or inferential generalisation suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Also, Horsburgh (2002, p.311), who studies Morse's (1999) work, suggests that:

> *situational, rather than demographic, representativeness is what is sought. It may be said, then, that generalizability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which theory developed within one study may be exported (K.M. Melia, personal communication) to provide explanatory theory for the experiences of other individuals who are in comparable situations.*

By adopting a qualitative approach, this research uses relatively small sizes of sample in order to study the context in a rich and deep way that is designed to generate indicative findings. So, there is no claim that findings are completely generalisable to 'the entire population' (Ali and Yusof, 2011, p.35). However, based on the above suggestions, a range of indicative findings generated by this research can claim to 'make logical generalisations to a theoretical understanding of a similar class of phenomena' (Popay et al., 1998, p.348). This then guides further research in wider settings.

3.9   Chronology of the empirical study

Before commencement of the subsequent chapters, it is helpful to outline the activities involved in the study. The chronology of the empirical components of the work is shown in Appendix 1. By presenting key information relating to the core activities, the rationale for each, and information relating to how one activity leads or links to another, the nature and intent of the research questions can be more clearly illustrated.

Chapter 4 Scoping Exercise

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents information and findings from the early stages of the empirical study. The purpose of the chapter is to discuss one of the main objectives of this study; that is to develop detailed knowledge of the challenges that are perceived by Chinese jewellery students during their transition from studying at Bachelor's level in China to studying at Master's level in the United Kingdom (UK). Based on the investigations from the first four research questions (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3), this chapter seeks to explore and discuss:

- What are the informants' perceptions of their educational experiences in the UK A&D HE context?
- To what extent do the informants perceive these experiences as 'challenges'?
- How those challenges represent themselves in stakeholders' day-to-day learning and teaching practices?
- How the informants perceive and engage with those challenges?

The literature reviewed for this thesis on Chinese students' educational experiences in UK HE indicates that they have faced different levels of challenges (Wu and Hammond, 2011; Henze and Zhu, 2012; Fan, 2014; Quan et al., 2016; Spencer-Oatey et al., 2016). The literature reviewed also evidences the existence of relatively recent studies that have investigated Chinese students' learning experiences in the UK's universities in (Liu 2006; Turner 2006; Wang and Byram 2011; Quan et al., 2013), and that a common aim among these studies is '[t]o satisfy better the demand for this market and improve student performance' (Quan et al., 2016, p.328). Wu (2015, p.754) argues that 'these studies have employed similar frames of reference', for example: concerning the influence of Eastern pedagogical settings and their relationship to Confucian-heritage cultures. Wu proposes that students' 'learning practices and beliefs' are formed through 'the sociocultural and sociohistorical settings in which learning occurs'. Wu (2015) also argues that assuming 'the homogeneity of students' (p.755) is flawed. It is not because 'Confucianism was under attack as an outdated cultural ideology by many influential Chinese intellectuals' (Zhang, 2016, p.3), but that these studies fail to see education from a developmental perspective in which the complexities and diversities within each culture and the dynamic interrelations between two different academic traditions exist (Ramburuth and McCormick, 2001; Rastall, 2006; Wu, 2014).

Quan et al. (2016, p.326) argue that studies undertaken on the subject of the learning experiences encountered by Chinese students in the UK HE have given limited attention to the 'diversity of [Chinese] student groups' and postgraduate taught (PGT) students.

> [d]espite almost a decade of research on Chinese students studying at British Universities, studies have focused primarily on standard-entry UG students (Schweisfurth and Gu 2009; Wang and Byram 2011). The literature reveals limited studies that investigate the cross-culture transition of the diversity of student groups, such as direct entry UG students (Quan, Smailes, and Fraser 2013) and in particular from the perspective of this research Chinese postgraduate (PG) students (Turner 2006), especially on how international students make their transition following a practical process step by step.

Based on the researcher's literature searches, limited published research appears to exist that focuses on Chinese PGT students' learning experiences in the A&D sector of the UK's HE at the Master's level, and again, based on the above-mentioned searches, there appears to be no published research that is specific to the area of jewellery.

Taking into account the limited research in this field, the researcher realises that in order to obtain and develop meaningful insights into the educational experiences of Chinese students in the UK A&D HE, there need to be more systematic and detailed investigations, and as in the case of this study, focused on a specific discipline. Also, in order to 'determine the likelihood that a prospective research site is 'realistic'' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.48), samples need to be carefully selected to maintain their credible and indicative natures (Brikci and Green, 2007).

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), 'a reasonable expectation of data quality and credibility' is possible by 'finding the 'processes, people, programs, interactions and structures of interest': that mutual trust can be formed between researcher and informants; that research will be ethical' (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.62; cited by Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.48). As introduced at the beginning of this thesis, this study developed from my own personal educational experiences and subsequent experience as a teaching assistant. I am therefore confident that through 'my personal prior knowledge of the context' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.48) and the building of relationship with the institutions involved in this research, the study's participants and I can assure that the research setting

is realistic.

Previous research has provided both qualitative and quantitative evidence that suggests that as well as cultural factors, personal, psychological and pedagogical factors are equally important in influencing students' learning' (Ramburuth and McCormick, 2001; Rastall, 2006; cited by Wu, 2015, p.755). Taking into consideration the existence of a wide range of potential study frameworks and approaches, the scoping exercise aims to extensively and developmentally explore the underlying reasons for the challenges experienced by Chinese postgraduate taught (PGT) students within the specific location and academic discipline of this research. The scope of the research (see Figure 4.1) is therefore designed to illustrate the range of the dimensions of this study. A more extensive range of sample selection is also made by this study; that is, sampling is not only carried out at UK HE institutions but also at jewellery HE institutions in China.
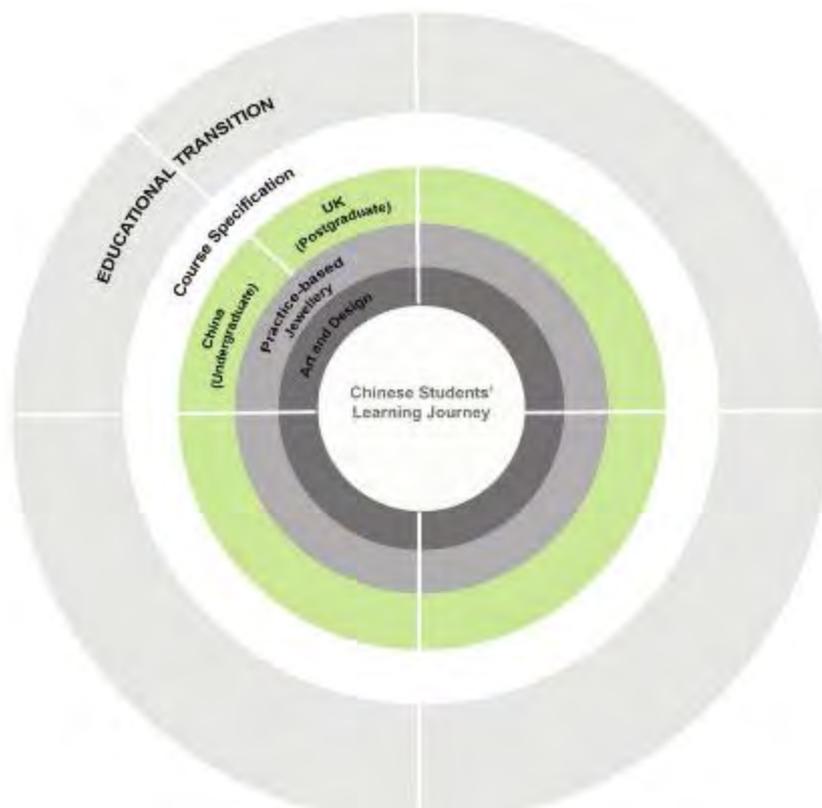
Figure 4.1 the scope of the research

Given this scope, the scoping exercise comprises three phases of study. These include:

Phase 1:   Interviewing a cohort of Master's students who have just finished their MA course (2013-2014) Jewellery, Silversmithing and Related Products (JSRP) at the School of Jewellery (SoJ), Birmingham City University (BCU), UK.

Phase 2:   Visiting two jewellery institutions in China where the investigation is undertaken through observation of learning and teaching practices, and the interview of selected participants (students and tutors).

Phase 3:   Undertaking a mentoring project for Chinese / international students studying on the MA (2014-2015) JSRP course at SoJ.

This chapter presents the studies undertaken during Phase 1 and Phase 2 with one jewellery institution in the UK and two jewellery institutions in China. It also presents reflections and initial findings that were drawn from these two phases of study, through which the study aims to develop an in-depth understanding of Chinese students' learning experiences in relation to their UK study. This chapter further aims to form the theoretical basis for the development of the Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) in the later stage of the empirical study (see Chapter 5).

It is important to note that Phase 3 is not included in this chapter. The mentoring project taking place in Phase 3 is funded by BCU's project scheme of Student Academic Mentoring Partnership (StAMP). This project was originally seen as an opportunity for it to be integrated in to the intervention experiment as part of the research plan. Useful findings could emerge through the researcher mentoring Chinese students, using this project, and these could contribute significantly to the research. However, through the development of the project, such findings were considered to be of a more instantaneous kind, than having, as was intended for the intervention, to have the potential to impact more fundamentally and developmentally on improving students' study abilities; for example, in developing their self-directed leaning abilities. In this respect, I observed that students taking the mentoring project tended to seek the solutions to acquire specific skills, such as, improving making and technical skills, while there was less evidence of their interest in exploring the meaning of the style of MA learning they were experiencing through their course. It was therefore concluded that the support provided to Chinese students through this mentoring project

would not form a part of the intervention. Thus, Phase 3 is not presented in this thesis. However, a project report is attached in Appendix 2 as a reference to the study.

4.2   Phase1: Interviewing with the MA (2013-2014) JSRP graduates, SoJ, BCU

As the school where my personal experience was gained and where this research was initiated, the SoJ was selected as the first institution to begin this stage of the empirical study. Being the largest jewellery school in Europe[16], BCU's SoJ has experienced the recruitment of increasing numbers of international students over the last eight years. The SoJ's MA JSRP course has one of Faculty's (Faculty of Arts, Design and Media) largest international student PHT cohorts, with over 90% being from Mainland China. For the SoJ, this profile has placed a significant emphasis on developing an interculturalised curriculum and pedagogy, requiring high levels of interaction amongst its 'home' and 'international' students and staff, at both institutional and disciplinary levels. This educational context provides this study with a good opportunity to collect rich data.

4.2.1   Plan and organisation of the interview

The study begins with the interview-based investigation of a cohort of Master's students. These students have just finished their study on the MA JSRP course in early September 2014. Initially, I contacted the JSRP course director in order to seek approval for interviewing the students and after obtaining permission, it was suggested that the best interview dates would be a two of days after the cohort finished their *viva*, as their memories about the whole year of MA study would be fresh in their minds and they would be able to reflect in more detail and depth at this final stage. I agreed to this suggestion and scheduled the interview date two days after the *viva*.

Prior to the date of the interviews, I prepared a participant information sheet, including a consent form (see Appendix 3). This form introduced the aims of the research and explained the benefit and cost of their participation and their right to withdraw at any point of the interview. All of the students approached accepted to participate in this study and signed the consent form with their agreement to be interviewed and audiotaped. The methods adopted in this study include group seminars, and individual structured and semi-structured interviews, conducted in English. All of the participants took part in the group seminar. However, in order to ensure that the most credible and richest information would

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[16] It is sourced from the article of School of Jewellery. Birmingham City University on the klimt02 website. Available at: https://klimt02.net/institutions/schools/school-jewellery-birmingham-city-university

be gathered (Li et al., 2014), the students who were more actively engaged in the group seminar were selected and invited to participate in the follow-up individual interview sessions. This selection was based on considering the need to draw as much information as possible from the interviews.

So, the study commenced with the group seminar and opened with a statement in relation to this study, before moving on to the interview sessions (see appendix 4). Hence, a series of open-ended questions was provided with the intention of revealing the diversity of the informants' perspectives on their MA learning experience. Meanwhile in the individual interview sessions, a range of more detailed open-ended questions were developed according to the topics that were discussed in the group seminar, in order to obtain a detailed, individual adjustment trajectory of the learning experience.

4.2.2 Participants

This phase of the study sought to explore holistic views of all the students' learning experiences to obtain different aspects of how they perceived the quality and standards of the course, and how these perceptions reflected upon their learning experiences. Thus, the sample included both home and international students, and was made up of a total of 31 students in the group seminar session, and 15 students in the follow-up individual interview sessions.

Reflecting the make-up of the sample, the majority of the participants were from China. The rest were international participants from Taiwan and Thailand and the home student participants (see Table 4.1).

Participant	Type Code	Count	Participant's mode of study
MA (2013-2014) JSRP Students	Home Participant (HP)	3	30 Full-time students 1 Part-time student
	Chinese International Participant (CIP)	20	
	Non-Chinese International Participant (NCIP)	8	

Table 4.1 Breakdown of sample 1

Based on the demographic's questionnaire given before the commencement of the study, a brief view of participants' age, gender and prior educational background was also provided (see Table 4.2).

Participant	Age (Count)	Gender (Count)	Prior Educational Background (Count)	Working Experience (Count)
MA (2013-2014) JSRP Students	18 – 25 (18) 26 – 35 (9) Not reported (4)	Male (2) Female (29)	Jewellery (who finished BA study in the UK) (11) Jewellery (who finished BA study in their own country) (14) Non-jewellery (6)	With working experience before entering the course (8) Without working experience (23)

Table 4.2 Breakdown of sample 2

4.2.3 Reflections and initial findings

This phase of study covers a range of concerns related to participants' prior experience, before entering the MA course, plus their MA study journey that they had just experienced. So, rather than specifying a focus on certain aspects, as often discussed by the other researchers, the study was introduced to participants as 'an investigation of the day-to-day learning and teaching experiences' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.57) on the MA course. Based on this strategy, participants felt that they had the freedom to talk at length about how they perceived and experienced their experiences, as well as how they adapted and adjusted themselves to the course. Therefore, rather than conveying pre-determined themes to the participants, most of the themes emerged through conversations as the interviews developed in to greater depth.

By analysing the data, 'in order to uncover the commonalities and divergence of the stakeholders' views' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.57) of their MA learning experiences, the themes covered by this study were separated into four main ones, which are expanded upon fully in this section. These include:

> Theme 1: Motivations and decision-making processes for undertaking a Master's programme in the UK
>
> Theme 2: Expectations of the learning on the MA JSRP course
>
> Theme 3: Challenges perceived after entering the MA JSRP course
>
> Theme 4: Experiences of adapting to the MA JSRP course

Theme 1: Motivations and decision-making processes for undertaking a Master's programme in the UK

The number of studies concerning the factors that influence Chinese students' learning experiences whilst studying in the UK has increased rapidly in recent years (Wu, 2014). By comparison, 'the underlying reasons that motivate these students to pursue postgraduation abroad and why these factors are influential are not sufficiently studied' (Ibid, p. 426).

Therefore, participants in this study were first encouraged to share their views of what motivated them to study abroad, and why and how they made the decision to choose the MA JSRP course. As can be seen from the information provided in Table 4.2, the participants differed in age, educational background and personal life experience. Thus,

participants' motivations of learning abroad tended to vary, according to their different perspectives. Through interpretation of the data, the most common motivations of the majority of Chinese participants can be attributed to either a desire to pursue an

However, it is worth noting that other motivations, which tended to be the most important impacting on their decision-making in relation to undertaking the MA JSRP course, were the following:

i) Compared to other major receiving countries (OECD, 2016), the one-year study mode of the UK Master's course is considered to be more efficient in both time and economy.

ii) Parents' opinions can be influential to some younger participants' decision-making.

iii) A lot of effort on international recruitment has been made by the educational agencies in students' home countries and by HE institutions in the UK, both of which influence participants' decisions-making processes.

iv) The reputation of the institution and its Master's programme are also important factors that impact the participants' choices.

It was found through the interviews that these factors are often inter-connected. and for a number of the participants' the latter two factors tend to be the most compelling and strongly impact on decisions to undertake the MA JSRP course. For instance:

CIP:

"*I submitted the application with the help of the education agent. I was choosing amongst three UK HE institutions that provided a jewellery Master's programme. They were SoJ, UAL (University of Arts London) and SHU (Sheffield Hallam University). However, the agent strongly recommended SoJ to me, as it is ranked higher in jewellery education than the others.*"

NCIP:

"*The choice of studying at SoJ was suggested by educational agents. They suggested to study here as it is one of the biggest jewellery schools around Europe. And it has been highly ranked in the field of jewellery education. Moreover, the living expense in Birmingham, as the agent said, is much less than in London.*"

CIP:

> *"There were people coming from BCU each year to our university to recruit students. We were offered an opportunity to attend a face-to-face interview for the application of their Master programme. The feedback can then be received in a very short period of time after the interview, which saves a lot of time for us to get the offer than the online application."*

NCIP:

> *"I knew many people who graduated from the MA JSRP course at SoJ, they all recommended this course to me. So, here I am."*

CIP:

> *"My purpose of learning abroad was to obtain the overseas Master's degree, which could be a benefit for seeking better jobs when I return to China. However, it will be more attractive if I can get a Master's degree from a well-known institution. The SoJ thus meets the aim."*

It has been reported by researchers that the 'push-pull' factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Bandias et al., 2003; Banks et al., 2007; Lawson, 2011) exist when international students consider their overseas learning destinations. The above examples reveal that educational agencies constitute a 'push' factor. They tend to deliberately transfer institutional and subject information, which, to some extent, depends on how much knowledge they have of the subject-specific institutions and the extent of their relationships with those institutions on business terms. On the other hand, a 'pull' factor has also been perceived in terms of the effort made by receiving universities towards international recruitment with a view to seeking 'commercial advantage' (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Apart from the influence of 'push-pull' factors, the findings, as mentioned above, also indicate that the reputation of the institution and its Master's programme is an important factor that impacts upon participants' decision-making. According to Lawson (2011), there is a demand for students to obtain qualifications from HE institutions that are internationally recognised, as this will increase their employability competitiveness. The quality and clarity of educational information provided by HE institutions to potential international students on overseas can substantially influence students' motivation and their destination choice. The participants interviewed found that this factor was beneficial to them and it made the process of course application easier.

However, there could also be drawbacks if the advantages of the above factors are overestimated. For example, many participants reported that most of the education agents failed to provide subject-specific information; recommendations and consultations related to the jewellery institutions were particularly limited; information about jewellery programmes was inadequate or out of date.

CIP:

> "I was advised to choose studying at SoJ just because of its good reputation on jewellery education. However, I was hardly provided any detailed information related to the course, even the general background of the school. The only thing that I knew before I came here is that I'm going to study at one of the most famous jewellery school in the world."

However, for most of the participants', their decision-making with regards to their learning destinations still largely relied on the factors given above. Yet information on the Master's programme – course specification, curriculum settings, pedagogical strategies – was rarely considered when their decisions were made. This is problematic, as students who have insufficiently equipped themselves with knowledge on their course are more likely to hold inadequate and preconceived ideas in relation to their future learning. In the following sections, the discussions of the participants' expectations of the MA JSRP course, and the actual challenges that they perceived after entering the course, have further revealed the impact of this factor, which impacts upon the participants' MA learning experience.

Theme 2: Expectations with respect to learning on the MA JSRP course

The impact of students bringing inadequate prior knowledge, and therefore preconceived ideas, to the MA JSRP course has been further investigated through questioning the participants about their general expectations towards the course before beginning their MA, and to what extent their actual experiences on the course met these expectations. The following provide examples:

CIP:

> "Before I came to the UK, I supposed that the MA JSRP course should be taught by teachers, at least there should be a person who will ask me to do something. However, I found it totally different (after entering the course) to what I used to expect. There was no one telling you what you should do. Any problems were

supposed to be sorted by ourselves."

CIP:

"In China, teacher would tell what you should do in a very specific way. So, what I should do is to make sure that I followed teacher's requirements and do my work as the teacher asked. I actually do not like this learning style, which is also one of the reasons that I decided to study abroad; as I supposed that the Western way of learning would allow more freedom for their students. Even though, I was still not very used to fit myself into this course, as it seems that no one would tell you what to do and how to learn, you have to learn everything by yourself. The learning style is very much self-directed."

NCIP:

"I was told by someone who graduated from the same course. They said that the learning on the course can be very intensive, and self-directed learning skills are heavily emphasised. So, I was preparing myself to face such situation. However, I was still shocked on the first day. The course tutor asked us to finish ten pieces of objects in one week without any instructions. That was really a big challenge, how I suppose to finish ten pieces of work in one week without any explanations or any rules?"

CIP:

"I used to imagine that I can learn some higher level of making skills or techniques from the course. However, the actual situation was very different. Rather than the making skills, the course tends to be more focused on the training of thinking skills and the skills of how you can artistically present yourself."

These examples show that the participants' actual learning experiences on their MA JSRP course were different from what many of them expected. Through interviews with the participants, two different points of view were perceived. One participant expressed a positive attitude to the situation and saw this as a positive challenge, which provided them with opportunities to obtain new experience and knowledge that they have never had before. However, over 80% of the participants indicated that they found it very difficult in the initial stage of the course, as they were not at all prepared to encounter such learning methods and approaches.

The interviews found that such factors began to impact on the participants' learning experiences soon after entering the course. Although some of the participants reported positive perceptions, the majority initially spoke of the educational difficulties that they encountered in their actual learning on the MA JSRP course. These difficulties generally concerned mismatches between their prior knowledge, their expectations of their course, and subsequent actual experiences, particularly during the early stage of the MA. This study perceives these mismatches as one of the main causes of the educational difficulties that the participants reported on in relation to the effectiveness of their transition into MA study.

Theme 3: Challenges perceived after entering the MA JSRP course

This section discusses the challenges perceived by the participants, and the ways in which they affected their transition into their course. Findings are categorised and discussed according to the following three main aspects:

i) Lack of awareness of the differences in learning expectations and educational traditions
ii) Lack of learning abilities related to the learning requirements of the MA course
iii) Lack of English language proficiency
iv) Lack of awareness of the differences in learning expectations and educational traditions

The previous sections discussed the aspects relating to the participants' preparations for entering the MA JSRP course. These revealed that the actual learning experiences on this course were unlikely to meet either the participants' preconceived ideas or their prior expectations of learning on the course. The majority of the participants lacked understanding of how different their new educational experience might be in comparison to their prior learning, and as a result many of them were confused by the aims and objectives of the MA study. A plentiful amount of information and learning sources are provided by the course. For example, the course specification on school's website for students preparing to enter the course; the course handbook which provides detailed guidance for every aspect relating to the MA study; the Moodle (an online learning platform used university-wide), which provides extra support for students accessing subject-specific materials at any time inside or outside of the classroom. However, these efforts seem unable to effectively tackle the learning that many of the participants were struggling with at the initial stage of their

study. For example:

CIP:

"I was unable to understand what exactly I should do on this MA course even the module guidance and learning materials are provided?"

CIP:

"Yes, I went through all the information on the SoJ website, and read the MA handbook as well. However, I can't really understand the requirements of the course."

NCIP:

"I think the understanding of the requirements mentioned in module brief was really challenging, even though I knew the meaning of every single word in the brief."

Apart from the students' lack of the preparation for their MA learning, the above evidence might also reveal another that the institution, school and the course tutors also lacked understanding of the educational differences. The impact of how these differences influence teaching and students' learning experiences seems to be underestimated by institutions and course tutors when creating educational strategies for certain groups of international students. For example, Hofstede (1994, p.217), in his discussion of the language issues relating to intercultural encounters in schools, comments that:

Information is more than words: it is words which fit into a cultural framework. The theories developed in one country might not apply to other countries with different situations.

Therefore, when they initially arrived in a new educational environment, many participants found it difficult to understand the resources that were dominated by the UK's academic traditions. As a result, this became one of the important factors that many participants found difficult; they reported their initial experience on the course being stressful and traumatic. For example:

NCIP:

"I can't really understand that what was expected by the course and I was just totally missing at the early stage?"

However, obstacles to learning, such as those discussed above, are not only apparent in international groups of students. In Leask's (2005) research of students' learning experience in HE education, she indicates that home students entering into HE may suffer educational culture shock in terms of the higher levels of teaching and learning requirements. In addition, they 'may suffer the emotional problems of late adolescence and young adulthood, as well as the academic stresses of dealing with new complex content and concepts' (Leask, 2005, p.121). This perspective has also been conveyed by one of the home participants (HP), who indicates that:

> *"There is the difference in the way that the course is run between the BA and the MA. If you were a home student you will probably find it quite different as well. You have to do a lot more thinking and to work it out for yourself. Chinese and Taiwanese students have got additional culture and language issues on top. But I think that's a nature different between those different sources of courses."*

Despite the differences that exist between students' prior and current learning experiences – something which challenges both international and home students – it can still be perceived that there is a dominant educational tradition which governs the perceptions of home students and the institution, in that this is a natural challenging process of MA study that everyone needs to overcome. Leask (2005) further indicates that 'for international students, especially those studying in a second language and an alien educational culture, there are additional challenges' (p.122). These additional challenges can also be perceived through the interviews, for instance:

CIP:
> *"(Against the situation in MA JSRP course), in China, you are likely judged by the final state of your work. Teachers paid less attention to the process of how the work was developed. The learning behaviours that I have already had made me feel really it was hard to adapt into the new learning environment."*

It was perceived that many Chinese participants showed similar perceptions of their learning strategies; that is, they tended to seek direct commands and suggestions given by their course director, as they believed that the "course director is the person who has the authority to make the judgement on the assessment" (CIP). By holding such perceptions, many Chinese participants on the MA JSRP course therefore tended to conjecture upon

the course director's preferences; they assumed that it might be wiser to develop their work by following what their course director might prefer, in order to achieve a better assessment result. So, the tendency of their learning strategy was likely to be only focused on measurable outcomes. Hence a problematic situation occurred, as one of the Chinese participants (CIP) states:

> *"I was really struggling with the requirement of showing the process and the evidence of design development. Those things have been asked such as sketch books, visual materials, design proposals… were unfamiliar to me. But they are always strongly emphasised through the assessment."*

The above evidence indicates that gaps in understanding of the fundamental differences between Chinese and UK educational traditions continue to exist in HE institutions. That is, according to Wang and Moore (2007, p.32):

> *Western learners accept involvement and learning through their own discovery and exploration. Chinese learners expect the teacher to lead and provide learning points, and they prefer a passive approach to learning.*

By citing Cottrell's (2003), and Sinfield and Burns' (2003) work, Edwards and Ran (2009, p.193) also indicate that:

> *[s]uccess in Western education, however, depends on study skills, which map poorly on to the learning strategies characteristic of good Chinese students.*

The study shows that perceptions, such as these, on the differences between educational traditions, strategies and practices exist. My research focuses on the perceptions of the participants and how these perceptions provide specific evidence that Chinese / international students, face significant difficulties in adapting to an unfamiliar educational learning environment and ways of working.

ii) Lack of learning abilities relating to the learning requirements of the MA course

Through the interview, it is perceived that International participants' lack of preparation for entering the MA course reflects not only upon the knowledge of educational traditions but also on the learning abilities required in the context of UK A&D HE.

The researcher drew upon a range of learning abilities, which MA JSRP students are normally expected to be equipped with and / or developed through learning on the course. Based on this, a self-evaluation form (see appendix 5) was developed for the participants to evaluate themselves their abilities, including the extent to which they consider that acquiring these learning abilities will be is challenging for them. 31 participants were invited to complete the form. The results are presented below in Table 4.3.

Level of challenges / Learning abilities	Easy	Normal	Challenging	Very challenging
Interpretation of learning requirements	6	7	12	6
Subject specific knowledge and terms	5	8	10	8
Making skills	3	14	9	5
Working with group	8	10	11	2
Self-management	10	6	13	2
Self-reflection	7	7	14	3
Innovative thinking	0	10	17	4
Critical thinking	3	8	13	7
Academic reading and writing	1	7	15	8
Presentation	5	10	14	2

Table 4.3 the result of participants' self-evaluation of their learning abilities

Chart 4.1 presents details of those participants who selected either challenging or very challenging in relation to each of the learning abilities. The number in each bar represents the combined number of those who made these selections.
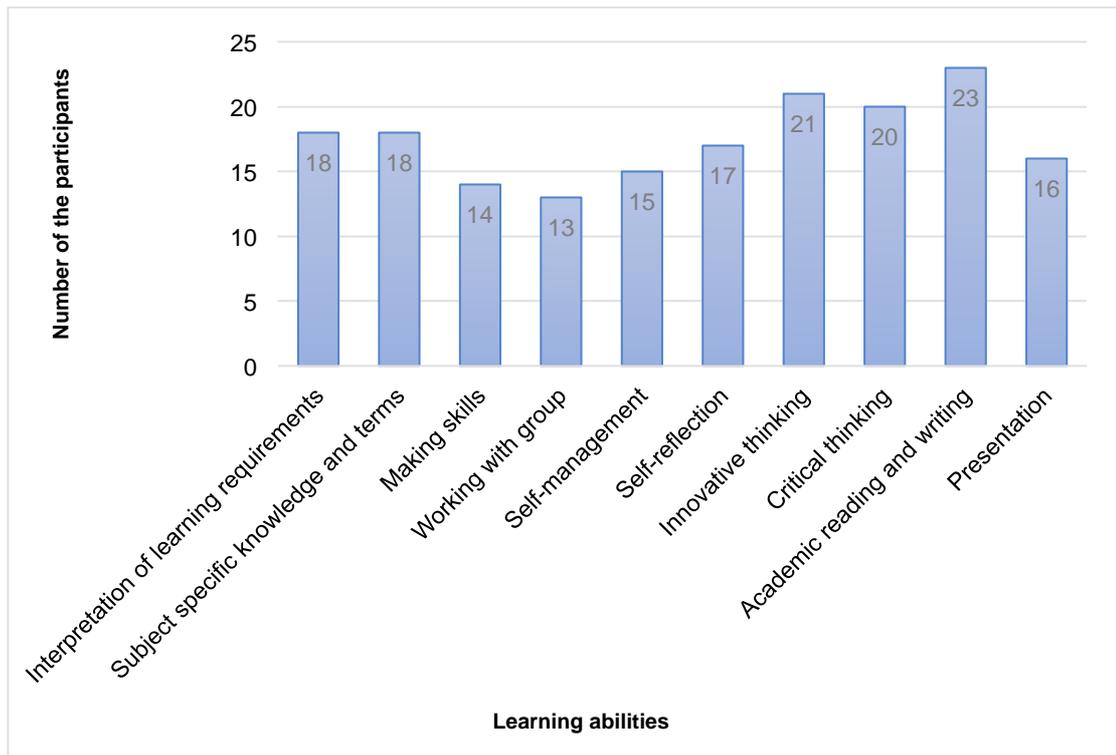
Chart 4.1 the level of perceived challenges in comparison to different learning abilities

The above data indicates that there are seven learning abilities, which are perceived to be particularly challenging by over half of the participants. In particular, the three abilities identified as the most challenging were – academic reading and writing, innovative thinking and critical thinking. These abilities correspond with those which the international participants often reported on as particularly difficult and confusing. For example:

CIP:

> "We are always asked to show the evidence of reflective and critical thinking through the design development, which made me so confused. These learning methods have not been taught in China, but also never been clearly explained on this course. This situation made it feels so difficult to meet the course requirements."

NCIP:

> "I think showing the critical thinking and writing the project report are two of the weakest areas for me. I was often told that I'm not critical enough to either the presentation of my work or the writing on my project report. However, I really cannot get the meaning of what is critical thinking."

The participants selected other learning abilities, included in the self-assessment form, as challenging. These abilities relate to the traditional learning backgrounds of the international participants, especially the Chinese participants. For example, difficulty in the interpretation of the learning requirements is associated with the participants being unable to understand the academic and subject-specific terms used on the course; working collaboratively in groups can be a culturally challenging concept, particularly for Chinese participants; lack of presentation skills is also another area of concern where such training was less frequently provided in their prior education. However, the researcher proposes that the data produced by the self-assessment and the interviews demonstrates that none of these abilities can be seen in isolation, and that it is their complex interconnections, which makes the learning encountered by the participants difficult.

iii) Lack of English language proficiency

For many international students from non-English-speaking countries, language is one of the most important and difficult obstacles to overcome. Literature indicates that international students who decide to study in the UK have to pass IELTS language tests in order to prove their language proficiency, and universities may apply strict language requirements for entrance. However, in reality, even acceptable IELTS scores do not guarantee communicative or receptive abilities equivalent to those of native speakers. Many international participants, who gained scores in IELTS test, which sufficiently meet the university's language requirement, still felt that their English proficiency was insufficient to enable them to follow the pace and subtleties of lectures. According to one of the CIPs:

> *"There are so many academic and subject-specific terms used by the teacher and home students, which I could not understand and I do not know how to use them either."*

However, being less equipped with the necessary academic and subject-specific vocabularies of the UK educational context not only impacted on international participants' learning efficiencies in terms of comprehending the learning materials, but also influenced their confidence levels for engaging with their learning activities. Some of the participants shared their embarrassment and uncomfortable experiences of taking part in the group activities in the class. For example:

CIP:

"I always feel afraid to talk to the group as if the way that I talk will make me look like an idiot."

NCIP:

"I was frightened to speak with the teachers and home students, because I feel it is very hard to make them understand what I want to say."

CIP:

"I was not confident to express myself in English. I was very afraid of expressing myself incorrectly. So, I kept silent at most of time through the group discussions."

Based on this third example above, these perceptions tended to further lead to a situation in which some of the participants did not feel confident when speaking in an English learning environment. However, for many of the Chinese participants, the reasons for their lack of confidence and therefore reticence to speak or ask questions in group situations, were not only attributed to limitations of English proficiency, but also to the learning style they inherited from their previous educational experience. For example:

CIP:

"I was not accustomed to asking questions, and I felt I had nothing to say when I was in the group discussions."

CIP:

"There is no such tradition of group discussion in Chinese universities. I am not used to studying in this way, which made me feel very hard to engage with."

Many Chinese participants reported that in China presentation skills are rarely taught and not considered as a necessary learning requirement. Also, the interactions between teachers and students also occurred less frequently through their learning activities. These are very different learning approaches in the UK A&D HE. The learning style inherited from such traditions, together with issues of English language proficiency, therefore contribute significantly to the quiet classroom behaviour adopted by many Chinese participants. However, such behaviour neither helps the improvement of the participants' English language skills, nor their adaptation to their new learning environment.

Theme 4: Experiences of adapting to the MA JSRP course

The findings indicate that the challenges facing the participants were mainly perceived by them during the period occurring from the point at which they entered the course (September) through to the middle of their second semester (around February to March of the following year). Some of the participants commented that:

NCIP:

> *"I really want to quit the MA study before March, and go back to Taiwan. I was struggling with solving different kind of problems, which made me feel so tired. And it seemed to be hopeless to overcome those issues."*

CIP:

> *"The first three to four months (of the MA study) were the most difficult time to me. I couldn't follow up the progress of the course. I was even failed on one of the modules' assessments. I was really thinking about giving up at that moment."*

It was also reported that students felt that the situation tended to become better towards the latter stages of their Master's studies. This echoes the perspectives that the review of literature suggests, in that the challenges are mainly focused on the early stages of international students' transition to Master's study. An example of how a participant has felt better about their transition and adaptation to the MA JSRP course at this stage is presented below:

CIP:

> *"I think that I gradually found my way of study at the later stage of the MA, especially after I had seen a lot of different artists work and talked a lot about my work with different people. I've learnt a lot from this process. It seems that I gradually made myself clearer about how to use the information and reflect on my own learning and support to develop my design project."*

However, different voices also exist. For example,

NCIP:

> *"I have spent almost six months making myself adapt to the MA course. It was really time-consuming in terms of a one-year MA study. I don't think this is fair to us*

in comparison to those home students who have already got used to this learning tradition, as in such condition there is no assurance that we can achieve the same standard of learning outcomes as home students in terms of both quality and quantity of the design work. I think the one-year study for international students is too short to be able to obtain a good achievement."

CIP:

"I think I finally succeeded in studying on the MA course in terms of reaching all the targets as the course required and passing the final examination. However, now I have another worry about how I can use what I have learnt from this course in my future career. It seems that what I have learnt does not fit to the current situation in China. How am I supposed to use this experience to find a job when I get back home?"

The above evidence reveals that challenges perceived through participants' learning on the MA JSRP course are not only related to the three aspects that have been discussed previously in Theme 3, (the challenges perceived after entering the MA JSRP course), but also to the concerns regarding the length of the study and employability after graduating from the course, thereby reinforcing the uncertainty of some participants with regards to the aims of the Master's study.

4.2.4   Summary

In summary, the research findings indicate that, for an international student, making the decision to attend a UK university and undertaking a course of study is a significant step in their life. The often-conflicting emotions of apprehension and excitement that accompany this decision indicate that the transition into a new educational environment abroad, especially into a Master's programme is far from easy.

The MA JSRP course emphasises primarily studio-based material investigation, which requires a high level of engagement, critical review skills, reflective thinking and clear understanding of independent self-directed study. However many Chinese students appear to struggle to meet such requirements. Based on the findings, the learning experience obstacles are perceived in relation to three main factors:

    i) Lack of awareness to the differences of learning expectations and educational

traditions

ii) Lack of learning abilities relating to the learning requirements of the MA course

iii) Lack of English language proficiency

As discussed above, the obstacles caused by these factors are experienced mainly through the early stage of their study of the course. However, also as previously identified, there are further long-lasting concerns that include the length of MA study, and post-course employability. The study also finds that since such obstacles and concerns have evolved in relation to both the participants' prior and current experiences, they tend to be complex, interwoven and mutually reinforcing: this implies that they are difficult to address through solutions that focus on one, or a partial set of the experiences discussed. Also, extra-curriculum support seems to be less effective when it is insufficiently underpinned by an understanding of Chinese students' prior educational experiences. Therefore, it is proposed that detailed investigation of Chinese students' prior experiences is necessary in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the complex and interwoven aspects of the participants' learning experiences, in both of their education environments.

4.3   Phase 2: The visit to jewellery institutions in China

4.3.1   Introduction

The idea of the researcher visiting jewellery institutions in China originated from a consideration for the need for further investigation into Chinese students' prior experiences, before they entered their Master's study in the UK. The purpose of the visit was to acquire comparable first-hand materials related to Chinese students who have intentions to study abroad; their educational experiences in the context of Chinese A&D HE; their motivations towards and expectations of overseas learning. A further aim was to investigate the underlying reasons of how, and to what extent, these experiences, motivations and expectations might influence their overseas study and how these compared to the findings drawn from the interviews of the MA JSRP participants in the UK.

In accordance with the above aims, two Chinese jewellery institutions were carefully selected:

- Jewellery Department of The Gemmological Institute (GIC), China University of Geosciences, Wuhan

- Jewellery Department of School of Design, Central Academic of Fine Art (CAFA), Beijing

One of the reasons for choosing these two institutions was that they have both sent a high percentages of their UG students and graduates to study at Master's level in UK jewellery institutions, particularly the SoJ BCU, which is understood to be a target institution. It was anticipated that examining the students' learning experiences in these two institutions would lead to a better understanding of the nature of experiences that they might encounter when they study in the UK. In addition, the two institutions selected are generally representative of the landscape of the A&D education in the Chinese HE context – in particular jewellery programmes, which appear to have different natures in different types of higher education institutions (HEIs). Therefore, before conducting this phase of study, it is necessary to obtain a holistic overview of students' educational experiences within the contexts of Chinese HE environments, the Chinese HE system in the context of internationalisation and the jewellery programmes developed in China,

A brief introduction of the BA jewellery programmes at these two institutions is presented in Appendix 6.

4.3.1.1 An overview of the Chinese HE system and the jewellery programmes developed in the context of internationalisation

Over the last 20 years, the internationalisation of HE has been emphasised in Chinese national policy (Liu and Metcalfe, 2015). According to Yang (2014), there are three major forms to the internationalisation of Chinese HE: study abroad, curricular adaptations and transnational programmatic development.

However, Pinna (2012, p.5) argues that,

> [I]f one looks at the official documents of the Chinese Ministry of Education the term internationalization (guojihua 国际化) is not present at all. Furthermore, it was my experience during some interviews with Chinese officials of the Ministry of Education, to be constrained to avoid the use of this term completely. In both cases, the terms used to speak about internationalization, or better academic relations between China and other countries, were terms like international exchange and cooperation (guojihezuoyujiaoliusi 国际合作与交流司).

This means that the concept of internationalisation of HE discussed in the context of this study is not fully applicable to the current situation of Chinese HE. In other words, the Chinese HE system has not yet been prepared for the fundamental changes associated with the movement of the internationalisation of HE (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2 and Section 2.2.3). Thus, a traditional Chinese HE system will still be considered as the main context where the questions related to the aims of this study are discussed.

HE in China is divided into several categories according to the different types of institutions. When considering the four-year UG programmes, they appear to be run by 'colleges, comprehensive universities, and specialized universities' (Fu and Hu, 2004) and lead to the Bachelor's degree. A comprehensive university is normally seen as an institution of HE, running the programmes across a broad range of disciplines (Chao, 2004), including subjects in A&D – the GIC at China University of Geosciences is one of this kind. In contrast, instead of running programmes across many disciplines, specialised universities are the HE institutions, which run programmes in specific subject areas – CAFA is an example of this type of university and specialises in A&D education. Despite the fact that the Chinese HE system is less compatible to the general perspective of the internationalisation of HE, the development of the subject of jewellery shows slightly different patterns.

China has one of the largest jewellery industries in the world (Lucas, et al., 2015), and the commercial jewellery market in China has developed rapidly in the last two decades. Hence, jewellery programmes run by various HE institutions have gradually emerged alongside this development. According to Lucas, et al. (2015, p.19):

> [P]rofessional training and degree programs in jewellery design have been offered since the early 1990s. Over the last twenty years, many leading universities and art academies have formed their own jewellery design and manufacturing departments to serve (this) expanding market. Foremost among these are Tsinghua University, China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), and China Central Academy of Fine Art.

Not only was teaching driven by the need for the development of the industry and the expanding market, there were also many artists and educators who, having obtained the latest information and knowledge in jewellery from Western countries, came back to China. They became an influential group and merged with the jewellery educators to bring

Western educational concepts and contemporary ideas into the subject area. For example, they first introduced the term 'contemporary jewellery' into Chinese jewellery education. However, because these contemporary ideas were still relatively new to Chinese audiences, they remained at a lower level of acceptance. According to Fei (2014) – one of the leading contemporary jewellery practitioner and educator in China:

> [T]here is lack of premises for such kind of major in the 90s of last century in China. It was only started as an experimental project in a few A&D academies in the early 21st century.
>
> *(cited by Eichler, 2014)*

Therefore, despite a small number of A&D HE institutions, which showed their ambitions of integrating Western methods of teaching jewellery, the majority of the jewellery programmes in China remained more focused upon skills and techniques. The two selected institutions, where this phase of study was conducted, are exemplars of these two kinds.

4.3.2 Plan and organisation of the visit

The visit to the two Chinese jewellery institutions took place in the middle of September 2014. The study involved travelling a long distance from the UK to China, and the duration of the whole trip was limited to two and half weeks as the Phase 3 study (see Section 4.4) was due to commence in the middle of October 2014. Therefore, in order to minimise any risks that may cause the withdrawal of the study, I started to plan the visit two months before the actual travelling date.

One of the advantages of selecting these two institutions was that I had relatively easy access to them. As a BA jewellery graduate from GIC, I had been in contact with the institution since 2001, and thus a good relationship with the jewellery course tutors had been maintained. Additionally, I knew one of the MA JSRP graduates very well and they were in fact one of the jewellery course tutors in CAFA; a communication was therefore built through him between the programme leader and myself. By these means, I was able to make contact with the jewellery programme leaders in these two institutions via email, in which I explained the aims of the visit and sought their approval and support for the research study. I was granted permission for the visit for research purposes by both of them within a week of the request being sent. A further request was then sent to ask for

their support to identify and approach participants on my behalf. The resulting sample is drawn accordingly from those informants who were available on the days that I was undertook the study.

According to the aims of this study (see Section 4.3.1), multiple approaches were adopted throughout the visit, including: a group seminar with student informants; interviews with course tutors and student informants; and observing learning and teaching practices in the classroom. Similar to what had taken place in the previous phase of study in the UK (see Section 4.2.1), a process of informing participants of the purpose of the study and obtaining their consent proceeded the study's formal commencement. The strategy of sampling was also applied through the group seminar in order to ensure that the richest and most credible information (Li et al., 2014) would be acquired in the individual interviews. Taking into consideration that the level of English proficiency might vary between different participants, and in order to obtain adequate information for this study, all research activities were conducted in Mandarin and data was translated and transcribed into English afterwards.

4.3.3   Participants

The sample for this study consisted of UG students and teaching staff across the two institutions. It was made up of 45 students in the group seminar session, and 25 students and three teaching staff in the follow-up individual interview sessions.

The construction of the participant sample is presented below in Table 4.3.

Participant	Type code	Count	Year of the study
Students	Student participants from GIC (GSP)	25	Second year (11) Third year (10) Final year (4)
	Student participants from jewellery department, CAFA (CSP)	20	Second year (7) Third year (6) Final year (7)
Teaching staffs	Teaching staff from GIC (GT)	2	
	Teaching staff from jewellery department, CAFA (CT)	1	

Table 4.3 Breakdown of sample 3

4.3.4 Reflections and initial interpretation of findings

As already mentioned, this phase of study was concerned with how students' learning takes place in the context of Chinese educational traditions, and how their learning experiences in this context might potentially further impact on their overseas learning. The study focuses on the two groups of informants – students and teaching staff – in order to holistically discover and compare these stakeholders' views on their educational experiences. Drawn from these views, the research findings are presented and interpreted through the following themes:

Theme 1: The general experience of undertaking UG study
Theme 2: The learning and teaching experiences of undertaking the BA jewellery course
Theme 3: Perspectives on learning skills
Theme 4: Motivations and expectations for studying abroad

Theme 1: The general experience of undertaking UG study

According to Leask (2005), students entering into HE may encounter many issues in relation to personal, sociocultural and educational aspects (see Section 4.2.3, Theme 3). Through the investigation of the student participants' general experiences of undertaking UG study, it could provide an overview of how Chinese HE traditions are reflected by these experiences. In addition, it may be possible to draw more specific issues from these experiences to guide further investigations.

The findings drawn from GIC reveal that many participants perceived that there were contradictions between the realities of their university study and their prior study expectations. One of the concerns communicated was that the participants had to spend most of their time in Year 1 studying courses that had no relationship to their core subject. For example, courses such as: Principles of Marxism, Morality Education and Fundamentals of Law, Computer High-level Language, and Military Theory. However, as the aims of undertaking these courses were not well explained to the students, they were therefore questioned by many of the participants, who tended to argue that study on these courses was unrelated to their subject. For example:

GSP:

> "It's not exactly the same as I imagined. I supposed that the course I was studying should be all about how to design and make jewellery. However, I spent my first year studying the so called 'liberal education courses', which were nothing about jewellery. I can't see anything that is useful in these courses; even I am going to graduate now."

Another area, that also tended to concern the participants, was the level of flexibly that the jewellery programme provided. As one of the GSP's stated:

> "I supposed that there might be more freedom to study in the university. The teacher would not treat us like a child as when we were in high school. And I also think that I should have opportunities to decide what I would like to do, especially for studying on a design course. However, the reality is not the same as what I expected. Our ideas are strictly controlled by many rules and requirements given by teachers. An A&D course should not be like this."

A picture emerges from the above evidence – that the jewellery course running in GIC was teacher-centred, whereby the provision of creative space for the students was lacking. This is also perceived in the latter section (see Section 4.3.4 Theme 4) as one of the factors that drives some of the GSPs' motivation to study abroad, as they are not satisfied by their current learning environment and are seeking one with greater flexibility. Notably, it is perceived through the Phase 1 study that one of the challenges that Chinese MA SoJ participants struggle with in the UK is the self-directed mode of study on the MA JSRP course. Here, there seems to be a mismatch between the GICs and GSPs' motivations to study abroad - their expectations of it allowing them more freedom, flexibility and independence, and the actual experiences reported by the MA SoJ when they enter their MA study in the UK. It seems that although the BA students studying in China have a sense of the creative space that studying abroad can give them, once they actually encounter this space, they feel that they are not equipped for it. Thus, they are often troubled by the creative space they had imagined and had been on of their main motivations for studying abroad. This question will be discussed later (see Section 4.3.4 Theme 4). However, experiences reported by the student participants from CAFA tend to present different educational strategies that operated within this institution.

Many CSPs reported that they had encountered a similar situation to the GSP informants, in that they also had experienced flexibility through their 'liberal education courses'. This is because the first year of their BA study is normally an opportunity for the students to explore their subject interests; they are given time to observe and experience different ways of learning and teaching across various A&D disciplines before deciding to study a particular subject.

In addition, based on the observation of the learning environment and interview findings, CAFA is also perceived as being advantageous in terms of its educational resources. As an HE institution specialised in A&D education, it includes a jewellery department, which focuses on facilitating students' innovative abilities. This learning environment is not only perceived to encourage an open, flexible interaction amongst students and teaching staffs, but also the learning opportunities enable students to have a great deal of exposure to different learning resources worldwide, thus widening students' views of the jewellery world, as conveyed by one of the CSP's:

> *"There are many jewellery exhibitions organised by teachers or current students. I was fascinated with these works so much. I hope I could also have this magic one*

day.”

The general learning experiences presented by the participants from these two institutions reflects two different educational strategies as to how the BA jewellery course should be taught. With this in mind, therefore, it was necessary to undertake an in-depth investigation to ascertain to what extent the experiences of learning on the BA jewellery courses of these two institutions differ from each other, and how these experiences impact on the participants' understanding of the notion of jewellery.

Theme 2: The learning and teaching experiences of undertaking the BA jewellery course

The findings drawn from the in-depth interviews indicate that the pedagogical approaches adopted by these two institutions and applied to their BA jewellery courses are different. These differences, according to the student participants' responses, are presented below:

CSP

> *"There are many forms of learning activities, such as seminars, lectures, group and individual projects, exhibitions, learning trips, through which we are encouraged to explore and practise our design ideas. I really enjoyed with this kind of learning."*

CSP

> *"Apart from the formal learning through this course, the school also provides lots of opportunities for us to engage into many kinds of A&D events across different disciplines. This really broadened our vision and strengthened our design thinking."*

The above indicates that the pedagogical approaches applied to the BA jewellery course at CAFA are to some extent similar to Western approaches, in which students expected their learning to be facilitated by various kinds of learning activities. Whereas, the evidence found in GIC tended to present a contrasting more didactic approach, for example:

GSP

> *"There are many courses taught by teachers through which the interactions between teacher and us have rarely happened."*

GSP

> *"There are also courses focusing on training design and making skills. However, there are not many spaces for us to embed our own ideas into the work. Some teachers even strictly ask us to follow exactly the same as what they intended us to do."*

Throug the above, the teacher-centred and less flexible pedagogical strategy is further perceived in the BA jewellery course at GIC. Thereby, the BA jewellery courses at these two institutions – governed by two different educational strategies – tended to lead their students' understanding of the concept of jewellery education in very different directions.

It is perceived that in CAFA, according to the responses of most of the CSPs, the subject knowledge that they acquired tended to be closer to the contemporary ideas that Western jewellery institutions are concerned with. Through the interview, they showed their familiarity with well-known jewellery institutes in Western countries, along with their favourite jewellery artists in the context of contemporary jewellery, as well as many world leading art galleries that have kept a number of collections of contemporary jewellery works. They indicated that, framed by these learning materials, their own design practices also tended to be largely influenced by contemporary ideas toward jewellery. In the context of such perspectives, innovative ideas are valued and appreciated rather than focus being on using precious materials, the latter being largely acknowledged as a traditional approach to jewellery.

In contrast, the findings drawn from GIC reflect a different focus on knowledge construction in relation to jewellery. According to some of the GSPs' responses:

GSP:

> *"I think jewellery should be made by precious materials, such as silver, gold, and gem stones."*

GSP:

> *"I can accept that jewellery can be made by different materials rather than gold, and I made this kind of jewellery as well. However, at the end of graduation, I have to face the truth that the market will request you to make jewellery by expensive and precious materials."*

Based on the above evidence, it is perceived that the traditional perspectives to jewellery tend to have a strong impact on the learning and teaching practices in this institution. This perception is also verified in an interview with one of the GIC teaching staff, who explains that this situation is determined by the industry-oriented nature of the course. She indicates that:

> *"Our institution has a strong connection with the Chinese jewellery industry. So, we understand very clearly what the industry needs are. The contemporary ideas to the jewellery education might be popular in the Western countries; however, these ideas do not suit the current need of the Chinese market. As teaching staff, we have responsibilities to ensure our students can meet these needs in order to find a job after leaving the school."*

However, different voices were also captured. For example, one of the GSPs argues that:

> *"Why does jewellery have to be made by precious metals? If possible, I would like to try different materials as often as possible I can."*

Another GSP also expresses a different attitude to the concept of jewellery, proposing that the monetary value of jewellery can be the result of design ideas rather than that of the materials used:

> *"Jewellery could be not expensive, in terms of the materials. But, it could be much more expensive, in terms of design ideas."*

It is also perceived that even when the educational strategy is driven by traditional perspectives to jewellery, some of the teaching staff mentioned by the participants were more open-minded and embraced different attitudes toward their teaching practices. For example:

GSP:
> *"Some of teachers tend to be different in teaching styles. We can have much more freedom in their classes. They encouraged us to develop our own ideas without being limited by those traditional rules in designing a jewellery work."*

This different attitude toward jewellery education is also perceived through the observation

of the teaching practice of a member of staff with his class. The observation record is presented as a diary entry, as follows:

This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry
Date of diary entry: 16th Sep. 2014
It was an engraving workshop. The course was taking place at a fully functioning jewellery studio. At the beginning of the course, the tutor started giving students a demonstration of how to hand engrave a pattern on a piece of metal by applying three basic engraving skills. Then, students were asked to practise with those skills by creating an object. There were no strict rules required, for example what kind of style of the work had to be. However, students were encouraged to think how the work could be made and which engraving skills could be integrated with other making skills that they have learnt before.

By interviewing this course tutor, his attitude on jewellery education is further explained as follows:

> *"Designing jewellery should be something about creativity. Apart from making skills, the most important thing about teaching this course should be facilitating students' creativities, encouraging students to think differently and try something new. A course tutor should play a role as a guide rather than a commander. I can give students some support when they feel confused. However, they have to learn how to make their own decisions."*

However, he also indicates that:

> *"There is a reality that if the students only know how to be as creative as an artist when leaving school, it is hard for them to find a job. I feel that I am responsible for teaching them the skills in order to find a job and to make a living."*

The above evidence reveals that even though different learning and teaching attitudes exist, either the teaching staff or the student participants are still governed by the overall learning objectives of the programme, in that the skills and knowledge obtained by students will be used to serve the industry's needs. Therefore, most of the informants are obliged to

compromise on this fact.

It is worth noting that the different findings emerging through the study may generally indicate that educational strategies can impact on students' perspectives of subjects, which therefore may further impact upon their beliefs in relation to subject learning. In comparison to the findings drawn from these two institutions, it seems that the educational strategy operating at CAFA should better support their students, who have intentions of overseas study, transition and adaptation into the Western learning environment. However, considering the learning concerns perceived in the Phase 1 study, international participants cannot be seen as a homogeneous group in which they all perceive those concerns as obstacles. However, most of the participants' learning experiences are perceived to be, in different ways and to different degrees, influenced by those concerns. This means that even though students may have been educated through a Westernised pedagogical style before entering their UK Master's course, their prior experiences may not create sufficient conditions to enable all of them to overcome their transitional study challenges; there might be other factors which could also be important influences on their UK Master's learning experience.

Theme 3: Perspectives to learning skills

Bringing forward the concerns raised at the end of the last section, a further investigation focused on participants' perspectives of what learning skills are perceived as essential for studying the BA jewellery course.

Before the commencement of the interview, the self-evaluation form, which was applied in Phase 1 (see Section 4.2.3 Theme 3), was given to the participants but with a different purpose. In this phase, the form was applied as a learning skills survey. The data collected by surveying the participants from two institutions is presented in the following bar charts (see Chart 4.2 and Chart 4.3). These two charts convey details of those participants who selected three out of ten learning skills listed on the form, based on what they perceived as the most important to their study. The number in each bar represents the combined number of those who made these selections.
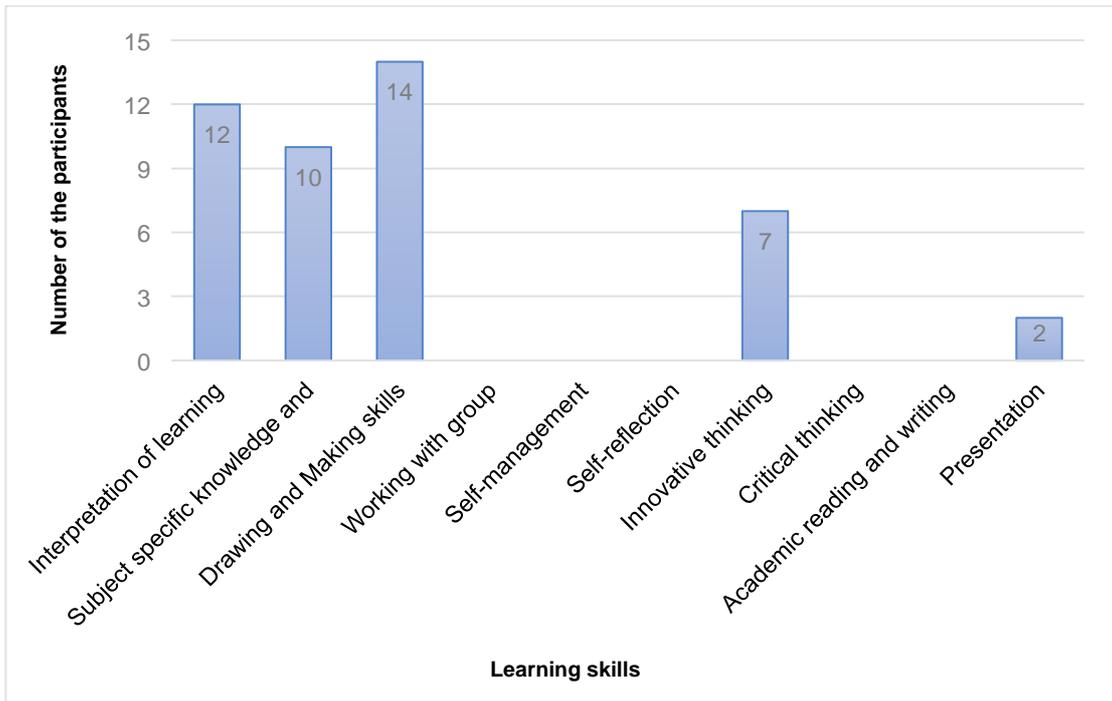
Chart 4.2 Participants' perspectives to the level of importance of learning skills (GIC)
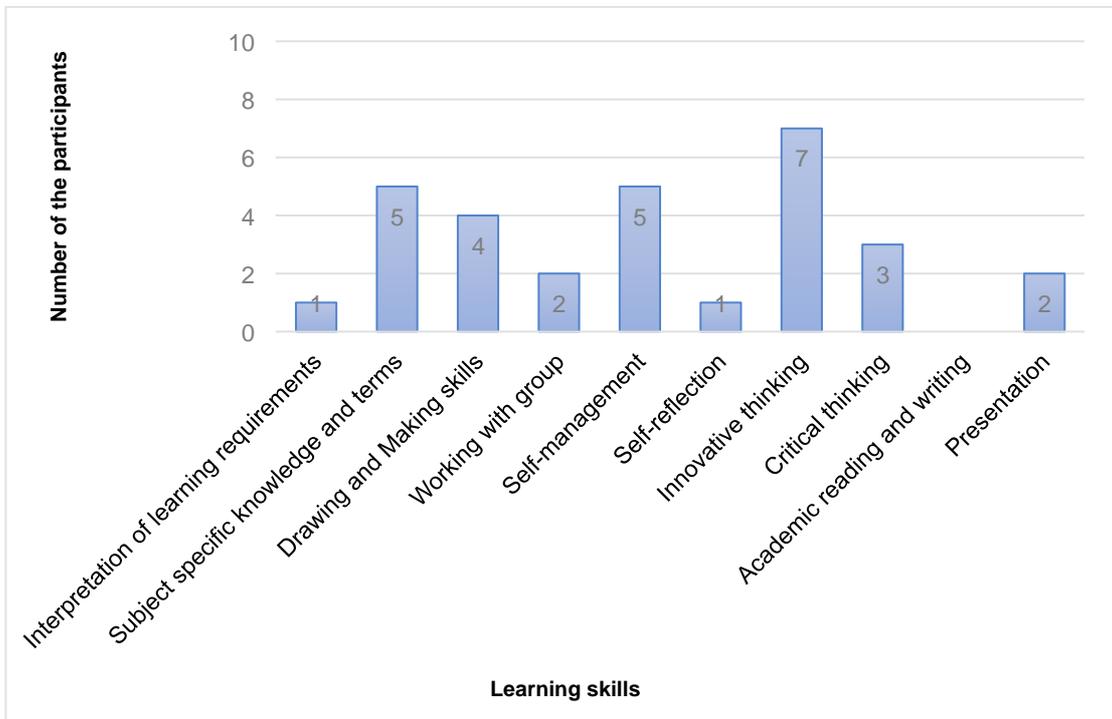
Chart 4.3 Participants' perspectives to the level of importance of learning skills (CAFA)

Data shown in the above charts indicates that the focus of the participants from the two institutions, regarding the most important learning skills to be acquired, was different. For example, the 'interpretation of learning requirements' and the 'drawing and making skills' were seen by most GSPs as two of most essential skills to be obtained, while these were of much less concern to the CSPs. According to one GTs' explanation, the result is not hard to understand – she indicates that in order to meet the industry's needs, over 50% of the BA jewellery courses' curricula are designed to focus on drawing and making skills. In addition, there is a requirement for the final year students to have met the target of '800 Pieces of Jewellery Design in Drawing' before leaving the school. To finish this task is seen as essential evidence by which one can prove his/her abilities in designing jewellery to the employer. However, a member of teaching staff from the jewellery department at CAFA expresses a different view towards the learning skills that are required for the subject study. He considers that:

> *"The jewellery department belongs to part of the School of Design, the school are very clearly aimed on educating our students to be innovative and creative. The BA Jewellery course also aims at this. We look to seeing our students to be independent, and to be able to bring the change to the current Chinese jewellery market, rather than to follow its steps."*

This evidence further supports the previous findings; that the impact of educational strategies operated by different institutions can result in divergent learning beliefs. Meanwhile, there is another more important finding related to the concerns raised at the end of the last section – that is, looking at the data presented in Charts 4.2 and 4.3, there are five skills which are shown to be of little concern by both institutions' participants. These skills include 'working with a group', 'self-reflection', 'critical thinking', 'academic reading and writing' and 'presentation'. Compared to the findings of perceived learning difficulties in the Phase 1 study (see Section 4.2.3 Theme 3), the data presented in Chart 4.1 indicates that international participants perceived particular difficulties in relation to these learning skills. In addition, however, the aspect of 'subject specific knowledge and terms' is seen to be given relatively higher consideration by both institutions' participants. Considering that it has also been perceived as one of the compelling obstacles to the international participants in Phase 1, it can be thus assumed that the subject knowledge and academic terms taught in these two institutions may not match those emphasised in the context of UK jewellery education. Further evidence is also provided by the member of teaching staff at CAFA, who graduated from BA jewellery course at CAFA, and then

obtained his Master's degree from the MA JSRP course at SoJ BCU. He introduced his learning experiences as follows:

> "CAFA was a great platform to bring me into the contemporary jewellery world. I was very successful on my BA study. My graduate work has even been selected to be exhibited in European countries. This gave me a very strong confidence to undertake the MA study in the UK, and I assumed that the MA JSRP course should be very easy for me. However, the one-year MA study totally changed my mind. I was struggling on this course that was just the same as the other Chinese students. However, the good thing that I learnt from CAFA is that it gave me the courage to challenge new things. So, I adapted myself to the new learning environment faster than many other international students. And finally, I succeeded and the course brought me into another level of understanding of learning this subject."

These factors could therefore help to better understand some of the important foundations that form the students' learning experiences: that is, a Westernised pedagogical strategy can have a positive impact on students' learning beliefs and this may increase their adaptability to the UK Master's study. However,, considering the higher level of learning requirements for the UK Master's course, without adequate preparation of learning skills, Chinese students' transition to such a learning environment can still be challenging, in the sense of the concerns and difficulties that have been discussed.

Theme 4: Motivations and expectations for studying abroad

As all the student participants selected had intentions to study abroad, their motivations and expectations to overseas learning were therefore investigated through the interviews. The findings indicate two main factors that impacted upon participants' motivations for studying abroad. One factor is that participants tended to be self-motivated in their decision-making. As one of the GSPs expresses:

> "I like to make jewellery and very much enjoy the process of creating things. However, I don't like study in this institution where there are many rules to limit my imagination. I would like to go outside to see something new, something I haven't experienced before."

Apart from the self-motivational reasons as shown above, the findings also indicate that

these participants were more confident about their overseas learning. For example:

CSP:

> *"I don't think there will be anything difficult in studying jewellery Master course in the UK. I have enough confidence to overcome any problems during the UK study, I have been well prepared."*

GSP:

> *"I have proved myself as a good student in my BA study. I think I should have same ability to prove that I can learn well when studying in the UK."*

It is perceived that many of the participants have such confidence in their overseas learning because they have performed well in their BA studies in China; particularly the CAFA participants, who tended to believe that the learning experience in CAFA provided them with strong academic competencies, which they believed were good enough to overcome any challenges when studying at Master's level abroad.

Undeniably, this positive attitude is necessary and can be seen as a positive quality for adaptation to a new learning environment. However, according to the previous findings, it can also be seen as a danger where a student is overly confident in his/her abilities but without sufficient awareness of the differences between the learning experiences of the two different learning traditions. This over confidence may lead to unexpected challenges.

If the above factor of participants' motivations for studying abroad is seen as coming from within the participants themselves, other factors can be attributed to external influences. Some of the students' decisions for studying abroad are due to unsatisfactory working conditions in the Chinese jewellery industry, for example:

GSP:

> *"Many graduates from this course are working in the jewellery companies, in which drawing becomes everyday job. I don't like it. It's so boring. However, apart from being one of them, I don't know if there is any other job that I can do. If I undertake another year studying abroad, then I, at least, don't have to worry about finding a job at the moment."*

Some of the students' decisions are influenced by their parents. For example:

GSP:

>*"My parents made this decision for me. In their opinion, the educational and cultural capitals that I obtained through the abroad learning will provide me with strong competencies for finding a good job in the future."*

Due to the above reasons, participants' decisions with regards to their learning destinations are likely to be determined by the suggestions of educational agents or their institutions.

GSP:

>*"The school provides the opportunity for studying abroad through applying the 2+2 UG programme. However, the programme only allows us to choose between the two UK institutions."*

GSP:

>*"I have no idea where to go and what to learn. But the educational agent tells me if I choose the same subject as what I've learnt in the BA, it will be easier to pass the application… The UK, which was suggested by the agent, is one of the most popular countries to study jewellery."*

Compared to the first cohort of participants, this group is perceived to be less intent on controlling their own decisions for studying abroad – either with regard to a subject of study or where to study. It is therefore further perceived that they have an even lower awareness of the challenges that they may encounter upon entering overseas Master's study.

In addition, the findings also reveal that – as in the Phase 1 study (see Section 4.2.3 Theme 1) – it is likely that the participants obtained only limited information about the destination institutions and the programmes on offer. Therefore, the majority of participants who decided to study in the UK, regardless of their motivations, tended to be less aware of the particular requirements of studying at Master's level in the UK. Another issue reported by some of the participants was that introductory materials for the Master's programmes were sometimes provided by the UK institutions. Hence, due to the lack of English language proficiency and the differences in educational traditions, the participants often found it difficult to fully understand the information provided. As one of the participants stated:

"I did read the information documents they provided to us. However, I guess it is probably because my English is not good enough, while many terms used in these documents made me feel it was hard to understand."

It is further perceived that the tendency towards an imprecise understanding of the nature of UK Master's courses could cause a deviation to the participants' expectations of what they are going to learn in the UK. For example:

"Although I can't fully understand the information provided by them (UK Master's programmes). But I think the jewellery institutions in the UK have been established for a long time. They should be more professional in jewellery education than the Chinese. I should be able to learn more advanced making skills there."

The above perspective can thus cause students a twofold dilemma as they may find that neither the UK Master's course meets their learning expectations, nor that their preparations are sufficient to support their adaptation to the course. Reflecting upon the question raised in Section 4.3.4 Theme 1, the findings in this section may be able to provide an answer: that some participants believed that the learning environment in the UK might enable them to be as independent as they expected, while, in reality, they may misunderstand the actual concept, methods and approaches of self-directed learning as practiced in the UK HE. As one of the main learning objectives, self-directed learning at Master's level in the UK tends to be one of the most important learning skills and must be developed by students to ensure success. However, as discussed in the previous section, many participants appeared to focus on developing their learning skills in a different direction from that which is required by the UK Master's course. The conflict is thus a result of a lack of awareness of such differences, as well as insufficient learning skills.

4.3.5 Summary

In summary, the visit to two Chinese jewellery institutions provided an insight into Chinese students' learning experiences before they entered the UK. Firstly, it is worth noting that this phase of study reflects the complex situations that exist in current Chinese jewellery education. The findings indicate that students' learning experiences in China and their motivations for studying abroad are influenced by many aspects. Through this study, the perceived aspects influencing students' learning experiences include: educational strategies operated at institutional level; teaching approaches applied by course tutors; and

the needs of the jewellery industry. Additionally, the perceived aspects influencing students' motivations for studying abroad include: the self-motivation of the students themselves; the general learning and employment environment; and the influences of the institutions, and parents and agents. These aspects further reflect the nature of the diversities among Chinese students, and they therefore prove that the generalised perspective of Chinese students as a homogeneous group (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3.2) is inadequate as well as unhelpful for developing and communicating better understandings of this complex situation.

On the other hand, by comparing the research findings drawn from the two institutions, it is also significant that as a result of the impacts of the educational strategies operating in different institutions, students' subject perspectives and their learning beliefs could also be different. It is perceived that a Westernised pedagogical strategy, such as that being adopted by CAFA, to some extent has a positive impact on students' overseas learning, which might add to students' confidence in adapting to UK Master's study. Through deeper investigation, aspects relating to participants' perspectives on learning skills are perceived as one of the most important and impactful factors relating to Chinese students' adaptation to UK Master's study. The findings indicate that certain learning skills are given little attention by the participants from both institutions, while most of these skills are perceived by the international participants in the Phase 1 study as difficult skills to understand fully and adapt to. Based on this finding, it is realised that apart from being familiar with the Westernised pedagogical style before entering the UK Master's course, it is also necessary to be equipped with a range of preparatory learning skills in order to meet the learning requirements in the context of UK A&D HE.

In addition, the investigation of the participants' motivations and expectations for studying abroad tends to reflect similar findings as those found in Phase 1 – the inexplicit understanding of the nature of the UK Master's course was frequently reported by the participants. Also observed was a tendency that deviations may be caused by this fact, in that the reality of studying on a UK Master's course might differ significantly from what participants expected. This, together with the lack of certain learning skills, means that Chinese students may face a significant dilemma in their UK study – that they might perceive that neither can the UK Master's course meet their learning expectations, nor are their preparations sufficient to support their adaptation to the course.

4.4   Summary of reflections and initial findings from the Scoping Exercises as a whole

In summary to this stage of empirical study as a whole, this chapter presents the research practice that has taken place under the guidance of the study's first four research questions. By investigating the Chinese students' educational experiences, motivations and expectations, the study aims to obtain knowledge and develop an in-depth understanding of the nature of the study challenges they encounter when entering UK jewellery Master's studies, with particular regard to difficulties in adapting to and acquiring certain skills, and language- and communication-based obstacles to learning.

As discussed in the Introduction, on pages 9 and 10, the cross-cultural position of the researcher allows the study to developmentally examine a range of beliefs and perspectives toward data collection. Multiple approaches were applied, such as group discussions, individual interviews and observations in order to ensure the quality and credibility of the study.

By undertaking the Phase 1 and Phase 2 studies, the researcher identifies that the challenges encountered by Chinese students in their UK Master's study are to a large extent, associated with five aspects. These are:

      i) Subject perspectives and associated learning beliefs
      ii) The motivations and decision-making for studying in the UK
      iii) The learning expectations towards UK Master's study
      iv) The learning skills acquired before entering UK study
      v) English language proficiency

The findings drawn from the investigation of the above aspects generally reflect that Chinese students lack awareness of the differences in educational traditions, which broadly exist between the two countries in question. This impacts adversely upon their preparation for undertaking Master's study in the UK. That is, their preparation is perceived as insufficient.

Additionally, through the in-depth investigations into Chinese students' learning experiences prior to studying in the UK, it can be seen that being educated in accordance with a Westernised pedagogical strategy has a positive impact on students' confidence

when adapting to the UK Master's study. It is also perceived that there is a weakness in the training of learning skills, with the result that many Chinese students tend to find themselves less capable of meeting the learning requirements for studying at Master's level in the UK, and this can be particularly problematic and concerning for the students during their early transition and adaptation to study in the UK.

Therefore, the scope of the study after this stage of research practice is further determined: by identifying the weaknesses of Chinese students in relation to the learning skills which are required for Master's study, the research aims to further explore the pedagogical approaches that have been applied in UK A&D HE, and to answer the research question:

> What provisions have been made in the UK A&D/jewellery school system to support Chinese / international PGT students in accommodating and adapting to learning in the UK HE context?

And to question:

> the extent to which adaptation methods and techniques in the UK HE jewellery sector adequate and effective

By answering the above questions, the study aims to further develop a range of interventions that can support and improve Chinese / international students' learning experiences associated with their transition from China to the UK.

Chapter 5   Learning Enhancement Programme

5.1   Introduction to the Learning Enhancement Programme

This empirical study was conducted through a Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP), comprising three distinct phases. This chapter explains and discusses the structure, aims and objectives, and development of this programme. The findings from each phase of the programme are then analysed, reflected upon and summarised. The chapter concludes by bringing together the most important findings as a basis for the following chapter, which goes more deeply into interpreting the findings and validity in answering the research questions and proposing actions for future work in this area.

5.1.1   The structure of the LEP

The programme commenced in November 2016. Phases 1 and 2 were conducted in the UK at the School of Jewellery (SoJ) at Birmingham City University (BCU) and Phase 3 took place at the Gemmological Institute of China University of Geosciences (GIC) in Wuhan, China. Each of the three phases comprised experimental interventions (EI); these consisted of practical workshops, which were grouped together according to theme-based activities.

5.1.2   The relationship of the LEP to the SoJ's Master's Jewellery, Silversmithing and Related Products degree curriculum

The programme operated alongside the Master's curriculum as an optional programme of additional learning support. Its design, development, structure and day-to-day organisation were planned through consultation and coordination with the Head of the SoJ and the Master's course tutors.

5.1.3   The aim of the LEP

The aim of the programme was to develop and test workable pedagogical strategies, methods and approaches for enhancing the learning experiences of Chinese students, particularly during the early transitional stage of their study in the United Kingdom (UK) – in the context of the discipline of jewellery within the UK Higher Education (HE) system.

5.1.4 The methods, approaches and objectives of the LEP

The methods and approaches of the programme were informed by the findings of the scoping exercise, as identified in the previous chapter. These were then tested and adjusted throughout the three phases of the programme. With the study's focus on the early stage of Master's study, the programme explored ways of supporting the students toward developing the confidence, skills and knowledge needed to learn effectively and successfully in their new environment.

Phase 1 of the programme focused on the piloting of experimental learning interventions and an initial analysis of their results. Informed by the expert interviews, as mentioned in the Research Methodology (see Chapter 3, Section 3.8), this provided the researcher with the first opportunity to observe student responses to the methods and approaches of the interventions, and to begin to identify what was missing or what could be improved. Based on initial analysis and instant reflections upon the Phase 1 data, the second phase enabled adjustments to be made. These included moving methods and techniques that were intended to be tested in Phase 1 to the second phase, and revising plans so as to give more attention to student engagement. This latter adjustment introduced a game-based approach, with the aim of testing the hypothesis that the concept of gamification – 'the use of game elements in non-game contexts' –might result in motivating engagement (Sailer et al., 2013, p.30). The third phase changed towards exploring how to support more 'abstract' dimensions of knowledge ('procedural' and 'metacognitive'), and in particular, critical thinking (Bloom, et al, 1956). This included comparing concepts of critical thinking between student learning contexts in the UK and China. The combination of all three phases facilitated an initial analysis of the extent to which the EIs could be specific to the discipline of jewellery and/or transferable across different university disciplines. The interpretation of the findings of this analysis is discussed in Chapter 6.

Through reference to Bloom, et al.'s (1956) 'The Taxonomy of educational objectives', the overall design of the programme aimed to develop practical learning tasks, learning engagement ability and finally conceptual translation and negotiation skills. In this way, the first phase centred on building student confidence in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to integrate into their new environment and adapt to different learning and teaching practices – for example, knowledge of discipline-specific terminology and UK HE learning and teaching concepts and practices. The second phase experimented with ways of encouraging engagement and improving self-reflection skills. As mentioned above, the

third phase changed significantly, moving from practical knowledge linked to integration and adaptation toward creative thinking (or cognitive skills). Specifically, this phase, through focusing on (or prioritising) conceptual and negotiation skills, considered the journey of the Chinese student, not only with respect to moving from China to study in the UK but also to graduating from the UK with a Master's degree to live, study or work back 'home' in China and/or other parts of the world.

5.2   LEP: Phase 1

The EI of Phase 1 specifically centred on supporting the participants' communication skills, learning methods and approaches, and subject specific concepts and practices. The following fictional conversations, which are constructed by the researcher from a range of sources, are intentionally open to different interpretations.

> There's just no evidence that the UK's teaching approach is any better than the Chinese approach; is there?
>
> Surely the UK's educational culture isn't the same as the Chinese educational culture, so is there any point in talking about generic principles?
>
> What's the point of a Chinese student judging their success of learning in the UK? Won't they just judge their success on their degree award or module credits?

The assumptions conveyed through these questions may be challenged, but here they are used to highlight how perceptions can become influential in everyday routines and experiences. This can be the case when universities reflect certain 'mainstream' values and paradigms, such as in the UK, where student-centred and independent learning are highly emphasised.

In the paper 'Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work', Eraut (2000) proposes that 'two parallel definitions of knowledge' can be used in learning contexts. Although this paper focuses on 'professional education and learning in the workplace', the author's descriptions are useful to this study.

Eraut's (2000, p.113) first definition of knowledge is as follows:

> *Codified knowledge, also referred to as public knowledge or propositional knowledge, is (1) subject to quality control by editors, peer review and debate and (2) given status by incorporation into educational programmes,examinations and courses.*

By comparison, Eraut's (2000, p.114) second, parallel definition is 'personal knowledge', which is 'the cognitive resource which a person brings to a situation that enables them to think and perform.' He summarises these definitions, by proposing that ''codified knowledge' is identified by its source and epistemological status' and 'personal knowledge', which 'may be either explicit or tacit', is identified 'by the context and manner of its use' (Ibid).

For the purpose of this study, Eraut's view that personal forms of knowledge 'may be either explicit or tacit' suggests that educational routines and experiences, in practice, can sometimes be unquestioned. For example, a tutor who may assume that a key concept, such as critical thinking, is understood in the same way by all students in a group and that its meaning is unambiguous, may also consider that there is no need to explain how the students can apply the concept to their work. For a Chinese student, who may bring a different understanding and interpretation to this concept, acquiring knowledge of how to apply it to her/his work would be problematic. In a similar way, as discussed in Chapter 2 (page 15), the Master's Jewellery, Silversmithing and Related Products (JSRP) course is an intensive practice-based discipline, and it therefore necessarily engages with subject-specific tacit knowledge. Thus, it is argued that enhancing Chinese students' learning requires methods and approaches through which the students can engage with tacit knowledge (through working in the SoJ studios and workshops) together with practices, which enable translations and interpretations of key concepts, such as critical thinking, to be explored and applied, by the students to their work.

This Phase 1 EI engaged the participants in some of the unquestioned concepts and methods of teaching and learning practices, specifically in the context of Master's level jewellery education in the UK. The experiment addressed how the interventions could help the participants to begin to engage with some of the unquestioned aspects of their study.

5.2.1   Planning and the organisation of the workshops

These experimental workshops took place in early November 2016, with first interactions with the 2016/17 Master's JSRP cohort. In the first week, the workshop was preceded by interview of 24 students, to gauge their perceptions of learning on the Master's course; followed by an introduction to this experimental module aimed at encouraging students' participation. By means of voluntary participation, this module successfully recruited 22 Chinese students. All the participants were asked to sign a consent form which included information relating to the purpose of this study and confirmation of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

By understanding participants' learning experiences on the Master's course, this module focused on supporting students to acquire learning skills and knowledge, which could help them better cope with the concerns and issues that they raised during the interview. These concerns and issues mainly focused on four aspects: being less effectively self-engaged; struggling with idea generation and the notion of design development; confusion of what critical thinking or reflection is and how to apply it through practice; and difficulties in articulating and communicating the actual thought towards their learning practice. Based on the above, five workshops were designed; each workshop, followed by a one-day tutorial, aimed to encourage the interactions amongst the learning elements in order to enhance the efficiency of the pedagogical practice. Whilst, following the dynamic of the teaching and learning process, it further aimed to answer the questions of 'how problems are located, how a situation can be changed, what norms are given priority and what possibilities are offered' (Swann, 2002, p.50).

The workshops continued from December 2016 to February 2017. In parallel, seven academic experts from different art and design disciplines across the Faculty of Art, Design and Media (ADM) in BCU were interviewed through this period. These interviews identified and classified the differences and similarities of Chinese postgraduate students' transition issues between jewellery and other art and design (A&D) courses; this gave an opportunity to consider a solution from a broader academic context. Finally, by looking at the outcomes and the feedback from participants, I was able to complement ideas and principles of learning for the second phase of the experiment.

5.2.2 The brief for the Phase 1 workshops

This phase consisted of five workshops and tutorials. The brief for the activities conducted in each workshop are presented in Appendix 7. Each workshop was accomplished over a period of two weeks, with a half-day workshop in the first week, followed by one day of tutorials in the second week. The themes of first four workshops were designed according to the previously mentioned aspects: communication skills, learning skills and approaches, and subject specific concepts and practices. These rehearsed a summary in preparation for design and planning for the final workshop.

It is important to recognise that although the workshops intended to develop pedagogical approaches with the aim of effectively supporting a group of Chinese students, this did not imply that the approaches oversimplified or overgeneralised groups of people (Rothstein-Fisch, 2003, p.5). There will always be diversity within the group of participants, as Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch and Greenfield (2000) indicate – that no society can be attributed to one thing or another, although it is very hard to get all the participants to fit neatly into one 'conceptual scheme' (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000) because their personal experiences vary and are too complex. Thus, the tutorials were designed to take care of the individual need of the participants. Through one-to-one tutorials, there was the opportunity to further take into account individual's concerns, and to more purposefully reinforce the knowledge and skills of learning they they may need.

English was used as the main language throughout the workshops, however, in some cases, Mandarin was also used for purposes of clarification and to encourage discussion, particularly when dealing with complex ideas.

5.2.3 Initial analysis and reflections on Phase 1 of the LEP

This section presents reflections on this phase of the EI, based on five aspects, which include: the participants' attendance; engagement; learning styles and abilities; teaching approaches; and participants' feedback. The findings of the academic expert interviews are integrated into these reflections in order to consider how the interview findings support the development of this intervention programme.

5.2.3.1 Reflections on attendance

I presented photographs that were taken before the start of the first workshop in order to draw the participants' attention to the fact that none of them actually arrived at SoJ on time to attend the workshop. By using this example, I was trying to make the sense of time management visible to them, and make them aware of how time management works in their daily life, even down to a simple detail such as being punctual. However, the issue of attendance was only an issue in my workshop, it is revealed that it is a common issue frequently found in the Chinese group across different A&D courses.

Expert B (B), who is an English Language specialist, has been teaching 'English for Foreign Language and English for Academic Specific Purposes in Higher Education' for over 15 years. She has been employed as an English Language specialist tutor for the design-specific programmes, to support the international students across different disciplines at ADM, BCU, since 2012. She described the different situations of attendance that she had observed through her teaching.

> *"I've seen that was happening more with Chinese students in the last three years. There was always the problem with the lateness. My theory on that is that education is very strict in China; they are away from their families and friends; they sleep a lot; they are like teenagers, they struggle with the structure of the organisation; they just completely on their own; and some of them get a little bit off the rails. These are all of the assumptions, I do apologise for it…"*

> *"… what is a little bit disappointing for my role that the reason it works with 'expert S' (S) because she supports the course, she has told the students that it's mandatory and they have to attend. Many other course directors don't tell the students that. At the moment, they know that is not mandatory then they are going to stay in the bed on Friday morning. They will think it's not part of their course, it's additional bit of their course. Then they will just like to see me a week before their submission."*

Expert S (S), mentioned above by B, has been the director of the Master's Interior Design programme at ADM, BCU since 2009. As the programme has been largely internationalised, she is very experienced in teaching international students, especially in

dealing with Chinese students' issues. She gives an explanation of the awkward situation that B described above:

> "… we have outstanding attendance, that's very much an Asian thing I think. And it's also a key thing that because this course is very heavily taught course and inspiring and challenging, and has met with their previous experience in education as well."

These perspectives remind me that the issue of attendance cannot be simply attributed to the learning attitude, it also cannot be viewed separately from Chinese student's prior learning experiences. In which case, it seems that to only teach the knowledge and skills of time management is inadequate to solve such a fundamental problem. To make improvements Chinese students must be prepared to challenge their preconceptions, their pre-determined training and the teaching methods used at their previous academic institutes. And first of all, they must learn how to be an independent adult learner, as B explains:

> "Sometimes I think that Chinese students are mentally not as mature as British students of the same age, because I think British students behave when they're out with friends and they're exposed so much in the city, whereas Chinese students are sometimes a little bit sheltered."

5.2.3.2 Reflections on participants' engagement

Teaching and learning engagement is particularly an issue in the first workshop. A few reasons can be found in the workshop feedback from the participants. Some participants argued that the workshop was less relevant to their current learning focus – they are concentrating on materials exploration and dealing with the design ideas; some others assumed that the workshop could help them to deal with specific problems such as design and making skills or idea generation. Whereas, the focus of practicing skills of time management and self-engagement seems unable to fulfil their expectations. Some participants, for example, say that:

> "The workshop doesn't meet with my expectations. I supposed that the workshop is helping us to deal with our confusions that relate to our MA design project, however, I don't think the making of an action plan any helps."

"I feel a little bit of disappointment for this workshop. I'm not a big fan of the action plan, as we have been told to make an action plan since the start of the MA course. However, I don't think it works for me. Plan is just a plan, it won't be helpful unless I can stick with it."

Such disappointments and dissatisfactions toward the workshop content can reduce the level of their engagement, as it can be seen from the poor-quality action plans produced in the workshop and the lack of attention when I was explaining the importance of the time management. It even reduced some students' willingness to participate in the following sessions, as the number of attendees decreased in the second workshop.

At this point I questioned whether I had made an incorrect prediction of the participants' needs. However, Expert G (G) answered this question. G is currently the Head of the School of Fashion in ADM, BCU. But prior to this he has had over ten years' experience of internationally recruiting students for the University, as well as a great deal of teaching experience across different A&D disciplines in the UK and overseas. He indicates that:

"There is a kind of space between educational systems, which I think international students have that problem of what the expectations would not be the same as the UK's. So, some of them will be quite shocked about the differences in the educational delivery issues of self-direction ideas about how you achieve."

He also points that:

"…the difference between the BA (in China) and the MA (in the UK), is the move from structured instruction to self-direction and interpretive and discursive powers. To some extent that's not being helped by economic pressures on institutions…"

According to G's perspectives, Chinese students may not be well prepared for 'self-direction and ideas about how you achieve'. G also considers that Chinese students may need extra support in certain areas, such as in the workshop or studio environments and by spending time talking with students individually.

The first workshop was designed with the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of self-directed learning, and the decision to use the themes of time management and self-

engagement for the first workshop was based on identifying such skills as essential components of self-directed learning, as proposed by other researchers' studies (Kim and Seong, 2015; Briede, 2016; Khiat, 2017). In addition, weaknesses in relation to time management and self-engagement were reported in the interviews by most of the participants. However, the reality was that the themes chosen for the workshop seemed to be unappreciated by some of the participants.

There is then the question of why did it cause such reactions in the participants? How did they make the judgement of the level of usefulness of the workshop? Some light may be shed on this by some participants' and experts' perspectives.

A typical participant response was that:

> *"Yes, I do feel I am struggling to manage my time. It is because I've been asked so many things to do. For example, making, reading, writing, research, materials exploration, learning new techniques … all those things drained off my energy. However, the most important thing to me is how to get my work done before the deadline and how to pass the module assessment."*

It seems that some of the perceived weakness in their time management has been attributed to external issues, such as the number of learning requirements from their tutors; they saw these as obstructions to passing the assessment.

Expert H (H) is the programme leader of the Master's Luxury Jewellery Management. As an international tutor, who is originally from Netherlands, he has many years' experience teaching in different countries and dealing with students from different origins. He gave his opinion of this situation.

> *"What I perceived that challenges from what I've seen is often that there is a knowledge gap in terms of learning tradition. The way that institutions in the UK teach is a way of learning what they have learnt. But, Chinese students don't automatically respond the same way that the UK or EU students might respond to. …Tutor won't know what Chinese students expected of them as well. So, I think that is a big challenge trying to know what is expected of them (Chinese students) and that set of tasks. That is a big challenge."*

It appears to relate to another factor, that H says that 'as the motivations are different, Chinese students all still want to do well, but they might not engage in the same way'. S, specifically from the angle of A&D education, also mentioned this factor.

> *"I think there is a cultural difference between the way that clearly students have been trained in the university in China and the way that they are trained here. I would say most international organisations, don't necessarily think the same way about design. So, design thinking is quite an interesting area. If we look at the research and activities being done around that, I can't see very many Chinese studies about that, it's not as interested in as British or European community. So, with regard to a lot of the work I am doing and reading on design thinking, I'm seeing that Chinese students are using different approaches, different design methods and to find out about adjustments for a European way, is very challenging. They are frightened of actually failing, whereas the British student knows that failure is golddust."*

So, these viewpoints seem to explain why the participants found that their studies tended neither to focus on specific design issues nor making skills, and perhaps why this led them to be disappointed. Their disappointment could relate to the differences between 'learning traditions', as mentioned by both of the above experts. The teaching of time management skills is not inappropriate in itself, however, it could be the case that the learning objectives and expected learning outcomes were not well informed. This factor, in particular, was reflected in the participants' feedback. It also seems that there is a stage of learning missing prior to that, in which a conceptual interpretation of the UK's academic tradition needs to be explained and discussed in order that a contextualised structure of understanding can be scaffolded in advance.

Such responses of the participants can also be associated to other factors – the teaching style and the teaching pace. These were reflected in their feedback and will be discussed in the later section on reflections on teaching techniques.

5.2.3.3 Reflections on learning behaviours and learning abilities

According to G, pre-Master's A&D courses that have been set up in China, specifically to prepare Chinese undergraduate students for Master's study in the UK, were formulaic and focused on enabling the student to survive their UK MA course.

"… when across China, you started to get pre-master courses or training for portfolio development in a range of cities, these looked at taking Chinese students to sharpen their portfolios and skills, so they can apply for postgraduate course in the West. You know, it seems now these things – I think that they occasionally go wrong. Basically, it was a formula. It was telling people, from A to B, certain methods, where those students can actually survive an MA course?"

It is also perhaps implicit in this view of these pre-Master's courses that they were founded upon the idea that Chinese students' learning is shaped in certain ways that result in their learning abilities being inadequate for A&D study at Master's level in the UK.

Importantly, the majority of the participants had not recognised that their interest in searching for a formula to direct their Master's study could be problematic in the context of UK learning approaches.

Generally, in the workshops, the participants wanted to find 'A to B' methods of solving the problems set by the workshop. For example, some of the participants, when looking at the 'direction game', questioned why the little boy used such complicated instructions to direct the old lady to her destination, rather than a much simpler and efficient route. These participants did not consider that in a real-world learning situation, a starting point of A may be unable to take the learner directly to destination B, or that there may exist alternative possibilities: C or D or E, and that the participants' involvement in the process of how to reach somewhere else, may be an important learning experience.

S suggested that a student's expectation of acquiring a set of knowledge by following a formula, and the anticipation that this knowledge will result in success, is incongruous with the complexity of the world. S also considers that the result of this mismatch between a student's study expectation and a harder to achieve reality can have a disillusioning effect on that student:

"I think people think when they come for [higher] education, they will discover a formula and a set of knowledge, which is required for success. But the truth is that success is much harder to achieve and is not predictable. I think there is a degree of disillusionment that falls on any student group when they want the world to be

simple. However, the world resists simple and a tutor is unable to explain the complexity of the world to the satisfaction of the student."

In summary, it is probable that Master's level learning will be more complex and therefore more difficult than a Chinese student may expect it to be. Not recognising this probability can be one of the important causes of misunderstandings by a Chinese student, for example, with regard to the methods and purposes of the learning and teaching that they encounter when studying for a Master's in the UK. Although the factors that can lead to such gaps between expectations and realities are variable across a group of students, certain key factors are distinct; these have been emphasised by most of the experts and identified by the majority of participants.

Motivations and expectations of learning

The first key factor is differences of motivations and expectations of learning. Although this has already been discussed in the Chapter 4, it deserves further discussion here because this factor has a significant impact on a Chinese student's experience of transition, as they adapt to different learning behaviours and develop their understanding of new learning requirements.

Some of the participants wrote in their feedback that it was difficult for them to find a way to access the Master's learning mode. Although they recognised positive aspects of learning from the workshops – which seemed to be clearly understood by the participants at the time of the workshops – once they were again in the real-world of their Master's learning, the problems they experienced in understanding how to apply their learning to their actual study remained.

G considers that this is a situation that relates to the individual motivations of students, in which factors of ambitions and the psychology and personality of the individual are influential.

G explains that:

"Some students get very focused about their career progress and they know exactly why they are here and what they want to achieve and what they hope to go back to. However, others just think to spend money and time and they will

simply become stars. So, it becomes obvious that it's not just about one bunch students. It's about individuals trying to make sense of why they are here."

G also emphasised another possibility:

"Through a lot of Asia, certainly Chinese Asia, there are strong parental influences on students' choice, with regards to first degree. They may have done a subject that they didn't like. So, they probably would like to try ... to modify their career direction to that course. Yet, sometimes, and not very often, you will find students who were, in a sense, divested by their family from what has much been an appropriate direction – typically, art and design, because art and design was seen as not a good career choice."

G offers a similar viewpoint on motivations:

"If you look at the motivation that drives students, it is not all the same. Sometimes students come to the UK just because they want to be in the UK to spend a few years here, but they don't really want to study; other times they are really passionate about the subject and they are really engaged and just want to learn everything that they care about; other times, maybe just their parents chose the subject for them."

G further indicates that,

"So, the reality is that we have got all these students in one classroom, and we were dealing with a range of issues, which were the tutors, the students and their parents."

Based on the information gathered for this study with regard to learning behaviours and abilities, I believe that there is strong evidence which indicates that one learning and teaching approach could never be completely effective for all students in a group, and that approaching learning and teaching with a group of students, as if they homogeneously fit the description Chinese, is unhelpful; and that by contrast, working as much as possible with students as individuals avoids pre-determined concepts of a group belonging to a certain type of behaviour and ability.

This is addressed by G, who considers that a tutor 'needs to be empathetic to their students' and 'needs to comprehend the student's aesthetic' and how this connects to their backgrounds.

The perspectives discussed above indicate that it is probable that exploring the motivations and expectations of the participants would increase the level of success of the workshops. However, it also seems to be that the efficiency of approaching factors – such as motivations and expectations – directly with the participants, is questionable. Rather than a direct explanatory approach, the findings of the workshops and the views of the experts suggest that in order to effectively bridge understandings of motivations and expectations between the learner and the teacher, a range instruments and interactive ways of using these instruments are required.

Language and Communication

Language is the second key factor that both the participants and the experts thought to be of importance. The perspectives toward language and communication differ; for the teacher, the concern is the frequently poor levels of English language proficiency that the Chinese students come to the UK with.

In order to measure the English language proficiencies in a typical cohort, Expert S conducts an audit of Chinese students' skills from the commencement of their Master's course. S then analyses and interprets this data in relation to possible connections between levels of achievement on the course and language proficiency. S began to identify a direct correlation between the IELTS levels of Chinese students and their final degree results. According to S, for example, this correlation means that if a Chinese student has three of the English language criteria at IELTS 5.5, this would indicate to the teacher that it would be unlikely that the student would pass the modules of the course.

S's concern is that an international student who starts the Master's course with an inadequate level of English language proficiency, as measured by IELTS, will be unable to reach the level of language proficiency quickly enough to study effectively at Master's level (level 7). In S's opinion, the pre-sessional English language courses, which provide additional language learning, 'have been unable to bridge this learning gap'.

> *"Even if we put substantial extra training in place, the learning process and the development skills takes time. The difficulty for the tutors is on day one we are delivering a level 7 programme to students who may have the equivalent of level 5.5 for writing in English. We don't think that the pre-sessional courses have been able to bridge this learning gap."*

Here, the perceived problem is that although pre-sessional courses may improve a student's level of English language application in a general language environment, the student may still be unable to apply their English language skills effectively in relation to the additional complications of the language used in a specific subject. This is especially challenging for an international student studying at Master's level because the course expects the student to be able to communicate their thinking at a high level.

G discusses this difference between non-subject specific and subject specific uses of English language:

> *"The problem with languages is that language is quite complicated. There is one thing, I guess, is to do with language and how things are framed – the way that things are discussed. If you just do conventional English language, then you don't learn how people talk artistically or how people talk pragmatically about a design process."*

This viewpoint reflects the participants' feedback with regard to the difficulties they experience in understanding curriculum content when their tutor uses a lot of subject specific vocabulary. Their feedback also indicates that it is very hard for them to express their ideas using English language in ways that enable their tutor to clearly understand their thinking.

Expert T (T) is the director of one of the postgraduate programmes at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, BCU. She describes difficulty with comprehension when communicating with international students, for whom English is their second language, in terms of either a 'lack of comprehension' or that the students 'are not getting it, or they just don't like it'.

> *"To some extent that may be bound up with lack of comprehension ... in some instances to a kind of lack of comprehension about what you talk about. What you mean by kinds of terms of what subject. I just mean understanding what the*

advice is that we're giving. So, yes, you can try and help a student in a tutorial. But when they then appear not to do that, it seems they don't really care. I suspect it may be that they are not getting it, or they just don't like it maybe?"

G also acknowledges communication difficulties, but describes these in relation to A&D students for whom English is their first language, as well as those for whom English is their second language. G also discusses communication in broader and more nuanced terms and with a specific connection to A&D practice, whereby communication is not just talking.

G's idea of 'what I can refer to':

"With design students, first of all, the student may be talking about things – 'what I can refer to'. Even if your first language is English, it's hard to say what you might mean. So, often when you talk with deign students it's not just this [talking], it's also involving body languages, because there are many kinds of subtleties and sensitivities about things."

G also highlights the importance of finding appropriate illustrations for what you mean, or similarities or metaphors, which people can understand. However, G also considers that it can be difficult in an academic system to explicitly discuss the 'more abstract qualitative nature of creative practice – the more incidental, particular and local kinds ideas and debates'.

In this regard, it is exactly the challenges involved in discussing specific practice-based approaches and abstract ideas within an academic system, where the advantages of the EI stand out. These advantages indicate that their application has the potential to improve the student experience transition from one learning culture and academic system to another. That is, key findings of the workshops indicate that they can enable the participants to tackle the complexities involved in their transition in to a new learning environment. In this regard, one of the workshops was designed to support communication skills. However, this workshop did not focus specifically on improving the participants' academic English language skills and vocabulary, as I recognised that significant language learning requires longer periods of time. By applying G's idea of 'what I can refer to', I therefore designed a range of workshop activities that was intended to enable the participants to practice their communication skills in a range of different ways. These activities concentrated on helping the participants to build their confidence in dealing with different kinds of communication

situations, and helping the participants to decrease their fear of showing their weaknesses in English speaking. The workshops were therefore designed to give the participants a range of communication, translation and negotiation tools.

H commented on the factor of confidence affecting communication, as follows:

> *"Some of it comes down to the confidence on part of the students, and confidence can come from feeling secure in your learning environment. If you don't feel you can communicate adequately, that might make you feel insecure."*

As discussed above, this study proposes that improving the participants' English language proficiency requires longer periods of time than enhancement workshops or similar project-based interventions allow. Through the perspectives of experts and feedback from the workshops, the study has also identified that using the workshops to build the participants' confidence in engaging with their subject offers an alternative direction that has the potential to support the participants' learning. H, for example, suggests that, although 'language is important in engaging effectively with [one's] subject', learning and having an opinion, for bi-lingual students, is not dependent on the use of their second language:

> *"I think knowledge of language is important in engaging effectively with your subject and your field of study. But you are allowed to have an opinion and it doesn't matter what language is used, just giving students an awareness that it's okay to have an opinion."*

H recognises that one of the fundamental learning concepts for students to learn their subject well is to be able to interact with classroom activities and to be proficient in the language of the programme. However, H proposes that the use of one language or another in a learning and teaching situation is less important than the goal of interactions that allow students not only to know how they are learning but to understand and actively practise their learning.

H provides an example:

> *"In a learning and teaching environment, a lot of the time students need to interact orally. So, rather than asking a question, like we might do talking with each other. I might give them time to think about the question and to formulate a response,*

rather than putting them on the sport and looking at my watch – okay, you have ten seconds to get the answer… Instead I design an environment in which they can work individually or in groups to arrive at the solutions or answers, using problem-based learning, which is a preferred method; and formulating their response to the question. In this way, they don't have to worry about – have I got the right words or wrong words? This can and give them confidence. Then gradually, when they are doing this more, their language skills will become better and they will need less time to prepare and will do things individually."

H had used this approach when teaching a group of students in a Chinese university, in Xia Men. He found that even in one week, the students had been able to achieve good results. H argues that 'it's not purely linguistic ... the thing is its maybe just about ideas, the ideas of what learning is.

Similarly, but with a different emphasis, G considers that it is important to inform Chinese students, before commencing a course in the UK, of the learning experiences they can expect.

The difference between these two perspectives may be understood as follows: H suggests that learning and teaching is concerned with ideas and the learning process, suggesting generalisable global education goals; by comparison, G gives emphasis to preparing Chinese students for a learning experience in the UK, with the implication that the they can expect a different experience. Regardless of these perspectives, when it comes down to the core ideas of what learning is or what professional development is in A&D in particular, it often discussed that an important learning expectation and requirement, which for both UK tutors and Chinese students is a significant challenge is critical thinking.

Critical thinking

B's view is that the two main foci of Master's 'level 7 courses ... in Britain are critical thinking and answering the question'. In this regard, according to the experts (see transcripts below) Chinese students come to the UK with a profound lack of critical skills and that this creates a substantial distance between their existing skills and the levels of skills they are expected to apply on their course. Being unequipped with critical skills is perceived as perhaps the most distinct factor, which hinders the Chinese students' studies.

The experts highlight Chinese students' critical thinking as a new and problematic concept for them, one that is a greater than English language proficiency:

G: *"We are talking about level 7. Chinese students, when they arrive, they   have very shallow thinking. For most critical thinking is a new approach."*

S: *"... in my experience, there is no critical thinking going on in these students. I have observed that with Chinese students, being 'critical' is a problem for them."*

B: *"What I've noticed of Chinese students is that there is just lack of across the board of critical thinking. The weaknesses around the critical thinking are so powerful that I had to forget about the language as there was so much to do with the critical thinking."*

H offers a perspective on this specific ability. According to H, the weaknesses attributed to Chinese students with regard to critical thinking 'is not because they cannot do it, they just do not know when they should do it, or they do not necessarily have all the [necessary] tools' He also considers that it does not help to discuss this ability by understanding it under the broad term of critical thinking. Other experts agree with this perspective and offer different dimensions. For example, H highlights relative levels of depth in terms of description of phenomena compared to deeper inquiry or searching for meaning beyond description of those phenomena:

> *"I would see Chinese students getting very fixated on describing things; being able to list things and being able to define things; but not necessarily looking for any deeper implications. Obviously, it bonds up with a lack of awareness of how and why to reference sources and cite sources. Those things they struggle with. I think that's again a part of tradition where they haven't really been required to use this sort of integrative tools to develop deeper thinking."*

B cites different levels of learning requirements between China and the UK education and how this causes a significant gap between the prior learning skills of a Chinese student and what is expected from them on a UK postgraduate course. For B, this gap in levels is very problematic – a one-academic year course (eight months) is too short:

"I mean if you compare that to the national curriculum level, you are not even at level two for primary school. And for me is quite terrifying. I don't blame them, I have a lot of sympathy for them. But how I'm going to get them from here to there in eight months? When whatever I do just doesn't seem to work."

Whilst the above perspective focuses on the need to bridge a gap in ability levels and the difficulty of achieving this within the short duration of the course, G gives attention to the international students' 'landing experience', and how her/his Master's academic and everyday living environments are foreign and how these impact on their learning.

"I think another very hard thing is that if someone comes into a British BA environment and to an approach to the design process; this is the approach to the creative process; this is the approach to researching, and when the student suddenly comes from the other side of the world, these approaches don't make any sense. I've never heard about these before. I wasn't taught these. It's a kind of landing experience, landing on a foreign planet, which is the tutor pushing the course on them, trying to get everybody into line. The individual international student is trying to make their own sense of where they are and what's going on, as well as, more often, not actually adapting to living in a foreign country. This in itself is kind of psychologically stressful, I think to some extent."

T also comments on psychological stress in relation to differences in learning approaches and expectations, considering that this applies to all international students:

"I think all international students have potentially a bit of a culture shock when they arrive from wherever they are and that's partly in connection with a whole different approach to learning especially at postgraduate level. There's an expectation that students will come in with a certain body of knowledge already."

This view, that students are expected to bring a 'certain body' and level of knowledge from their undergraduate courses to their postgraduate courses, accords with the UK's HE system. However, G suggests that this has been problematic 'over the years with academics', and the reasons for this are that approaches to learning:

> *"…have been unsympathetic to cultural differences, or kind of not perceiving cultural differences in some ways, or [tutors] didn't know how to respond to cultural differences, perhaps most correctly."*

The idea of differences between educational traditions arises consistently throughout this study. At the same time, discussion on the learning behaviours and abilities of a group of Chinese students indicates that it is unhelpful to consider such a group as homogeneous, in the sense that certain types of expectations cannot fit every student in the group.

S considers that differences in learning behaviours and abilities create a pedagogical challenge, which some international students find 'too great'. However, S also proposes that these students, including Chinese students, 'can do' critical thinking, but the 'the adjustment to develop critical thinking skills takes time'

G comments on learning expectations, comparing the communication of 'precise' competency-based expectations to what a student may unexpectedly and positively achieve through the way a certain learning environment is created. G suggests that the former learning achievement can be taught, whereas the latter, more open, approach cannot guarantee the achievement.

> *"Perhaps it is hard to convey when people write courses and talk about the expectations of achievement that students have not achieved. It moves from very precise issues of competency … can you do that properly? Or the other idea: wow, that's really surprised me; that's unexpected … which is not something you can teach. You can create an environment or you can assist in creating an environment … or you can assist and facilitate a physical circumstance that might lead [the student] to [an achievement], but you can't guarantee it. At another end, the precise [competency] it's like saying: okay, today, we're going to learn how to use this; have you learnt how to use this before?"*

Further discussion on categories of learning achievements, with particular regard to those that may be more precisely communicated than others, would require detailed investigation into their learning, teaching and assessment. This is beyond the scope of this study. The main purpose of the LEP, as discussed so far, was to practically investigate pedagogical approaches toward finding ways of better supporting and improving Chinese students' learning. This phase of the LEP helped to identify what was working effectively and what

needed to be adjusted in order to achieve this goal. The next section reflects upon what was learnt through this phase by the researcher and discusses how feedback from the participants informed the development of the LEP.

5.2.3.4 Reflections on learning and teaching approaches

As previously highlighted, Phase 1 revealed that some of the learning and teaching approaches applied in the first workshop needed improvement. For example, the participants' feedback concerning their level of learning engagement:

> "We have been taught different kinds of theories, but it has been less explained how those theories could be related to our MA learning practice."

> "I think that you spent too much time talking about the methods and skills of self-engagement in English. However, I can't follow the pace of your talking most of time, and I guess many other classmates feel the same as me."

Some others commented that

> "It is a three-hour workshop, which I think you just put too many things into. There were taught sessions, practices and discussions. However, the time that really let us reflect on what we have learnt and how we have learnt is not enough."

There were also examples of more positive responses to the workshops. The following focus on time management:

> "The skills of how to manage our time are very useful. I can use those skills to manage my studio practice more efficiently."

> "I like the session that you asked us to spend one hour on focusing on our own design project. By thinking of the questions that you provided, it makes me realise how time can be effectively occupied, even just in one hour."

Based on the participants' feedback, I reflected upon the teaching process of the first workshop in an attempt to identify the reasons behind the participants' responses. I considered that, overall, this first workshop was not very successful and identified that

these reasons for this were: my lack of experience in the practical application of teaching approaches; the organisation of the classroom; and the control of the pace of the learning activities. Despite these deficiencies, I considered that the design of the workshop had reasonably matched its objectives: to stimulate awareness within the participants of the importance of the self-engagement; to facilitate approaches to help the participants to develop deeper thinking and self-reflection abilities; and to enhance their skills of time management. However, a factor that I had not taken into account was the diversity of participants within the group.

At the time of this first workshop, the participants were at different levels of adjustment to their Master's course and this meant that their expectations from the workshop varied. Some, who were struggling to adapt to the course, expected to find solutions from the workshop, others who had fewer problems in adaptation expected to obtain additional learning skills and enhance their understanding of the UK education traditions. Thus, I confronted a question of how the workshop could be designed to better meet the different needs of the participants.

Game-based learning approach

Adjustments were made for the Phase 2 workshops. The first adjustment concerned helping the participants to feel more comfortable and to build their confidence. The importance of confidence has already been discussed in relation to language and communication in the section above on reflections on learning behaviours and abilities. H, for example, suggests that the confidence of students may be dependent on a number of aspects and that a 'comfortable' learning environment is one of the most important factors. G uses words such as 'calm' and 'trust' when discussing similar ideas. However, in the opinion of S, confidence is not easy to achieve, because for Chinese students, their experience of adapting to their new learning environment is challenging and this can be uncomfortable and adversely affects confidence. Through teaching practice, B similarly highlights the importance of confidence, linking language, culture, communication and 'group cohesion':

> *"The advantages of teaching Chinese learners are that I very rarely have behaviour problems, because, they don't really argue with me. They don't talk much. Obviously, I can understand why, because of the language and culture reasons. It usually takes about a term for them to like me, for them to warm to me. Once you*

get group cohesion then they will start to open up a little bit, and they will start to talk in the class. It might be because they feel more comfortable and confident. But, it takes time."

Based on perspectives such as these, and reflections on the first workshop, as discussed above, I identified that it is very important to consider, from the start, how selected workshop contents and approaches may affect confidence. For example, the participants did not know me very well and perhaps more importantly, they were not sure about the benefits of participating in the workshop. Thus, attempting to encourage a calming and reassuring environment seemed to be essential to develop effective and deeper learning interactions.

Based on this realisation, the adjustment made was to design and use a range of games and to embed these within a game-based learning[17] approach throughout the Phase 1 workshops. Hycraft (1978, p.94) has given a definition to game-based strategies as:

an agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English and as it is gently competitive, it increases motivation. It is also a contrast to periods of intensive study.

According to the UK HEA (2017), '[g]ames have a number of common characteristics that can be used to create effective learning environments.' The characteristics of problem solving, risk-taking and interactions for example, have been seen as:

opportunities to improve intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, engagement and to change behaviour. A cope component of games is that they are fun and provide a form of "edutainment" for participants.

Through observing individual participants' learning behaviours during the first workshop, it was found that the majority could be described as relatively shy and, as a group, reticent in engaging in discussion and responding to questions. Therefore, applying a game-based learning approach was tested as a method of encouraging the participants to engage in activities in ways that could be less emotionally intensive than formal teaching approaches

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[17] HEA (2017) defines that 'the Digital Games-Based Learning is the integration of gaming into learning experiences to increase engagement and motivation.'

In the Learning Enhancement Programme, the definition refers to the 'Physical Games-Based Learning', which is used for the similar purposes as the digital one.

(Hycraft, 1978). It was hoped that this would help the participants to talk with more confidence. It was also considered important that an 'easy-talking' environment could build trust between the participants and the researcher. This adjustment and the reasons behind it, later proved to establish an important foundation for conducting further and deeper discussions in Phase 2 and 3.

According to the participants' responses to the workshop, this adjustment effectively enhanced their levels of engagement, and it was clear that their willingness to join in with group activities increased. The following are examples of the participants' feedback:

> *"It was a very fun process of playing the game with the other classmates. I had a lot of joy from it. More importantly, I don't have to worry too much about my English language, as nobody will blame on it, even when you are wrong."*

> *"I feel that to start talking is not that difficult when playing the games. And interestingly, I feel more confident to talk, even when the game is finished."*

The following comment raised was of particular interest and potential relevance to the study:

> *"It is more than just playing a game, I think. Some games are designed strongly related to our learning. I can get a lot of reflections from there."*

This response prompted my interest in how the benefits of game-based learning might not only be about enhancing learning engagement. Based on this participant's insight, I began to consider potential correlations between the design of a game and the facilitation of certain learning skills: a game could be designed for specific learning purposes. This also prompted questions on the relationship of educational discourses to learning and teaching efficiency:

> *"I like this change, the workshop started with the game, then it makes me feel that the whole process of learning in the workshop is also like a game."*

The term 'gamification', is used to articulate 'the potential benefits of applying gaming concepts in non-gaming contexts' (HEA, 2017). According to the HEA:

"Gamification refers to the use of a pedagogical system that was developed within gaming design but which is implemented within a non-game context."

The use of games in education would always naturally depend on different learning situations and contexts. However, if approaching the learning process as a game, could gamification be applied to change existing ways of articulating learning requirements and expectations and compared to conventional processes of study? Could these changes be instrumental in reducing intensive levels of pressure? Reflections and resulting questions, such as these, informed the ideas to be tested in the Phase 2 of the LEP.

Bilingual approach

A second adjustment was made based on the initial finding of the first workshop. This concerned consideration of the languages to be used in the workshops: which language should be dominant, English or Mandarin? Should one or the other language be dominant at all? As discussed earlier in this chapter, some of the participants were uncomfortable or struggled with the pace of the workshop. One of the most important reasons for this was that the workshop was undertaken using English language. The participants' levels of English proficiency varied; with some finding it difficult to follow the pace of the instructor's or researcher's English speaking. In addition to varying levels of English language proficiency, the differences between culture-based academic conventions, as previously discussed, also contributed to obstacles for the participants in developing their understanding of key terms and concepts used in the context of A&D in the UK HE. Such obstacles were highlighted by the experts, most of whom have considered similar solutions – to introduce a Mandarin speaker with an equivalent academic background to support communications between tutor and student/s. B, for example, placed emphasis on the use of Mandarin speakers as translators:

"If someone could tell me what the magic solution is, I think it would be more Mandarin speakers to translate expectations, to translate what they need to do to communicate academic culture conventions."

However, it seems that such an approach (using a Mandarin speaker in a class) conflicts with the general perspectives of many UK HE institutions, in which there is a requirement that English language must be spoken in school at all times. In theory, this would seem to be a sensible requirement, as it impels students to engage with their English environment

alongside improving their English language proficiency. However, in reality, alternative perspectives exist that may be leading in a different direction. S, for example, suggests the need for flexibility in this regard:

> "Well, to be honest, the situation is that if I were to demand that the students speak English all the time, then I wouldn't be able to get through the lecture. So, there has to be a little bit of fluidity and response."

As this approach indicates, there have been many ways of involving the use of Mandarin language in learning and teaching practices. G and S promote the recruitment of alumni as 'Student Academic Mentors' – acting as partners in the academic environment of the design studio. During lecture and classroom study periods the mentors intervene to assist students when they are unable to follow or understand what is being communicated or what the learning objectives are.

T directs the student mentoring scheme at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where the scheme is established for the purpose of supporting international students with their living and studying. A Chinese student in a group receiving support from this scheme explained that:

> "The aim of the scheme is to try to shorten the transition period of international students as much as possible, so that they have a more equal playing field with the rest of the students on the same course. The second is – I'd really like to help with integration. By using a second-year student I'm hoping that they would be able to not just pass on the knowledge and experiences that they have gained from the past year but also to transfer the notion of the community that is formed by those mentors and students to the new students."

The feedback on the above solutions is very positive. To some extent, they removed pressure from course tutors. However, problems still exist. One of the distinct problems, as S indicates, is that:

> "the real difficult thing about running the programme is that we've got this really difficult situation being managed by a host of people. The numbers of staff and alumni working with the students is absolutely incredible, but this intervention patch

> *work approach is fragile and unsustainable as we worked together by chance rather than design."*

In addition to this perceived unsustainability is a further problem concerning the extent to which continuity of the quality of mentoring can be maintained. The advantages of using alumni or second-year students as mentors are: firstly, they can help the students to translate unfamiliar academic language into their own language; and secondly, they can share their experiences of successful learning. However, there could be inconsistencies in the application of mentoring and the achievement of expected beneficial outcomes. This is because of a number of variables: different levels of academic knowledge and understanding; different levels of language proficiency; and how the experiences of mentors may be applicable to the students. Some of them may be well engaged, but some may be not. However, in general it is acknowledged that the practice of using Mandarin language interventions when teaching Chinese students is beneficial. Therefore, the important questions concern how and to what extent this approach can be more effectively developed and applied. This is how I started to think about applying bilingual approaches[18] within the LEP experiment interventions.

I considered how a bilingual learning approach could be further developed in relation to the objectives of the LEP. I thought that changes to the existing mentoring method could be made as follows. Firstly, that the participants could be allowed to use English and Mandarin interchangeably in the workshop, and I, as the instructor with English and Mandarin languages, could stand in between the two languages system. Secondly, through interchanging their use of languages, the participants could choose for themselves the most effective way to engage in their learning; using this approach, the idea would be to encourage the participants to engage with languages as a cognitive tool, giving emphasis to supporting thinking skills, (more than communication). Thirdly, by holding onto the idea of conceptual interpretation, this bilingual approach could help to break barriers between the two language systems; this would facilitate in various ways explanations of and discussions on academic and subject-specific knowledge, enabling the participants to explore and find the most effective way of relating their thinking, understanding and communicating to their contexts.

The following is an example of the participants' feedback on this adjustment:

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[18] Wierzbicka (2011) indicates that 'bilingual experience is a crucial source of insight into human cognition and into the inadequacy of purely English-based 'data gathering' aimed at discovering cognitive categories of speakers of different languages' (p.213).

"It was a really good experience of communicating in English and Mandarin at same time in the workshop. It helped me to express myself clearer than only in English."

"I like this (bilingual) way of teaching. But, I think the most important thing is you. It's not only because you can understand both languages, you can, but you can also understand something beyond the language, something that cannot be well expressed by us."

I found that by applying this bilingual approach I could connect much better with participants. I also reflected on how this approach enabled understandings of what the participants meant beyond what they were saying, and how this could lead to interpreting where their point of view or argument was going. The interchangeable bilingual approach also helped to more precisely discuss with participants aspects of adjustment in relation to the learning behaviours and expectations of their course. For example, in a tutorial the approach facilitated analysis and discussion on the relationship of a participant's practical work to Western design education models; what the course tutor expects to see in the assessment – the beginning of ideas, how those ideas led to further research, development and selection, and how the ideas may be connected to a narrative of the design process. These points of discussion exemplify the thinking and communication skills and academic/subject knowledge commonly missing from the participants' presentations.

An idea of the realtionship between the use of two languages in an academic context is given below by one of the participants. This idea supports the proposed emphasis on cognitive skills in relation to languages, as discussed above:

"I used to think the problem of communicating with a tutor is because my English is not good enough. However, this (bilingual approach) makes me realise that the problem is not only about the English language as sometimes I even cannot express myself well in Mandarin. I think the understanding of the course requirement is much more important than language problems."

This connects with a viewpont expressed by H in an interview:

"[The students] might not be able to articulate in English, but even if they can say what their opinion is they might not fully understand why they have that opinion. If I ask them what they think about something, they will be very happy to tell me. But if I ask them why they think that or what led you to that conclusion or why do you hold that belief ... then they will find this more difficult … So it's still limiting and it doesn't matter even if they are fluent in English. That understanding of what is expected still holds back their grades."

In the following transcript, G discusses the knowledge and disposition of academics in relation to the effectiveness of learning and teaching in international student contexts:

"To do that you have to be very aware of the knowledge of different cultural traditions, and the knowledge of what's on offer and have the experience there. To some extent, it also depends on the tutors' empathy for international students' origins … that starts to account to your perceptions of what the students' ambitions might be and your ability to empathise and to see somebody in their own origin. It's quite important. We had the problems over the years with academics. I think it has been unsympathetic to cultural differences, or kind of not perceiving cultural differences in some ways, or didn't know how to respond to cultural differences perhaps most correctly."

This highlights that although the application of the bilingual approach, as discussed above, indicates that it has the potential to be positively instrumental in improving the effectivenees of learning in international student contexts, it would need to applied in combination with related pedagogical developments/methods and approaches. For example, G points to the importance of the experience and/or the readiness of the academic to empathise with areas of knowledge within different cultaral settings and, as previously discussed, of facilitating within Chinese students understanding of UK A&D educational models and learning expectations and requirements. This is also one of the positives that can be developed in the next phase of experiment.

5.2.5   Summary of key reflections and initial findings: Phase 1

In conclusion, this section has reflected on the workshops of Phase 1 and discussed indicative findings. Examples of the participants' feedback on the workshops and findings from the expert interviews are integrated into these reflections and discussion.

This approach has enabled an examination of the relevance of previously identified obstacles to effective learning in Chinese students, or whether other factors are more realistically and impactfully involved. As the discussion above indicates, the development of a range of interconnected pedagogical methods and approaches are required. For example, a bilingual approach may contribute positively to Chinese students' learning, but the findings from Phase 1 have indicated that this would need to be applied as part of a broader, holistic strategy. In a similar way to languages, the findings indicate that linking student attendance to time management ability or self-engagement skills represents a limited narrative. Perceptions of Chinese students, in an homogeneous sense, as less mature than their British counterparts, offers an equally limited narrative and thereby scope for improvement. This section has also discussed perceptions of learning behaviours, including critical thinking and self-directed learning and how participants' motivations and tutor expectations can contribute in complex ways to Chinese student learning.

A general finding from Phase 1 is that an understanding of educational contexts and experiences, from different student and tutor perspectives, is a precondition for improving Chinese students' learning. However, as G suggests, in reality, tacit knowledge and understanding within different Chinese and Western cultures creates complexity and 'international students interface with all the complexities ... of being a student'.

This development of understanding can be particularly challenging if you are trying to talk about complex ideas, or where thinking in depth is called for. Asking a Chinese student to look for something, or to look into themselves to find something, can mean asking the student to find something that is not there. It is not there because the student's society has never been concerned with it. When this connects to a UK tutor's or an international student's experiences, the tutor and the student may be conscious that they may have different ways of thinking and that these are based on prior experience, but then the problem is not knowing where correlations between their experiences and viewpoints might be found.

So, to address improving Chinese students' learning in the UK, first of all, we have to find ways of bridging and communicating the educational experiences of tutors and students. Evidence gathered in Phase 1, strongly indicates that a process of scaffolding learning could ensure that a foundation of learning is built upon an understanding of contexts, which initially may be from different perspectives, but which can then lead to developing areas of

meaningful understanding beyond specific contexts or ways of thinking. It is this approach that informed Phase 2 and Phase 3.

This phase of the LEP has explored and tested selected pedagogical approaches with varying degrees of failure and success, as discussed above. One of the advantages of the LEP as a whole is that it is organised as a series of EIs. This means that the failures can be as constructive as the successes. In particular, the failures provide the study with opportunities to identify where problems exist and to identify their nature, and because of the structure of the LEP adjustments, response can be immediate. The momentum of the LEP is thus driven by this ongoing evaluative process. This approach reflects the viewpoint of G with regard to the effectiveness of learning and teaching methods: 'your teaching methods cannot be guaranteed', but at least they can move forward in steps toward achieving an understanding of how best to support the learning of Chinese students in the UK HE system.

5.3   Learning Enhancement Programme: PHASE 2

Phase 1 of the LEP indicated that EI had the potential to support participants' learning alongside and complementary to the SoJ's Master's curriculum. The findings from the expert interviews generally indicate that the learning and teaching experiences of Chinese students and their tutors in the UK are affected by differences between the two educational contexts of China and the UK. These perceived differences affect communication, in particular with regard to study requirements and practices: what a student expects from their studies and what the tutors expect from the student. The interviews and observations of teaching sessions also showed how aspects of education related theory, such as Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al., 1956), could be used by tutors in cross-cultural contexts in order to illustrate different levels of learning and associated skills. However, overall, the expert interviews and findings from Phase 1, indicate the need for a systematic approach to subject-specific research and the development of a more strategic plan for next phase of the EI.

As discussed in the summary of Phase 1, in order for the EI to make a positive difference to the participants' educational experience, it is important to engage the participants in: i) examining and exploring some of the commonly perceived differences between the Chinese and UK educational traditions; ii) understanding the learning requirements of taught postgraduate A&D education in the UK; and iii) understanding how and to what

extent the participants' previous abilities, shaped by their previous learning experience, can enable them to meet their current study requirements.

However, the findings of the research during Phase 1 and through referencing the literature, indicate that in order to achieve these enhancement objectives, it would be necessary to consider how pedagogical strategies and approaches could be used toward building the confidence of the participants. In this respect, the literature provided evidence of how game-based learning approaches could be used as a way of supporting confidence and creating an active learning environment. There was initial evidence from the Phase 1 workshops that the participants were willing to actively engage in group conversations and activities. The literature also suggests that a bilingual approach could further encourage and deepen the dialogue.

Based on these findings it was decided to continue with the approaches applied in Phase 1, but to make further adjustments as the interventions proceeded. It was also decided that in order to effectively use themes for each workshop – focused on selected learning skills – the workshops would need the learning skills to be engaged in combination with a holistic contextualisation of the Master's learning expectations and study requirements. So, the adjustment of the strategies to the teaching delivery is also important. Firstly, the changes have to focus on the constant of the learning contextualisation and development, which means that participants who study in such a learning environment can understand the relationships of each learning session, and can also feel the development of the level of the learning difficulties. Secondly, the changes have to consider the ways of embedding the training of learning skills through the whole teaching and learning process, rather than separating them.

The second phase of the programme aims to rationalise the EI, in order to make it more efficient – by recognising its strengths and weaknesses in the first one and making adjustments accordingly.

5.3.1 Planning and organisation of the workshops

Before the commencement of Phase 2, it was agreed with the course leader of MA Interior Design that I could observe a number of Interior Design teaching sessions (2017/18). This provided an opportunity to observe pedagogical approaches and practices and to critically reflect upon how their utilisation supported the students' learning within this discipline. They

also enabled consideration of how it may be possible to transfer certain practice-based Masters' level approaches and practices from one discipline to another with respect to the EI.

Bringing forward the findings and reflections of the mainstream course observation, the second phase of the programme took place on 23rd October 2017. In the morning, a 30-minute introduction to the programme and an announcement of recruitment was given to the 2017/18 MA JSRP cohort (23 students). After a period of consideration through their lunch break, twelve students showed an interest in the programme. I then had a further one-to-one conversation with students, during which I collected information relating to their learning experiences and to understand the reasons why they were interested in the programme. This, in the meantime, gave them an opportunity to become more familiar with the programme and to finally make the decision whether they would like to participate. At the end of the day, there were nine students who decided to join the programme; they all signed the consent form to make sure that they understood the terms and conditions of participation.

As the Master's first module assessment was taking place in January 2018, it was negotiated with the course tutor that this phase of programme needed to be accomplished by the middle of December 2017, just before the Christmas break, to minimise potential impact on the students' preparation for their assessment. So, given the limitations of the time scale, I then decided to remove the one-to-one tutorial sessions and designed interventions in the form of workshop-based sessions only. However, a tutorial could still be offered to the individuals through a booked appointment.

5.3.2   The brief for the Phase 2 workshops

This phase comprised five three-hour workshops. The brief for the activities conducted in each workshop are presented in Appendix 8. This phase of LEP took place on Monday afternoons, from 6th November 2017 to 4th December 2017. Compared to the workshops in Phase 1, which were more independent from each other, these Phase 2 workshops were designed as an interrelated group, with developing levels of challenge. This strategy emphasised both the participants' transition from one learning experience to another, and progressively the development of knowledge and skills associated with deeper learning.

This group of five workshops were designed in order to (or aimed to):

- Mirror, through a condensed and abstracted version, the developmental processes of the students' Master's jewellery course
- Help the students to link the developmental processes of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al., 1956) to their Master's course.

An important difference between the five workshops and the students' Master's course was that within the former, for obvious reasons of time and the enhancement status of the EI, the students were not expected to acquire any of the actual Master's course skills and areas of knowledge. The intention of the workshops was instead to help the students to begin to construct a conceptual picture of their course, its learning challenges and developmental processes.

5.3.3   Initial analysis and reflections on Phase 2 of the LEP:

The following analysis and reflections concentrate on the findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 and their influence on the adjustments made to pedagogical strategies and approaches in preparation for Phase 3. It includes details of the adjustments made, why they were mad, and the extent to which they had an impact on Phase 3.

5.3.3.1 Adjustment to the LEP: Phase 1

Adjustment to the workshop plan

As emphasised in the introduction to Phase 2, the main adjustment to this phase concerned misconnection. That is, some of the key different ideas of educational experiences expressed by the experts interviewed and Chinese participants during this phase. As discussed in Phase 1, evidence suggests that such misconnections can impact fundamentally on the effectiveness and meaningfulness of learning. I therefore proposed building a bridge for communicating different perceptions and understandings of learning.

The experts offer views on how to communicate across two different educational experiences and traditions. H, for instance, suggests that it is necessary to help students to understand what is expected from them by using certain methods to prompt their realisation. H suggests that:

"I think a lot of it is just about getting close to the students and finding things that will trigger their realisation about what is acceptable: what is expected."

G offers the following viewpoint through one of the examples based on G's mentoring experience:

"In the beginning of the mentoring scheme, nobody tells me what I should do, so I don't know where should I begin. But what I did perceive was that expectations from students are kind of different from the university's, which means that students might feel confused sometimes when some of the university's expectations are contradicting their own. So, I started from there to help them with their understanding of the university's expectations, which did help."

It seems that to make the connection between two educational experiences, the understanding of expectations to students' learning performance is as a key to unlock the complexities behind it. However, it is hard to make it work by simply telling them what they are expected to be able to achieve. B indicates that she strived to explain to the students that what they have to do to meet the requirements of the study at Master's level in the UK. However, she says that:

"No, I don't think it works. I think it's all down to experience and your construction of the world. Because even the way that I've been trained to teach is very student-centred, it is still hard to shape their perceptions of learning as they've been trained in a totally different way, where they've been taught by philosophy, values and believes are totally different."

So, if the technique of telling students what they are expected to do does not work, then 'what would be the effective way of triggering students' realisation?' S, here, demonstrated a good example when I was observing one of her lectures on the MA Interior Design course, in which she was using the Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al., 1956) to illustrate different levels of learning and key skills that are expected to acquire associated to each level. Alternatively, she encouraged students to analyse how the levels of learning showing in the Taxonomy can be connected to the levels of Batchelor's or Master's studies; and to what extent students' own learning abilities can be matched to the levels classified in the Taxonomy.

There are many ways of applying Bloom's Taxonomy. Based on the research findings, the Taxonomy is most frequently used at levels of policy making, and has been found in some common areas, such as specifying lesson objectives, preparing tests, asking questions at different taxonomic levels, and increasing the cognitive levels of activity, where the Taxonomy has been applied to help teachers to prepare them teach the course (Cullinane, 2010). However, it is also claimed that the Taxonomy is used sparingly by schools and teachers in the classroom (Anderson and Sosniak, 1994; Cullinane, 2010).

According to what S's lecture, it seems that there is a possibility of different uses of the Taxonomy. In her case, the Taxonomy was not only used functionally as a guide to teaching, but also as a learning device for facilitating students' critical analysis and reflection. By doing so, the impact on Chinese students' understanding of what the UK educational experience is might not be able to be immediately seen. However, the learning expectations have been explicitly visualised, whilst students have been actively involved in the critical process of reflecting on such expectations. I think at their initial stage of learning, an approach – which is necessary to make students clear about the expectations and which, more importantly, is essential to be able to get their self-reflections involved within the context – can then be functionally called a 'trigger'.

Thus, I decided to apply this approach to help the adjustment through my interventional experiment. On the one hand, I used the Taxonomy as a guide to planning the workshops. The levels of learning classified in the Taxonomy indicate the increasing levels of difficulties from the bottom to the very top. It also can be seen as a demonstration of how the levels of difficulties distinguish the differences of expectations in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Based on my previous research findings and perspectives of experts, Chinese students' educational experience to some extent might only stay on the Taxonomy's learning level of knowledge or comprehension, maybe a little bit of application. H, for instance, states that:

> "I would see Chinese students getting very fixated on describing things, being able to list things and being able to define things, but not necessarily looking for any deeper implications."

S, also states a similar opinion, who says that;

> *"For the majority of these students - the best that they can do is describe in detail the work of others or their own process/praxis, or by comparing identify what works in the work of others by looking at two case studies that are successful."*

It's worth noting that Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al., 1956) recognises that the development from 'concrete' to 'abstract' knowledge is a continuum and that one set of skills – 'concrete' – will get mixed up together with another set – "abstract" – so as is typical, its more complex a diagram will show.

Thus, I started my first workshop by focusing upon facilitating their acquirement of learning skills which are associated to lower order learning skills on the Taxonomy; and by considering the nature of the jewellery study, the skills training was mainly focused on discovery, observation and description. The following workshops were then designed to increase the levels of difficulty gradually and correspondingly; the skills training was focused on, but not limited to, communication, idea generation, research, problem solving and creativity. The training of the critical skill-set, such as reflection, analysis and evaluation, was embedded into every stage, alongside other skills training.

Ideally, it is a test – the experiment of five workshops undertaken over one month, created a model of 'conceptual interpretation' where participants could be fully exposed to the learning environment that was conducted based on the expectations of UK postgraduate study. In this model, they were not explicitly told the aims at the beginning of each workshop, but they were given an explanation as to what extent what they learnt through the workshop might be correlated to their mainstream course study. It was the conjunction of teacher-led and student-led learning, however it was more focused on the participants' experiential side. In this way, the questions of what the UK educational experience is and of what this experience means to their own learning can be answered by participants themselves, alongside their own interpretations to each session of learning.

This model of experiment might be still unable to fully change participants' perceptions of what educational experience is, however, it functionally completed its mission in terms of being as a 'trigger'. Participants commented in the feedback:

> *"I was confused about the aims of the activities and games, which I didn't understand what it's for? And thought it was meaningless. However, it gradually made sense to me by reflecting on the learning process of each workshop, I then*

found that the knowledge and skills embedded into those activities can be quite related to what I'm learning on the MA course. They might be unable to be used by me immediately, however, I can feel they are impacting on me slowly. Thank you very much!"

The adjustment of applying Bloom's Taxonomy created the strategic change of the workshop plan. However, to make the 'trigger' really work it also relies upon the instructor's sensitivity and empathy towards participants' reactions, which through the learning process can be detected and interpreted; the instructor can then make corresponding and instant adjustments to the teaching approaches as necessary. Such adjustments, which can be nuanced to the teaching strategies and approaches, are discussed in the next section including another use of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Adjustments to Bloom's Taxonomy

It has been discussed that the application of Bloom's Taxonomy for planning the overall pedagogical strategy functions as an underpinning of the design of the interventions experiment of this phase. It has also indicated that this is another use for the Taxonomy where a teaching approach is applied.

Inspired by S's lecturing, the application of Bloom's Taxonomy has shown its potential for facilitating students' self-reflection on what is expected for a postgraduate level of learning, and identifying the gap in learning abilities between students themselves and the postgraduate course requirement. Therefore, I applied this approach in the first workshop as a diagnostic tool, to make the expectations of learning visible as well as to help to identify group and individual issues of participants, it then helped me to adjust the learning and teaching focus.

Based on the participants' feedback, it to some extent fits well with the above intentions, when the application of this approach was conducted at the initial stage of this phase.

The following participants' feedback provides examples of the effective use of Bloom's Taxonomy as a diagnostic tool:

"*If I was told this (Bloom's Taxonomy) at the beginning of the course, I   wouldn't be so confused about what I'm expected and what I should do.*"

"It's really helpful. It helps me to be able to see clearly the gap between the course expectations and myself. More importantly, it gives me the direction to strive forward."

"We used to be asked to be creative, to be reflective, to be critical….To be honest, I didn't quite understand what they are. But, through the Bloom's Taxonomy, I start understanding a little bit of how these learning skills are connected, and it seems that we cannot directly step into that kind of higher level of learning."

However, it has also raised my attention to the fact that it is the ambiguous area – where the distinctions and correlations of two different educational experiences had not been fully explored and exposed – which caused the learning skills that participants have already acquired to be misconnected with the learning skills that they are expected to have. However, according to Heer (2012, p.2), 'learning activities often involve both lower order and higher order thinking skills as well as a mix of concrete and abstract knowledge.'

It seems misleading that students are simply required to be able to apply certain skills or even to be able to achieve certain level of learning abilities if the connection between different learning skills has not been built.

| This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry. |
| Date of diary entry: 25/11/2017 |
| It is just like playing a 'puzzle game', sometimes you do know what you hold in your hand, however, you just cannot find a clue of how to use them. It also like what I'm doing at the moment, when I'm writing up the thesis, all the materials are in front of me, however, I also have to get passed that moment where I didn't know how to put them into the right place. It will finally become clear, but it takes time and I do understand how long and how hard it will be. |

It can be extremely hard to play this learning 'puzzle game' with a one-year course study in jewellery, with its intensive practice-based learning, and where a group of higher order learning skills are required to be shown through the process. I think the support that several training workshops can give students is small, but a 'clue' at least can be provided; and the initiation of thinking about what learning skills are expected – and how they can

correlate with their acquired learning skills through the introduction and discussion of Bloom's Taxonomy – can be the first step in supporting them to access into this 'game'.

5.3.3.2 Reflective and experiential learning

This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry. Date of diary entry: 27/11/2017
I raised a question after the discussion of Bloom's Taxonomy – 'How is your feeling of learning on the MA JSRP course so far?' Varying answers were provided, however, most of them stood for the same point of view, in which they felt it is hard to imagine how it can be possible to stick to only one design project for the whole year of MA study. They worried whether if they are able to develop their work sustainably for such a long period of time. For instance, someone was afraid of losing interests as time goes by; someone worried about the ability to deal with complexities when the design project develops deeper; and someone also mentioned that she was very confused about the aim of the study, she explained that she used to be trained to focus on doing things with clear purpose, however, it has not yet been explicitly explained on this course.

As discussed in the above section, Bloom's Taxonomy helps participants better understand what is expected in terms of higher order learning skills in postgraduate study in the UK. However, the conflict between two educational experiences is not only shown in the aspect of the misconnection of learning skills, according to the above diary entry, it can also be related to the different attitudes towards how to teach A&D in HE. Through deeper and more detailed discussion with the participants, this difference is further highlighted by the following examples of participants' responses:

> *"We were normally asked to finish a design project in no more than a month and we understand very clearly what we need to provide at the end."*

> *"It was relatively simple when I was studying in the BA in China. I made up some design ideas in my head, and then just make them out. That's it. However, the process of thinking and making seems to be more emphasised and I can see where the end is."*

"It made me feel I was really struggling when I was making something, I was always asked to tell how the thing that I made can be related to my design idea and how this can be developed further."

G explains these situations, which might be more specifically related to the different attitudes towards the 'design process' in two different educational experiences; and based on what participants, described, there is a lack of preparedness of transition from one to the other.

"There were things about British educational system and British educational view of what art and design education was. There were some differences between what we would think of as a global approach to it, which is different countries in different situations have different ideas in what significant in design process. They also have different relationships to the manufacturing production and distribution systems in their countries. So, the art and design tradition in the UK plays the idea of creativity and artistry and creative ambition of individual, which in the UK is terribly possible because we no longer have large factory employers. Where I think the situation in China or India for example is quite different, they have got significant manufacturing belts that are looking for different kinds of student to fit industrial process. So, there is a discord between British education for British people in the British industrial situation and British education for those international students who will return to international industrial context."

No matter whether the conflict is reasoned by the difference of general perspective of how to teach A&D or caused by more specific difference of attitude towards the design process, it seems that Chinese students entering UK postgraduate education tend to have expectations based on the 'concrete and the certain' and 'often seek 'clarity'' (Austerlitz et al., 2008, p.127). Whereas, Austerlitz et al. (2008, p.127) further indicate that in the UK:

Art and design pedagogy is concerned with the importance of students interacting with openness and uncertainty to enable them, on graduation, to negotiate the complex and unpredictable demands of the creative industries.

Austerlitz et al. (2008, p.126) indicate this value of teaching A&D is 'implicit rather than explicit' and is 'although largely unspoken', which can thus create 'vagueness and insecurity' for many students, including both home and international students who are first

exposed to such a learning environment. However, with previously discussed overlapping issues, Chinese students tend to find it more difficult to adapt themselves into this environment where their prior understanding of A&D is conflicted with 'the centrality of 'ambiguity' to the creative process' (Ibid).

To deal with this issue, Austerlitz et al. (2008, p.144) suggests that one of the best ways is to 'acknowledge the nature and importance of students and tutors' expectations and to respond to them as part of the educational process.' However, to make it happen, as discussed previously, it does not help when based only on verbal instruction; it also shows a tendency that providing different ideas and activities around reflection tend to be more supportive to the participants' adaptation. Therefore, the idea of 'reflective and experiential learning' is applied by considering both theoretical and practical ways to support this intention.

The application of 'reflection and experiential learning' in HE in the UK is not new, however, the concept in itself has an 'amorphous nature' (Bentley, 2004). Moon (2004), in her book 'A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice', well considers this nature and 'provide[s] a useful guide to understanding and using reflective and experiential learning, looking both at theory and practical implementation' (Bentley, 2004). I learnt from this book and others, in relation to 'reflection and experiential learning', to personally gain a better understanding of its nature and the application in the EI in this phase of LEP.

Moon (2004, p.114) indicates that 'probably the most common understanding of experiential learning is that based on the work of Kolb (1984) with his cycle of experiential learning which was developed from the work of Piaget, Lewin and others.' Also, with the increase of use of the 'reflection and experiential learning' in HE, Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory[19] (ELT), as Healey and Jenkins (2000, p.1) describe, is 'one of the best-known educational theories in higher education' and Kolb's learning cycle is often referred as 'probably the most frequently taught model of experiential, reflective learning' (Ramsey, 2006, p.12).

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[19] Kolb's (1984) Experiential learning theory (ELT) defines learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience'
Kolb 1984, p. 41

Healey and Jenkins (2000, p.2) suggest that 'the theory presents a way of structuring and sequencing the curriculum and indicates, in particular how a session, or a whole course, may be taught to improve student learning.' However, the Kolb's learning cycle, argued by other researchers, is the 'recipe' type of sequential approach that is demonstrated (Rowland, 2000, cited by Moon, 2004). Some, for instance, argue the cycle is simplistic (Jarvis, 1987; Rowland, 2000; Moon, 2001); some argue it is 'formulaic' (Marsick and Watkins, 1990, cited by Moon, 2004, p.114); and others argue it is lack of 'considering factors such as the transfer of learning' (Wallace, 1996, cited by Moon, 2004). Newman (1999, p.84) also indicates that the cycle makes him feel 'too ordered', 'too regular', and 'too predictable' to let the experiences enter into a 'natural' way.

Despite these different arguments in relation to Kolb's work, as reflection plays an essential role within the four stages of experiential learning process in Kolb's cycle, it is still widely adopted and used in educational and training circles (Moon, 2004), and the terms of reflective learning and experiential learning are 'inter-linked' (Moon, 2004, p.106) and used in many aspects of learning and teaching practice. However, Moon (2004, p.73) argues that reflective learning and experiential learning are both 'topical' and 'neither is clearly defined', 'their actual relationship is not obvious.'

Because of a lack of clarity, Moon (2004, p.106) goes on to indicate that sometimes it appears that there is a suggestion of 'all there is to experiential learning is to have an experience and then to follow through a sequence of activities such as is depicted in the Kolb cycle.' Many studies have explicitly expressed that all learning is learning from experience (Dewey, 1938; Chickering, 1977; Boud et al., 2000; Jarvis, 1987; Laurillard, 1993; Michelson, 1996). However, Winter (1989) points out that 'having and experience and learning from experience are different: 'Experience' is not quite the same thing as 'learning from experience'' (Ibid, cited by Moon, 2004, p.105). Jarvis (1987) also indicates that there is no meaning of an experience in itself unless the meaning is given by individuals 'who mainly draws on socially constructed meaning' (Ibid, cited by Moon, 2004, p.107), and the meaning here can be based on an individual's reflection on the experience. However, Moon (2004, p.81) also indicates that 'there is still relatively little literature that directly and explicitly links and explores reflection and leaning from experience'; and this might cause a situation (Moon, 2001, cited by Moon, 2004, p.116), which is:

> [t]he way in which the Kolb cycle (and similar depictions) are used – particularly in
> the field of training and development. Often the cycle is used more to underpin a

process of the management of learning, than necessarily as a description of the learning process itself.

Moon (2004) acknowledges that the Kolb cycle can 'work as a tool for learning' when the experiential learning activities involve reflective learning. However, this happens with a condition in which the material of learning tends to be 'relatively challenging to a learner who has the intention of attaining meaning' (Ibid, p.123). Moon (2004, p.123) identifies four situations when material of learning can be challenging:

1) it is complex in relation to the learner's prior experience.

2) it is not complex itself but the learner's prior experiences do not or cannot guide the process of learning (e.g., the learner does not have the prerequisite prior understanding.

3) it is not complex itself, but when the learner wants to use a frame of reference in a manner that is challenging to her.

4) perhaps the context of the learning is difficult or challenging.

Based on my previous study of the issues that Chinese students have had on their Master's study in the UK, the challenging situations listed above are, to a greater or lesser extent, related to what the students have experienced. Thus, the 'reflective and experiential learning' seems to be a reasonable approach and can be applied for this EI.

The approach is applied in two different ways. Firstly – although it has been argued that Kolb's learning cycle is often used 'to underpin a process of the management of learning, than necessarily as a description of the learning process itself' (Moon, 2001, cited by Moon, 2004, p.116) – it is still introduced to the participants as a tool, which helps to translate the notion of professional development and how creative process can be better understood through the different stages that are demonstrated in Kolb's cycle. By referring to its function of 'the management of learning' (Ibid), participants can learn from it and purposefully manage their own creative process.

The second use of this approach reflects on pedagogical strategy of the design of learning activities, where the idea of making experiences meaningful and maximising the potential of fostering reflections on the experiential learning activities is embedded. Normally, in the design of a curriculum, or more specifically a learning activity, the aims and objectives are always provided in the form of brief or at least verbally communicated. However, there is a

tendency that students 'tend to see knowledge in terms of 'right or wrong', viewing the teacher as the expert who will pass on knowledge while they absorb it absolutist stage, it is harder for them to recognize the need to reflect' (Moon, 2004, p.162). Thus, in the activities that I designed the aims were not communicated at the initial stage, instead, a range of open-ended questions, with the aim to facilitate reflection, were provided for participants' consideration through the process of activities. It was confusing to some extent, as the aims were unspoken, however, it rightly reflected 'the centrality of 'ambiguity' to the creative process' (Austerlitz et al., 2008, p.126); and exposed participants to an environment intensively based on sessions of activities and where they would have to reflect upon those experiences. An explanation of the aims was provided at the end of each activity, and a group discussion was always conducted to encourage participants to share their reflections and interpretations of the aims of the activities. By doing so, as Moon suggests, it enabled them 'to progress in their understanding of learning', which 'will bring them to stages in which they will recognize that there are alternative interpretations that require reflection' (2004, p.162). McAlpine and Weston (2002, p.69; cited by Moon, 2004, p.69) also say:

> *Transforming experiential and tacit knowledge into principled explicit knowledge (in this case) about teaching requires…intentional reflection for the purpose of making sense of and learning from experience for the purpose of improvement…Reflection requires linking existing knowledge to an analysis of the relationship between current experience and future action…They go on to say that reflection aids in the reflective processes themselves, thereby building or expanding knowledge.*

In order to maintain the quality of the learning and teaching in an ongoing manner, I played the central role as a facilitator as well as an observer. In this process I observed and learnt about the principles of participants' action and I also used 'knowledge of the learners, of pedagogy and of the content of teaching' (Moon, 2004, p.81) to make learning contextualised in relation to mainstream courses and to also further guide future teaching.

5.3.3.3 Game-based learning approach

It has been discussed that 'reflective and experiential learning' is applied as a strategic approach for the design of learning activities and the maintenance of the quality of teaching.

This section will discuss how this strategy guides the actual learning and teaching process with the application of a 'game-based learning' approach.

As discussed in the first phase, the game-based learning approach was applied for the purpose of the enhancement of participants' confidence and levels of engagement. The effectiveness of the application of this approach was proven by the perceived active engagement of the participants in the workshops, as well as through reflection on their feedback. It was also proposed that there may be potential to improve this approach, which not only focuses on the aspects of building up confidence and enhancing learning engagement but which can also be used as a learning device in which skills training is embedded. Alternatively, a hypothesis was proposed as to whether the concept of gamification could be applied to change the manner of the articulation of educational discourse and to formulate a 'gamification environment' (Sailer et al., 2013) within the learning and teaching context. However, there was not enough time to test these two ideas in Phase one, thus they are left as potential adjustments in this phase.

The generation of the idea of adjustment to the above is also related to the findings of the experts' interviews. Both G and S emphasised the same issue – perceived when teaching Chinese students – which relates to the idea of risk taking. S perceived that:

> "These students want analytical models that are not risky. So, creative risk-taking is something that they really struggling with right now."

Whereas, G gives an analysis from another angle that:

> "There is the other, which is about finding yourself creatively and professionally, which actually has to be a territory of risk. I think one of the things is that we never tell students that there is a degree of riskiness, which means you can get bad marks, but it won't be the end of your life. If you are reasonably sensible that you are trying to make your pass of your course, because of everybody wanting that, but you learn stuff from mistakes then you have to give yourself a freedom to try. I think that is a harder one, because there might be a group of students who would believe that if you tell me how to be a genius, I could be a genius. And there might be another bunch of students who knows that it's illusive, there is a degree of introspection and randomise experience, who knows what it is that they create your time, your moment and your ability."

However, despite the issue comes from 'intrinsic and extrinsic motivation' (HEA, 2017) of the students, it at least evidenced that Chinese students are less able to realise that there is a nature of risk-taking in learning or positively involve themselves in risky situations – risk means an uncertainty, which is excluded by their prior educational experience. S has applied an approach to cope with such a situation, in which she decided to 'chang[e] the language' of the teaching delivery. She demonstrates that:

> *"One of the ways I've tried to tackle that fear of creative risk-taking is to package this differently. So, I have developed the way of speaking about design risk-taking as 'poetry' and as a poetic process. Because the students are so sensitive to their art poetry heritage and classical traditions, they can appreciate by reflecting on the poetic devices, that their own work could be re-framed as art or spatial poetry. You are still talking about composition harmony rhythm when you are describing an interior too. So, their real respect on love of art of poetry can be used as a metaphor or process in their own work and methods. So, if I say that if I want to be creative like a poet, they will more willing to do that than if I say I want you to take more creative risks please."*

> *"So, changing the language. Have you heard of the discipline called 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming? So, this is an action that you choose to use specific language that will give you a better connection with students. So, if I change the language like 'Please take creative risks.' Then they know the work 'risk' but not comfortable with that to 'I want you to be creative like a poet."*

However, the poetic way of changing the language might to some extent still rely upon a degree of introspection and randomise experience of different individuals. If a student is not sensitive enough to the sense of poetry, it might affect the effectiveness of applying this approach. On the other hand, this approach seems to be better applied through the creative process, where there is a good correspondence between the level of students' learning skills and tutor's expectations.

Thus, it seems both of the above conditions are not able to fit with this intervention experiment, however, the idea of 'changing the language' coincidentally matched with my hypothesis of the change of the game discourse. It provides realistic evidence of the possibilities of testing such hypothesis. Meanwhile, on the theoretical side, it has been

introduced that HEA (2017) listed a number of common characteristics of games that can be used to create effective learning environments –one of which is 'risk-taking'. More importantly, given the 'fun' nature of games, the form of 'edutainment' (HEA, 2017) is provided where the idea is participants will feel emotionally less intensive, as supported by Hycraft (1978). Whilst, according to Sailer et al. (2013, p.30), their theoretical inquiry indicates that 'gamification potentially addresses motivational mechanisms and thereby fosters motivation' and is thus embedded with training of learning skills, meaning that the idea of risk-taking might become possible and may be accepted by participants with more comfort and confidence.

As demonstrated in the section discussing the brief of the facilitator's script, the application of this approach was based on the workshops, where each game was designed for a particular purpose to lead to certain discussions, which on the one hand could facilitate students' instant self-reflection on the process of playing the game and the sharing of individual's perspectives to the group. On the other hand, it also stimulated their thinking of how methods that had been using while they were playing the game could be connected to mainstream course learning. By doing so, I was able to evaluate their responses to the game workshop, to then see how they evaluated their level of understanding. It also helped me to identify the pros and cons of the setting of the gamification environment more efficiently, whereby I could make an instant adjustment to improve the learning and teaching experience. There is a scenario, for instance:

| This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry. |
| Date of diary entry: 23/11.2017 |
| I was noticed that even the workshop started with a game session, it seemed that some of participants were not as relaxed as what I expected. It was interesting to think that what attitude that they held when they were playing the game; what they would see as most important thing, whether if it is the fun and experiential process of playing the game or just a result. |
| Coming with such curiosities, I asked them the question of 'what is your motivation when played the game?' There was a typical answer that stands for most points of view of those participants who were perceived as 'unrelaxed' players. It is that: |
| "The game was just for fun, we should've enjoyed it, and it did for most of time. However, occasionally, I was just unconsciously focusing on the |

> result, while I'd care more about whether if I can win or I have won the game."

The game, more or less, brought the notion of competition and it is fairly reasonable to see such motivation – a striving to win – in the participants. The interesting thing here is that, as Sailer et al. (2013) indicates, the game did foster motivation, however, such motivation did not help with the purpose of this interventions experiment where the concept of gamification is applied. So, the adjustment was made to tackle this problem, which my interpretations as a designer and my reflections as an observer of the game were integrated into the discussion session after each game. By doing so, participants are able to understand my intentions, as well as how they are supported to reflect on the process of game-playing more effectively.

There is another example of how the gamification environment supports learning:

This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry.
Date of diary entry: 23/11/2017
When it went half-way through this phase of experiment, in order to facilitate deep thinking and critical analysis, I increased the level of difficulties of the game and raised the questions for the after-game discussion which were more challenging. It was found that participants started feeling uncomfortable through engaging into such a learning process. When played the game 'Line-ups', for instance, participants were required to identify their positions within the line in which they were guided by the clues that I provided. In addition, they had to talk with each other to identify the subtle difference and to figure out where they should exactly be located. To achieve this, participants had to cope with a series of challenges, such as effective questioning, group cooperation, critical analysis, and decision making, in which a basic open-ended problem-solving skill was expected through playing the game. However, there was no one who succeeded in the game. One of the reasons was because they did not realise the importance of the group cooperation, which is highly demanded for playing this game. However, it was more important that they were really struggling how to identify their position within the group; to them, identifying such subtle differences between each other seemed to be really hard. However, it was just the result that I intended to have. The purpose of designing this game was meant to make them feel uncomfortable at beginning of the workshop but stay with a degree of curiosities of how to tackle the

problem, which thus helped to draw their attention to what the purpose of the game is interpreted; what they can reflect on their experience of playing the game; and how those unsolved problems can be solved by continuingly engaging into the following sessions of the workshop.

It is evident that the applications of game-based approach and the idea of creating the gamification environment for learning were well accepted by the participants. They commented in the feedbacks as follows:

> "*The game was fun, I've really enjoyed it. More importantly, I've learnt a lot of skills through playing the game, which can be used for my own learning.*"

> "*I like this style of teaching. It makes me feel very comfortable. But, I can also learn a lot of new things at the same time.*"

> "*It's fun, sometimes challenging, but more inspiring.*"

However, it is also evidently shown in the feedback that most of the participants still felt challenged when trying to apply what they have learnt from the workshops. It is contradictory, they appeared to enjoy the learning in the workshops and they value their reflections on the learning experience, however, there is still confusion when these are applied to their own learning situations. This might be caused by several reasons: firstly, it may be misleading to some extent that the positives shown in the classroom engagement and participants' feedback made me assume that the knowledge and skills have been effectively taken on board; secondly, it might be overestimated that the scale of workshop is assumed to be affordable by the participants' capacities of absorbing the information; and thirdly, it is deliberated that there might be a tendency that participants are still looking for direct and explicit solutions in consequence of the effects of the 'concrete' nature of their prior educational experience. Obviously, the evidence does show that the EI positively affected participants' learning, based either on my observation or participants' feedback. Whereas, it has been discussed previously, learning takes time and the improvement of learning outcomes is hardly to be expected in only five workshop sessions. Thus, participants could have such confusion and anxieties after they have attended several workshops.

However, despite the facts above, there was still an uncertainty in which the way of validating the actual effectiveness of applying the game-based approach is challenging. I wish I could validate that what participants have learnt from the workshop will directly affect their learning performance on the mainstream course. However, this wish seems unlikely to be fulfilled, as even if there is an improvement, it still hard to identify whether the progress is affected by the workshop or the mainstream course, or just initiated by participants themselves. However, it seemed to be unnecessary to struggle with such uncertainty when I had a conversation with Expert V (V).

V, who worked in architectural practice and education for 10 years, is currently the Deputy Head of the School of Architecture and Design at BCU. She commented on my application of game-based learning approach:

> *"I think a lot of teachers that they think the value in teaching is precisely seeing that the student gets it. However, it might be ignored that this can happens at any time, or it can take ages, or sometimes it never happens, while the student seems not to be able to take that leap as it almost likes a kind of leaping into the unknown, which is really difficult to explain. For example, if you try to explain to somebody where it has not already happened, they might ask 'what are you talking about?' Whereas, if you talk to somebody where they have experienced it, then they know exactly what you are talking about. So, telling people what is going to happen does not necessarily help. In some ways I think you are right, you are doing games and bringing students along with you, when they enter into a kind of trust, they then can realize that they are doing something they didn't know they could."*

But, she also indicates the intangible nature of my experiment. She says that:

> *"However, the effectiveness to the learning outcomes, I think it's quite intangible. Because if the way that everything turned into cost benefit, such as how much it cost to do this and how much benefit, or more specifically what the learning outcomes are; when everything is being measured by a sort of ruler, it is then very difficult to be able to maintain that kind of richness."*

5.3.4 Summary of key reflections and initial findings: Phase 2

In conclusion, this section emphasised that there was a need for necessary improvements to be made in order to obtain the meaningfulness of the EI. It introduced that improvements were made based on certain adjustments both to theoretical level, in which Bloom's Taxonomy is applied to guide the pedagogical planning of the framework of interventional workshops, and at a practical level, in which teaching strategies and approaches are developed to maintain and enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

The rational of why and how these adjustments are made and how they are inter-linked with each other has also been discussed. There is a recognition of the weakness of the design of the interventional workshops in the Phase 1, where skill-focused training – without looking after participants' understanding of what the educational experience is – tended to be less effectively attempted. It is thus realised that a connection of educational experiences between what participants have had previously and what they are expected to have in the UK is necessarily considered to be built through interventional workshops. According to this, the following adjustments are made:

i)   The application of Bloom's Taxonomy
      Bloom's Taxonomy was applied as a guide to planning and designing the workshops in relation to different levels of challenge of learning expectations; it was also applied as a translation tool to help the participants find correlations between the learning skills that they acquired previously and the learning skills that they are expected to have in the Master's course study. In addition, it also supports the process of conceptual translation and negotiation: across the participants' previous education experience, in China and their Master's level study in the UK, and in the context of participants' practice-based subject.

ii)   The application of 'reflective and experiential learning'
      It is realised that it is not enough to just focus on building up the connections of learning skills. In order to effectively connect two educational experiences, it is essential to make participants aware of the differences of the attitude towards the creative process between two educational traditions; and it is also essential to support the understanding of the notion of professional development in their Master's study and of how this notion correlates to their prior understanding. Thus, Kolb's learning cycle is applied as a translation tool, as well as a

management tool, to support participants' understanding and purposeful management of their own creative process. Whilst, the idea of the application of 'reflective and experiential learning' also supports the design of the learning and teaching activities, in which the fostered reflections and constructed knowledge by participants themselves are expected. Last but not least, when I lead and observe the learning and teaching process, the idea also guides me to consider how to make learning contextualised in relation to participants' Master's study and further guides more teaching.

iii)   The application of 'game-based learning' approach

The 'game-based learning' approach was applied in the EI workshops in Phase 1, it was continuously applied in this phase and its use was developed. In the intervention workshops in this phase, 'game-based learning' approach still maintained its function of building participants' levels of confidence. Beside this, it was also applied in two other ways: firstly, inspired by the idea of 'changing the language', the approach was used to change the way of articulation of educational discourse and formulate a 'gamification environment' in the teaching and learning context, in which the nature of risk-taking in learning tends to be more easily adapted by participants; secondly, it was applied in the actual learning process, in which activities were designed as games to foster motivation and willingness of learning in order to meet the purposes of skills acquisition and knowledge construction by the participants themselves.

Based on the feedback of the participants, it evidently shows effective impact on their learning; and it seems that they started to realise the differences between the two educational experiences and made the interpretation of the differences based on their own reflections through the learning process. However, the effectiveness of the learning outcomes can be intangible, and it is also unrealistic to expect that the change in their attitudes to learning will emerge immediately, as learning takes times and because different individuals might reflect on the learning materials in different ways. Despite these, the EI does meet its purpose of functionally being as a 'trigger'.

5.4   Experimental Learning Enhancement Programme: PHASE 3

Phase 3 of the Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) was conducted at the Gemmological Institute of China University of Geosciences (GIC) in Wuhan, China.

Comprising a series of workshops, 18 first-year students taking the GIC Master's degree course in jewellery design at GIC participated in the programme. The aim of the workshops was to support their learning skills development, through UK educational methods and approaches. Consistent with the previous two phases, the Phase 3 workshops concentrated on building specialist subject knowledge (jewellery design concepts and practices) and Master's level learning skills, with a focus on utilising and testing general and subject-specific aspects of UK practices in HE.

The text boxes below contain extracts from the researcher's diary of personal reflections on the experience of conducting the workshops.

5.4.1 Planning and the organisation of the workshops

The following diary entries concern the period of planning and preparing for the first Phase 3 workshop in China.

This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry, made in the UK before the workshops at GIC.
Date of diary entry: 03/12/2017
It had not been planned to take the learning enhancement programme into a third phase, until I received an invitation from GIC in Wuhan, China. The Director of the Jewellery Department invited me, as a visiting lecturer, to conduct a two-week teaching session with first-year Master's jewellery students, I was asked to apply academic approaches that are commonly used in the UK in A&D HE, and there were no restrictions that I had to follow regarding the strategies operating at GIC. This gave me freedom to design the teaching sessions. This freedom led me to think about using the EIs that I had developed in the UK as a basis to create the teaching sessions in China for the GIC jewellery course. I was interested to find out to what extent the students in China could understand the UK learning expectations and educational experience. Could the students in China also benefit from learning approaches, which are used in the UK learning environment? The GIC Director of Jewellery positively supported these ideas and questions. As such, I started designing the sessions, as an extension to the EIs in the UK.

5.4.2 Consideration of how the EIs conducted in the UK could transfer to China

Phases 1 and 2 applied and tested EI methods and techniques, with a specific focus on developing the participants' understanding of how 'conceptual translation' and negotiation skills could support their adaptation to learning in the UK HE system. However, for Phase 3, as the educational environment and context for this phase had changed from the UK to China, it was necessary to consider how the nature of the interventions, as applied in the UK, could be adapted to relate to the environment of Chinese HE. Adaptations were made and these are detailed below. Testing the adapted interventions in China enabled the researcher to consider the effectiveness of the adaptations and to compare the group of Chinese students participating in the workshops in their 'home' environment to the group of Chinese students participating in similar workshops in the UK.

The workshops in Phase 3 were designed as practical studio- and technical workshop-based activities, situated in the context of contemporary jewellery. This was the first time that the interventions were integrated into jewellery practice. Therefore, in addition to the comparisons above, this enabled the researcher to compare the effectiveness of the interventions that were conducted without a direct physical connection to jewellery practice to those applied through practice.

For Phase 3, it was important to consider that the participants had not previously been exposed to UK-based learning practices, either in the UK or in China, and that the majority would most likely finish their Master's studies in China. Therefore, although the process of preparing for the workshops assessed how the participants could benefit from UK-based learning and teaching approaches, in their local setting, it did not necessarily address, as a priority, the previously discussed matters of adjustment, adaptation and transition, which are generally acknowledged as necessary processes when a student moves from one educational tradition in to another.

This text is based on the researcher's reflection on a research diary entry, made in China before workshops at GIC.
Date of diary entry: 17/12/2017
Before the start of the teaching sessions, I spent a week familiarising myself with the learning and teaching environment in order to make sure that the

workshops could run as planned. This week of preparation included a group of actions: investigating the practical learning environment; classroom observation; teaching facilities preparation; negotiating the teaching plan. These actions found that learning on the GIC Jewellery Master's course is generally studio-based and that the university provided good facilities and spaces to support active learning. Despite several conventional courses, which run across all of the Master's courses, the Jewellery course is set up based on a number of learning stages within a three-year period. Each stage is made up of design projects. The students must successfully accomplish all of these projects in order to move to next stage. The projects are designed for a variety of purposes. These include: technique-focused – through which the students demonstrate their ability to apply particular techniques or making-skills in their design work; industrial-oriented – which require the students to consider a range of industrial-related factors in producing their work; emphasising creative ideas and innovation – through the use of technologies, whereby the students are required to demonstrate creative abilities. I also observed that the role of the Master's course tutors tends to give more emphasis to 'guiding to learn' than 'leading to learn'. All of the above findings seem to point in the direction of a Western way of teaching. However, differences, in terms of pedagogical strategies, could still be observed. For example, compared to a UK Master's course in A&D, the length of each project is relatively short, normally no longer than one month. From a UK perspective this might mean giving less opportunity for deeper and more sustained thinking through the learning process. I also observed that tutors or students, or both, appeared to focus on the final product rather than the process of design development. At GIC there is also the situation that learning aims are communicated to students in relation to the different stages of the Master's course. This is because Master's courses in China run over three years and has different stages. Although the stages are linked, they tend to be discreet in character, making it difficult for the student to make their own connections across the stages and to integrate them together. By comparison, the Master's in the UK, running over one year is much more intensive and because the course is more continuous in character, this enables the student to learn more holistically.

The findings through the previously mentioned workshop pre-actions provided a lens through which to consider the learning situations of the participants. They also enabled the

researcher to speculate on how the participants might interact with the planned teaching sessions. This led to the realisation that the workshops would not be effective if they were organised in the same way as the workshops that were conducted in the UK. It was therefore decided to approach the GIC workshops in a more practical way, that is, to maintain the active nature of game-based learning activities, but to involve these with actual jewellery design practices. According to this thinking, a series of nine full-day practice-based workshops were conducted, whereby the participants were encouraged to discover the ways in which ideas and materials are explored in contemporary jewellery practice. The intention of the approach was to enable the participants to develop of a broader understanding of: what jewellery can be; how contemporary thinking about materials impacts on studio-based jewellery practice; how personal experience can contribute or counteract ideas generation. Within the condensed time of the workshops, the intention was to help the students, through self-reflection, to make their own connections between what they have learnt from previous courses and how they can apply the knowledge and experiences they acquired through the workshops to new learning situations.

The workshops were organised as a design project, comprising nine days of practice-based activities. The workshop participants engaged with approaches to contemporary jewellery practice and the ways through which ideas and materials can be explored.

5.4.3   The brief for the Phase 3 workshops

The workshops comprised a range of activities. The brief for the activities conducted in each workshop are presented in Appendix 9. The first workshop commenced with a focus on facilitating and building communication aptitudes and skills. This was approached through the researcher and the participants sharing learning-journey stories. To begin with, I introduced my own story and reflections upon educational experiences in China and the UK. This was followed by each of the participants sharing their own journeys with the rest of the group. The aim of this activity was to help the participants to identify where they had got to with respect to the acquisition of learning skills and subject knowledge, and to reflect upon their previous experiences in Phases 1 and 2 of the LEP. It also aimed to provide an opportunity to discuss study expectations and ambitions. An overview of the learning objectives of the workshops as a whole, and their relationship to aspects of educational theory, provided a context for discussion on skills and knowledge. Overall, this workshop

enabled the group to self- and peer-assess their real-world educational and life experiences across different cultures and education practices.

The second workshop focused on further building, applying and evaluating knowledge and skills. The activities commenced with a focus on the relationship of cognitive skills to experimental jewellery practice. Specifically, these were designed in order to give attention to aspects of observation and description; research and reflection; experimentation with materials; thinking skills in relation to practice and ideas development; and analysis. These skills-centred activities were followed by practically applying learning and teaching methods: group discussions, group tutorials, group critiques and one-to-one tutorials, in the context of jewellery study and practice. Finally, each participant was asked to critically reflect upon: her/his experience of learning, teaching and assessment methods and approaches; their perceptions of differences between what they had been accustomed to educationally in China compared to what they then found in the UK; how they can use their own judgement in engaging with unfamiliar approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and how they can benefit from negotiating new learning experiences.

The third workshop focused on the use participants could make of the assessment process. In particular it paid attention to what the participants could learn from their engagement in assessment – not so much with respect to the achievement of a final mark, but more in terms of how they can learn and develop through the processes of reflection and criteria-based evaluation, and how assessment works in practice. Through presenting and discussing their design work in relation to learning outcomes and the assessment of these outcomes, this stage enabled the participants to evaluate and synthesise what they had learnt from the previous two stages.

Critical to the combination of the three workshops above was enabling the participants to build their own knowledge in a way that had meaning to themselves and helped to equip them with the tools to learn and develop within different environments.

5.4.5   Initial analysis and reflections on Phase 3 of the LEP

The following analysis of Phase 3 of the programme focuses on observations and reflections on the learning experiences of the programme's participants and the adjustments made to pedagogical approaches by the researcher toward better supporting student learning in the context of the Chinese HE system. The analysis also explores

perspectives on the subject of contemporary jewellery practice and begins to identify key themes, which emerged during this phase. In particular, aspects of inter-cultural learning and teaching experiences are discussed and the importance of developing negotiation skills, which enable the participants, working together with tutors, to interpret, exchange and explore 'meaning relations' in a dynamic and flexible education space.

The following summary is organised in a way that interconnects the researcher's:

- diary recordings of the workshops;
- reflections on those recollections;
- initial findings from the workshops and discussion on what they mean for the research;
- engagement with expert interviews.

The diary recordings are based on extracts from the researcher's diary. These are presented in text boxes. Each diary entry is followed by reflections on their content and connected to relevant aspects of educational theory. Through this structure, the research begins to formulate proposals for actions and further research.

5.4.5.1 Reflections on the initial learning experiences of Chinese students undertaking the LEP workshops in China

Compared to the previous two workshops in the UK, for these Phase 3 workshops in China, the first workshop was the first time that I met the participants. It was therefore important to introduce myself and the nature and purposes of the workshops.

> This text is based on the researcher's reflection on a research diary entry, made in China after day one of the first workshop.
> Date of diary entry: 18/12/2017
>
> On day one, the workshop began with an introduction to my learning and teaching experience in China; I talked about the reasons why I abandoned the teaching position and made the decision to study in the UK; I described how I initially struggled to learn effectively on the Master's course and how I finally achieved success; I shared my motivation to continue my studies at research degree level; I also emphasised the importance of this research and how it could benefit not only students learning abroad, but also the students in this classroom.

The following is a transcript of a conversation between the researcher and one of the teachers at GIC.

> *"We are inviting educational experts and jewellery professionals who come from different places around world as visiting lecturers to teach our students every year. They are normally running one-off teaching sessions of one-month duration. They are welcomed by the students, because they can bring lots of ideas and teaching approaches that we are not familiar with, and students very much enjoy the learning time they spent with them. However, the problem is that once the expert has left, it seems that students are all going back to their normal everyday routines like before the visiting experts came. It is not obvious to see the impacts that have been left on the students."*

It is the view of the researcher that it is likely that the above situation is caused by the pedagogical strategies that operate in this institution – that is, the impact on student learning is temporary. There is the benefit of learning through exposure to unfamiliar ideas and approaches, but it seems that this learning / knowledge / experience is not taken by the students in to their studies – the experience stays within the visiting teaching sessions. It is suggested that these strategies are important determining factors, which affect the extent to which learners are able to reflect on their learning, as well as to build connections between the experiences between 'the learner's 'inner and outer environments' (Räsänen, 1998, p.40). This thinking is often seen as an essential element of learning by academics and researchers who advocate reflective and experiential learning approaches. However, there can be another reason, which might reflect to a dilemma – the conflict of two different educational experiences – similar to what Chinese students and UK tutors have encountered. As I discovered through the conversation with course tutors, the visiting lecturers invited from abroad are teaching mainly in English, and their teaching is basically studio practice-based and involves activities such as making, discussion, tutorial and presentation, which are dominated by the Western idea of learning and teaching. However, most of them have very limited understanding about the educational situations in this institute.

Räsänen (1998, p.40) states that 'according to hermeneutical phenomenology, personal attitudes and views are based on different meaning contents that are received and interpreted through earlier contents of mind.' Reflecting on this, the educational experiences of the Chinese students and those of the visiting lecturers can be reasoned by

two different meaning contents. However, this can be problematic that without the negotiation of two different meaning contents by both tutors and participants, then there is less possibility that the meaning of the learning experience through their teaching can be discovered and conceptualised by the students.

Bringing these concerns, I decided to start the first workshop with an introduction of my own learning experiences. Based on the previous experience of teaching Chinese students in the UK, I believe that it is essential to establish a trustworthy environment before the start of the learning and teaching session; and that, by introducing my own learning experience both in China and in the UK, it clarifies the meaning of participation in my workshops, as well as helping participants to see the potential connections between their own experiences and the experiences that my workshops might bring to them.

This text is based on the researcher's reflections on a research diary entry, made in China after day one of the first workshop. Date of diary entry: 18/12/2017
After finishing introducing myself, each student was asked to give a short self-introduction to the group, in which a group of questions had to be answered, including: what is your name; where are you from; how is your learning experience before the Master's course; what is your motivation for studying the Postgraduate course?

According to Hofstede's Power Distance Index (PDI) (1980), China is one of the world's "high-PDI" countries, and this also reflects on its educational environment. Based on Hofstede's (2008) discussion on the manifestation of power distance education, it illustrates a high-power distance situation where the educational process is dominated by the teacher and the students likely remain silent in the class. Thus, the classroom, affected by this power dimension, might appear to be relatively less effective in the application of the learning interaction methods and approaches, which involve tutor and student interactions, such as discussions, activities and tutorials. There is evidence that the course tutors at GIC have adopted certain Western learning and teaching approaches (see Section 5.4.1). However, based on the researcher's observations, the pedagogical approaches applied by tutors at GIC could be considered at this stage to operate on a relatively surface level and therefore that deeper learning – facilitated through interactions such as discussions, tutorials and open reflections – is more difficult to achieve.

From considering this type of educational environment, it is necessary to encourage the positive engagement of participants at the initial stage. The above question and answer session was designed for this aim. Additionally, I also spent time explaining the similarities and differences between the pedagogical strategies and approaches that are applied on their Master's course and my workshops; and to emphasise the importance of the nature of communication and interaction during the learning process. The selection of learning activities also aimed to make participants physically feel the differences that I explained, thus decrease negative factors which might come from their prior learning experiences and to change their attitudes and motivations of participation of the workshops.

The researcher observed that the participants were curious about the different teaching styles and approaches that the workshops utilised. Based on their feedback, they responded positively to the way that self-initiated learning was encouraged. It also emerged that the participants questioned ways of learning and how contemporary thinking about the practice of jewellery could be applied by them after the workshops and when they return to their local learning environment.

According to Räsänen (1998, p.38):

> *All education aims at creating and developing meaning relations. A meaning relation is born when a person understands the meaning behind a phenomenon and builds a relationship to the world according to this understanding.*

It seems that the 'meaning relation' has been created and developed amongst this group of participants who are dominated by Chinese educational traditions. However, this presented even more challenges than when I was teaching the Chinese group in the UK, because it was not necessary to have a process of adaptation when the participants had already been studying in a familiar educational environment. Otherwise, there could be a paradox if there is an insistence on adjustment or adaptation from one educational culture to another in this situation, because this tends to be a precondition that a dominated educational culture exists. However, this idea of domination in education could deny the 'meaning relations' in respect of a student's experience gained from his/her prior education, and it might also ignore the nature of 'meaning relations' developed through the interactions between personal experience and the changing environment culturally, regionally, and globally. For example, as Harley (2008, p.178) points out:

With an international student, perceptions of design and cognitive skills can often be seen negatively, in that it does not appear to directly relate to the European skill set. Difference is often perceived as weakness i.e. a lack of … skills, or perceived familiarity with our ways of 'doing things.

International students here are seen as 'educational others' （Ibid） to distinguish from the 'educational west'. According to Harley, in order to be seen 'none-negatively', they are expected to be able to act in similar ways of 'doing things' as that of home students. However, it could be problematic if this perspective is brought into a shifted situation, for example that which I was encountering in China in which – although still dealing with the relationship between Chinese students' own experiences and the UK educational traditions – the educational situation was internationally shifted. The attitudes and expectations of learning are adjusted as the educational environment shifts from the UK to China; thus the participants find what I was trying to encourage them to understand as 'alien', and it always comes down to an uncertainty as to what the meanings of these 'alien' things have to do in relation to their current Master's study. So, if 'all education aims at creating and developing meaning relations' (Räsänen, 1998, p.38), then the idea of how to maintain the meaningfulness of learning seems to be more vital than the insistence of the privileges of the dominated educational culture.

According to Räsänen, the development of 'meaning relations' relies on 'understanding the relativeness and complexity of the world and our experiences, and integrating different learning styles' (1998, p.34). This means that when I taught this group of participants, I could not neglect the influence of their own experiences and also could not ignore the central role of myself as an agency of fostering the 'meaning relations'. In this process, I needed to teach in the context of the UK jewellery HE, as well as having to learn what the participants have already acquired based on their current Master's education. By considering the idea of 'internationalizing the curriculum' where Harley et al. (2008: p.168) argue that in HE there is a need for a "Third Space': a generative, incorporative, dynamic, experimental space of mutuality and exchange,' I decided myself, as a co-worker rather than a facilitator, to see the teaching and learning with participants as 'reciprocal' and 'collaborative' processes (Bostock, 2012, p.222), in which the participants took additional responsibility of working with me, together with the ideas of conceptual translation and negotiation to support the happening of new knowledge construction.

The next section considers evidence drawn from the LEP workshops. The intention is to relate this evidence to the key concepts and practices explored through this research.

5.4.5.2 Analysis and reflections on evidence drawn from the LEP workshops

Evidence 1:

The art works produced by a range of contemporary jewellery artists (see Appendix figure…), were introduced to the students as examples relevant to discussing the contemporary perspective on 'What is jewellery?' Clear confusion appeared on the most of the students' faces and they expressed their uncertainty of how they should define these works as jewellery? One of them even bravely asked that 'what is the point to discuss those artists work if there is no such environment to accept their values in China?'

Mapping Evidence 1 to theory:

I was not surprised that the students had such reactions; these artists' work challenged the general public's conventional perspectives on jewellery even when they were first-established in the Western world. The reason that I presented those art works to the students was to make them aware of different voices and attitudes on jewellery, and highlight that they would be expected to reflect on those voices and attitudes and develop their own thinking on jewellery. However, the students' reactions indicated that although they may be familiar with the term 'contemporary jewellery' they lack knowledge of what makes contemporary jewellery and what contemporary perspectives make jewellery distinctive.

As explained by the course tutor, contemporary A&D education in China has not existed for very long, and jewellery education in this institute in particular has been about how it should operate and what relationship it should have with industry. Although it has been absorbing the contemporary concepts that are currently advocated in the jewellery education of Western countries, Chinese design education has been subjected to many more governmental regulations regarding the curriculum; and there is a tension that jewellery education has to meet industry needs in order to maintain a good level of employability. Consequently, the ways in which these concepts can have meaning in relation to the local education mode has been rarely explored. Thus, without a contextualised understanding in relation to the participants' personal histories and their

actual learning situations, the concept of 'meaning relations' has also hardly been developed.

To build the contextualised understanding, Rothstein-Fisch (2003, p.9) suggests that:

> *As with any new set of concepts, it is best to situate this framework within the learners' own lived experiences with real world cultural conflicts and concerns. Participants will need time to see what applies to the individuals and groups they work with in school settings. … It is therefore ideal to allow for as much guided discussion time as possible.*

Thus, guidance was given that the aim of introducing artists' works and contemporary perspectives on jewellery was neither about the overall acceptance of contemporary ideas in making jewellery nor about making value judgement on jewellery artists' works – rather, its aim was to lead the discussion of to what extent the boundaries of jewellery can be explored and what this means to the people who are actively engaging in this subject. Time was allocated for ongoing discussions, led by these open-ended questions; it encouraged students to consider their own experiences as they reflected upon and anticipated interactions with contemporary thinking on jewellery. In these ways, conceptual translation and negotiation practices – ones that blended their own experiences with the new ideas that were given – provided participants with more choice as a reflectioner and afforded a wider range of meaning making. Learning was taking place while I was teaching, and whilst they were teaching they and I were learning – together we created new knowledge, which was meaningful to all stakeholders.

Evidence 2

Students were organised to play the 'Directions Game' (see appendix 7 & 9), in which they were given five minutes to identify a destination that a lady was looking for. They could use the boy's words as instruction and address the name of the destination shown on the map. This process was predominantly completed in English; after the game, the students were asked to share their reflections of playing the game, in Mandarin.

The following is a transcription of a conversation between the researcher (R) and the participants (P). The conversation is in Mandarin and is transcribed in English.

P: *"It should be a fastest route, why did the boy direct it in a so complex way?"*

R: *"So, is there any other route can reach the destination?"*

P: *"Yes".*

R: *"How many routes?"*

P: *"…a lot"*

R: *"So, what are you reflecting on this?"*

P: *"There are lots of ways of reaching the destination."*

R: *"How does it relate to the materials exploration?"*

P: *"We should pay more attention to the different possibilities of exploring the materials, rather than only focus on achieving the final result."*

R: *"Are there other reflections on playing this game?"*

P: *"The fastest path might not be the best path. Different path could lead to different experience, sometimes, experiencing on the process might be more valuable than the result."*

R: *"Now, is there anyone can share your understanding of what the 'Critical reflection' is?"*

P: *"At the beginning, I thought that 'critical' means to criticise something. But, now, it seems to me as a process of reflecting on yourself through asking question, analysing, and making judgement. I think it is an objective way of analysing and evaluating things. I think this is a mode of thinking through questioning."*

Mapping Evidence 2 to theory:

The content and conduct of the workshop involving bilingual communication was the same in both China and the UK, but the proportion of English to Mandarin in one environment was different to the other. Nevertheless, the building of learning skills by the application of a bilingual approach seemed to be important in this learning situation and it tied in with conceptual translation and negotiation.

The 'Directions Game' as a learning activity was designed to be used in both intervention workshops in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Its use was developed from the purpose of enhancing learning engagement and building participants' confidence to a more meaningful level, in which it was used as an effective learning device to facilitate critical reflection skills. I continued to use it when I was teaching in China, however, as the notion of critical thinking is mentioned less frequently in Chinese educational traditions, the 'Direction Game' thus had an additional function: to initiate the discussion and conceptual translation of what critical thinking is and how it can be applied in the context of Chinese jewellery education.

It has been discussed in the previous two phases that critical skills are one of the essential elements that support self-directed learning. However, 'Critical thinking is often an area that is cited as a problem for international students' (Alexander, Argent and Spender 2008; cited by Caldwell and Gregory, 2016, p.118), and the experts who were interviewed as part of this study also expressed similar concerns. The reasons for this have been discussed in Phase 1 – it might either be because (1): Chinese students are rarely trained in such skills before they arrive in the UK; or (2) due to the fact that two different educational experiences have not been fully considered by UK tutors, which as a result may be misleading, in that Chinese students are assumed to be able to obtain the same level of understanding of the learning expectations as home students, causing a lack of sympathy in the tutor to cultural differences, as well as students' culture shock to learning abroad.

However, as discussed within this group of participants, I realised that the explanation of the academic terms can also be sometimes problematic for students acquiring learning skills. According to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) (2014), some of the academic terms featuring prominently in UK A&D education are often not explicitly explained. Critical thinking, for instance, is not able to be 'explicitly taught the forms of expression and inquiry which are expected within their particular context and discipline. (Ibid, 2014, p.3)'. Turner (2006) also argues that critical thinking is often unclearly defined in many cases, and

'emerge from cultural knowledge traditions rather than universal measures of higher learning' (Turner, 2006, p.2), which can thus cause Chinese students to be often characterised as unable to work in a critical context, especially in an English dominated learning environment. Despite these, HEA (2014c, p.4) cited Mason's (2008) research findings and indicates that 'critical thinking is viewed in many different ways and can encompass a variety of skills such as: reasoning, asking probing questions, evaluating arguments and evidence'.

This above can be seen as a common Western view of the nature of critical thinking. However, as a way of successfully explaining it to Chinese students has not been found, their understanding of the notion of this academic term thus has to be generally based on direct translations. The most common translation of the term into Chinese is '批判性思维' or '批判性思考'[20]. Yet, the term '批判' means 'to be criticised', which is 'misleading because it confuses differences in style of expression with a lack of academic rigour' (Yoshino, 2004, p.10; cited by Ryan and Louie, 2008, p.73), and it fails to understand the real notion of the critical thinking. Turner (2006, p.34) also indicates that 'Chinese students face an acute need to bridge different ways of knowing and expressing what they know.'

However, as Niinisto argues, 'knowing does not alone lead to understanding, the learner's whole personality has to be involved in the act of understanding' (1984, cited by Räsänen, 1998, p.40). So, to tackle this problem, the bilingual approach together with the 'Direction Game', as applied as in this scenario, created a cycle of reflective and experiential learning, in which – according to Räsänen's theory of 'experiential art learning' – participants began to recognise that the problem in playing the game is interpretation. 'After personal associations and identification, subjective experiences are placed into a conceptual framework based on the historical and cultural grounds behind the conflicts studied' (Räsänen, 1998, p.31). The 'heightened level of consciousness' (Ibid) is then expected to be gradually adapted with the further practices.

In this way, it helped participants assess the notion of critical thinking by reflecting upon the activity they were just involved in, and to problematise and reflect upon their

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[20] Google translate: Critical thinking　批判性思□
  Noun. the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.

  Cambridge Dictionary: Critical thinking　批判性思考
  Noun. the process of thinking carefully about a subject or idea, without allowing feelings or opinions to affect you

preunderstanding of the term – which aimed at participants' self-consciousness of 'turning their experience into learning applicable to real-life situations' (Ibid). More importantly, a bilingual perspective helped participants switch their thinking mode in between English and Chinese, which enabled them to connect and negotiate their own experiences with factual context much more easily, and then conceptualise them as understandable knowledge. It thus fostered skills and abilities that enabled them to move between different educational cultures and make them flexible as individuals.

Evidence 3

During the second session of materials exploration (see Appendix 9), participants were asked to make five objects in two hours by using one of the materials that they had previously selected. The objects did not have to be well-finished, however, the design thinking and the potential of design development had to be shown through the presentation of their works.

By doing this, the misunderstanding of the learning requirements was perceived through the presentations of the participants, and was further proved through their conversation with the researcher. The following is a transcription of a conversation [21] between the researcher (R) and one of the participants (P). This provides an example of how misunderstanding can happen. The conversation is in Mandarin, and is transcribed in English:

R: *"What have you made?"*

P: *"I made five objects by using dry flowers and newspapers."*

R: *"Why did you make these?"*

P: *"Through this collection of works, I would like to show the relationship between life and death. I think the process of life and death makes a cycle, there is no end.*

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[21] When the researcher was working with this group of Chinese students, it was recognised that there was a sense of directness in the approach to discussing the students' ideas and work. When translated from Mandarin into English, this approach could be perceived as impolite. It is therefore important to explain that such a perception would be the result of the different ways in which the two languages work in each of their cultural contexts. As discussed in the research methodology chapter, it was necessary to converse in different ways with Chinese students who were studying in the UK and with those who were studying in China. This was because of the relationship of languages to cultural contexts and the resulting expectations of students.

Newspaper and its burning marks present something in the past or has already gone, but it won't be the end. A new life is growing from the ashes, in which I used dry flower to express this feeling."

R: *"Thank you for telling us this beautiful story. However, in terms of a design project, I think it is not convinced enough only by making up a story. There is still something missing that it cannot make me believe it is a successful design project. As first, it is hard to make me obtain the same feeling as what you described in your story, because you did not provide any support evidence, and only by looking at these actual pieces of work it is not sufficient to make me connect them with your story; and I also think it is too ambitious to fulfil this task in only two hours. Second, the story might be nice, however, in terms of the design development, it is hardly to see the evidence that how it to do with your design thinking and development, as you just made five pieces of object, which looks very much the same; and third, the materials that you have chosen might be able to support your design idea, however, regarding the requirement of materials exploration, neither the dry flowers nor the newspapers have been transformed in any kind of forms; it seems that you just used these materials and assembled them together as what they were used to be looking like. So, can you try to be honest to yourself and explain again that how you have made these five pieces of work?"*

P: *"At beginning, I chose the dry flower and newspaper as the materials and made one object first; then I thought that those materials are quite fit to the topic of life and death, because the dry flower to me is like a feeling of life, and the newspaper to me is like something old or something in the past, especially when I burned it. Because you asked us to make 5 objects, in which they have to relate to each other. So, I continued to make another 4 pieces of object and to keep them as a same style by using the same materials, and I supposed that these works have presented my design ideas well."*

R: *"Thanks for your honesty. Can you tell me that what is you understand of what the design development is?"*

P: *"I think it's probably a process of making your work based on your design ideas."*

R: *"Can you explain it in more details that how you cope with this process?"*

P: *"By looking at the materials, there are usually some ideas or images generated in my mind first, if there is time I will draw them out, and then make them as real. Otherwise, I will make them out straight away."*

R: *"Is there anything else which might need your attentions in this process?"*

P: *"Yes, get my work done on time."*

Mapping Evidence 3 to theory

In this situation, it can be seen that the misunderstanding of the learning requirements was mainly caused by the notion of design development[22], in which the interpretation formed by the participants differed from its actual meaning in the context of UK A&D HE. According to Austerlitz et al. (2008, p.140), their perspectives on A&D pedagogies within a Western context indicates that the notion of design development, which tends to be 'process-oriented', refers to that 'each person is required to develop his or her personal response to the creation of 'work''; and the process of the development of this response is always bonded with 'experiential knowledge of the practice', in which:

> *such experiential knowledge is built up through learning about a range of processes and techniques, through experimentation, testing, and trial and error. The students are expected to research, to independently explore a wide range of contextual factors relevant to the discipline and to the project they are engaged in.*

Whereas, according to what M explained in our conversation, it can be seen that design development, which tends to be 'exam-oriented or result-oriented', was interpreted as a designing and making process, where the focus is on one's final work, and the imaginations and ideas that went behind were not necessarily well presented.

As discussed in the previous section, a problem occurs when the academic terms are not explicitly explained, for example the issues around the understanding of the notion of critical thinking. This scenario provides us with another dimension of viewing the problem in relation to academic terms: in that even when the learning requirements of the academic

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[22] Design development has also been named as personal development (Austerlitz et al., 2008).
Austerlitz et al. indicates that 'a number of key precepts are central to art and design pedagogies within a western context. The first of these is the notion of the individual's personal development' (2008, p.140)

term have been clearly indicated it may be the case that the academic term has been interpreted differently within the learner's original educational context.

It is notable that this finding was intangible when the workshops were undertaken in the UK. One of the reasons may be because that in the UK-based workshops did not involve the studio jewellery practice, meaning that the impact of such differences was less observable. On the other hand, the proportion of students using English language in the UK is greater that using Madeiran. Participants seemed less able to articulate their actual thoughts using English, and this may be related to what S and H suggest – that Chinese students are afraid to be wrong, especially when they are not able to effectively articulate their thoughts in English. However, the finding became tangible when the impacts of the educational cultural difference became obvious through the studio practice and conversations in a Mandarin-speaking environment, in which participants could articulate themselves with more confidence – they are studying in the Chinese educational culture context and their academic mindset is also dominated by this culture, thus they logically convince themselves that they are doing the 'right things'.

However, without a proper understanding of how the academic term might be differently interpreted, Chinese students are more likely to be seen as 'educational others', and such a difference can thus be perceived as a weakness in learning skills (Harley et al., 2008). This perspective can also be detected through the expert interviews, for instance, the opinion of H was:

> "…*the problem is that a lot of Chinese students don't read enough or they are not exposing themselves to enough sources of information such as cultural, theoretical, technical or whatever, for them to come up with concepts or interpret with concepts in different ways, because they've got such a narrow lens with which they are looking at idea."*

G also points that:

> "*There is another thing, which I suppose is about research in the design process. In Western cultures, there is an implicit understood relationship with historical materials, which always passing the exemplars and almost unconsciously without studying students absorb many kinds of visual language of fashion design. Whereas in China was quite different because of lots of complicated reasons… But,*

I think research in the design process is a bit of absent, which provides deeper learning opportunities."

Despite the above, it has been discussed in Phase 2 that there is a difference existing between the UK and Chinese views of what A&D education is, and this difference is further associated with diverse ideas about what is significant in the design process and the relationships to the industrial situations of both countries. Thus, rather than simply seeing Chinese students' learning skills in a negative light, it is worthwhile considering the meaning of the different interpretations of design development, which may reflect the pedagogical approaches applied differently in the Chinese and UK A&D HE context and which might be applied with particular meanings in their own context. Otherwise, it can be problematic if either pedagogical approach is directly applied into the other educational context without a process of negotiation and conceptual translation of the academic terms in order to create 'meaning relations' for each other.

As discussed earlier in this section, the pedagogical approaches have been referred to differently as 'process-oriented' nature in the UK and 'result-oriented' nature in China. In order to better understand the extent of the impact that 'result-oriented' nature has upon participants' learning experiences, a further investigation proceeded through the interviews conducted by the researcher (R) with participants (P) and their teachers (T). These questions and answers are presented as follows:

R: "*Which aspect do you think is more significant when you are asked to design and make something on your course, the design process or the final product?"*

P1*: "If you are talking about my MA course, I would choose the final product. Because of that at most of time, the qualities of our final work are more emphasised. Thinking and decision making through the design and making process will also be discussed with our tutors, whereas they are not actually taken into account and associated with our final mark.*

R: *"If there is no correlation with the mark, will the final product still be your first choice?"*

P2: "*I think the answer is 'Yes', because the discussions around the process of design and making with tutors are sometimes just for the purpose of proving you*

are in the right direction of making your work. However, the judgement of that whether if you are in the right direction normally counts to tutor's decisions. They will tell you this is right and this is wrong; or you should be doing this or you should be doing that…"

R: *"If you are spending more time focusing on your final product, how are you making sure the work you produced at the end meets the course requirement?"*

P3: "*Every tutor has his/her own attitude and preference on our work. I'm very clear about what tutors want from me and what they prefer to be seeing. So, it's going to be very simple that the needs are to make sure my work meets the quality standard in terms of making, as well as to make my work as what they like in terms of design. Achieving both of these, it then will get me a good mark or get pass at least."*

R*: "What approaches are normally used for the assessment of students' learning outcomes in a design project?"*

T1: "*Students' learning is monitored across the whole process of their design project, which covers from their idea generation to the final product. We use approaches such as group lecturing, discussion and one to one tutorial to clarify the aims of the learning and identify the problems that students might be encountering through the learning process. However, the way of assessing students' learning outcomes is mainly based on the quality and the level of finishing of their final product."*

R: "*Would that mean the marks that are given for the students' learning of the project relies on the judgement towards the final product rather than the learning process?"*

T1: "*Yes, the large proportions that determine students' marks are based on of the judgement of the final product."*

R*: "Is there any particular reason for adopting this assessment approach?"*

T2: *"I think the answer to this could be complex, and it is hard to be explained by attributing this to any single reason. However, there is a one I think is important that the way that how students' work is assessed in the University will be the same as how their work is assessed when they are working in the industry. Either the employer or the customers will judge their success based on the final product that they provided."*

R: *"Would you mind to talk about the other reasons?"*

T1: *"It is also a dominant approach which has been applied for many years in here. It is hard to be changed in a short period of time, otherwise it will make things complicated as there is no standard for how to make the judgement by accessing learning process."*

T2: *"I can understand the advantage side of the process-oriented approach; however, we have a situation here, in which there are so many students in one class (around 40 students in one class). It is hard to imagine how many workloads will be added if we are going to take care of everyone's learning process."*

T3: *"It might be also correlated with the policy that has been operated to assess our teaching staffs, in which the way that university accesses our quality of teaching is largely based on how many hours you have spent on teaching rather than how effective of your teaching performance. So, there might be a tendency that the approach of assessment is hard to be changed, because it is seen as a relatively easy approach to be selected by only necessarily providing the quantifiable evidences in order to cope with this policy."*

Based on the conversations through interviews above, it seems that a more complex situation in this educational context has been revealed, whereby the previous discussion in relation to the interpretation of the academic terms can only be seen as a small part of a much larger problem. Certainly, there is a correlation between the result-oriented nature – which is reflected in the manner of interpreting the academic terms – and the Chinese industrial situation, which gives the meaning in this particular educational context. However, there are other facts, which are more importantly related to all the stakeholders – students, teaching staff and the institutions (universities) – and their relationships with each other's

priorities. One issue is that, at the institution level, policy makers consider the correlation between hours invested in teaching and the students' results in terms of how well the students have achieved a specific outcome. In other words, the policy is focused upon a goal and the number of hours taken to enable students to achieve that goal is the way in which the quality of its teaching staffs is assessed. This significant overarching approach not only governs the way that students behave and perform in that environment but at the same time oversees the way in which the staff teach. Because of this overarching approach, the course tutors place more emphasis on the quantifiable work that students produce – test scores for instance. In A&D, it thus appears as the judgement of the final design work based on tutor's personal taste or the level of making skills. This directly leads to the fact that the outcomes of learning are predictable to the students, who can therefore make up their work by following tutors' personal preferences in order to obtain a good mark. Also worth noting is that since class sizes in China are considerably larger than those in the UK, it seems unfeasible for Chinese teachers to provide students with individualised attention through an accurate evaluation of each student's learning process. Subsequently, Chinese teachers opt to access students' learning outcomes strictly based on their final product.

The above findings have proved that the result-oriented nature has a major impact: from the aspect of learning and teaching at individual level, to the aspect of policy making and strategy operating at institution level – as G describes, 'it is like a baggage that individual communities carrying around with them, and the things have been put inside of it were what they see is significant and why they see is significant.' Meanwhile, according to what has been explained by using the idea of 'threshold concept'[23], H also indicates that:

> *"[it] was something with me refer to the threshold concept, which is that something once if understood that idea they cannot unlearn it, they cannot forget about that, and they will completely transform how they carry on learning."*

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[23] Meyer and Land (2003, p.1) define that

'a threshold concept can be considered as akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress. As a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept there may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even worldview. This transformation may be sudden or it may be protracted over a considerable period of time, with the transition to understanding proving troublesome. Such a transformed view or landscape may represent how people 'think' in a particular discipline, or how they perceive, apprehend, or experience particular phenomena within that discipline (or more generally).'

Thus, having been brought through this kind of culture and by having a kind of understanding of what is going to happen, Chinese students predictably come with that understanding and it cannot be washed away that easily.

In comparison with the previous themes that have been discussed in relation to either academic terms or subject knowledge and skills based on previous two scenarios, the theme discussed in the next scenario is more related to the over overarching idea of what A&D education is, or more specifically, what jewellery education is. This a vital aspect to be dealt with in terms of developing 'meaning relations' of learning in my workshops, because the idea of what A&D education is will govern the way that participants understand the learning aims and the way in which they behave in respect to such an understanding. Based on the awareness of the facts that can impact on participants' perceptions on learning the subject, I thus changed the method of acknowledging the idea of jewellery practice in relation to its process-oriented nature in the West. I tried to avoid any kind of judgement in relation to the advantages and disadvantages of educational traditions which may have caused a conflict with participants' prior understandings. Instead, I spent three days of the workshops getting participants involved in the studio practice. This created a learning environment in which I encouraged them to positively engage with their own process of practicing on material explorations and ideas development. They were expected to develop works which would reflect the quality of design thinking and making; whereas they did not have to worry too much about finished effect of actual works in the final result of the assessment. Either a process-oriented or result-oriented attitude was allowed, or if they preferred, they could even have both attitudes towards their learning at the same time, which meant that they could see this as either a process of gaining knowledge or as a result to fulfil my requirements, or even both.

By doing this, it showed the effects on the learning and teaching process. Because students embraced different attitudes to learning, it meant that they did not need to raise the tension of first understanding the meanings of these attitudes. So, as a result, the participants and I worked together through the process of learning and teaching with more flexibility, and it thus enabled participants to learn with more confidence and enabled me to see how the conscious learning process was problematised and validated in this particular educational setting. There was evidence that some of the participants did perceived problems through this learning process, in which they tended to question and reconsider how learning can be validated given that the finish of the actual work did not have to be considered as the most important aspect in the final assessment. However, by looking at

their works together, I was able to imply the idea of negotiation and conceptual translation and conduct critical discussions which, in a way, were focused upon looking at how many possibilities could be created by holding different attitudes of learning, and how these possibilities meant that fruitful learning experiences can be valued and appreciated. As an example, given by G:

> "*I can remember early on, because there is a kind of religion, which believes that design has to be conducted in a particular way to be successful in British design education. However, about 15 years ago, there was a Taiwanese MA student, basically she just did a little drawing, then she did another drawing was completely different, then another drawing… It was always on the top of her head. And she turned out and designed one of the most successful wedding dresses in California. Then I realised that 'OK, there is more than one way (to get success).' I think that to have a sort of humility of accepting that the British design education is one way, when people come to it, there is a particular way to approach it and there are certain expectations within the system. But it may not always be the best way that suits people…*"

Hence, there was a shift from debate to the awareness and focus of how an individual can benefit from different attitudes, ideas or concepts, and how they can be meaningful to one's own learning, in contrast to an emphasis of the significant and advantages of either side. It thus constructed an ideal space where participants and I were able to negotiate and interpret together with those fruitful experiences; it further created and developed 'meaning relations' for all of us; and at the end, these 'meaning relations' can be transformed as new knowledge when each individual goes back to their own educational context.

5.4.6   Summary of key reflections and initial findings from Phase 3

The intervention experiments conducted in this phase present an additional dimension, which to some extent is more vital, to view the notion of meaningfulness in teaching Chinese students in the international context. On this dimension, it suggests that the traditional way of viewing notions of adjustment, adaptation or transition – which are acknowledged as necessary processes when one moves from one educational tradition to another – might be challenged. To accept these notions of ideas will generally imply that there is a dominant Western educational culture, where guest lecturers are those whose learning has met the needs required by the host culture. Whereas, through the exploration

of this phase of study, it seems that this idea can be problematic when the positions of guest and host are shifted in a different educational context – the problem being that people learning in their own culture do not necessarily change their attitude of learning to adapt and apply what a guest lecturer has taught them. However, in an international education context, neither of these two situations is deemed to be less effective for learning and teaching.

The dimension presented by this phase of study therefore appears to show there is another solution for teaching Chinese students, where an ideal space is suggested. It is a space, in which students and teacher are working together to deal with the educational cultural conflicts by negotiating and interpreting different meanings, and thus developing 'meaning relations' to every encounter in this space. More importantly, by bringing the ability of creating 'meaning relations', people's learning can become dynamic and flexible, thus enabling them to cope with changeable situations or contexts.

It is worth noting that what has been discussed in this phase are indicative findings, which are specific to the institution and might not apply in every situation. However, the dimension provided here helps in-depth understanding of why many students' behaviours tend to be in conflict with the local educational culture when they are studying Postgraduate education in the UK. On the other hand, due to their lack of knowledge of culture-based perspectives on educational values, educators often misdiagnose learning issues which emerge in the classroom or misinterpret Chinese students' learning behaviours. However, with the suggestion of ideal space, based on this dimension, it is helpful for both students and educators to improve learning and teaching performance and to move forward to a more meaningful level in the international education context.

5.5   Summary of reflections and initial findings from the LEP as a whole

By general reviewing the findings of the Learning Enhancement Programme as a whole, it sheds the light that how the way of considering the notion of the international education and the internationalisation of HE might be reframed by the sense of negotiation and co-creation (Harley et al., 2008). That is, promotes a shared space where appreciates the equal benefit from each side among different educational cultures, rather than emphasises privileges of the dominant educational culture. Bring with the thinking as such, it might drive this study to a more meaningful level. Therefore, a concluding summary of Phases

1,2 & 3 is set up to let the reader know what key concepts / discussion points are discussed / addressed in the next chapter – the Findings and interpretations chapter.

Chapter 6   Findings and interpretations

6.1   Introduction

Through reference to aspects of the literature review and the two previous chapters (Chapter 4: Scoping Exercise, and Chapter 5: Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP), this chapter applies a thematic approach to interpreting key findings and initial interpretations from the empirical research. The aim is to discuss what can be understood from the findings of empirical research and what they mean for the study as a whole. The chapter concludes by exploring and identifying the ways in which these themes and related practical actions can contribute to new knowledge in the context of this study.

This thesis aims to explicate the understanding of the nature of challenges[24] that Chinese students have encountered through their journey of learning in the United Kingdom (UK) postgraduate taught (PGT) education in the context of art and design (A&D). It gives particular emphasis to the importance of the understanding of their learning experience at the initial stage of entering the Master's course, by identifying how and to what extent the challenges have impacted on Chinese students' learning experiences. Thus, it further aims to develop effective interventions to address these challenges as well as to enhance students' learning in the context of globalisation and internationalisation of higher education (HE). However, given the complex and multifaceted nature of globalisation and internationalisation and inadequate understanding of the actual transition experiences of individual students (see Section 2.1.1, page 8), I have previously referred my research approaches as empirical, case-based action research methods, applied within a discipline and specific location. The study has used these approaches in order to ensure the meaningfulness of this study, which enables both a holistic approach as well as a focus on individuals, in contrast to general theory (see Section 2.1.2, page 10).

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[24] As a reminder to the reader, the researcher acknowledges that the term, challenges, is open to be changeable interpretations depending on its use in different contexts. For the purposes of this thesis, the intended meaning of this term relates to the educational context of the study, and specifically to the learning journey of the group of participants – MA (SoJ, BCU) Chinese / international students and the student groups in China (GIC, CAFA).

The researcher recognises from personal experience, as a student and then through mentoring and teaching experiences, and now as a researcher, that it is important to set challenges for students, and that in this sense, challenges are there to encourage progressive and effective learning. In the context of this thesis, whilst fully taking this positive sense of educational challenges into account, when the term is used in relation to the study it relates to the specific difficulties and concerns that the Chinese / international participants spoke about through their reflections on their journey of learning. The researcher also uses the term, obstacles, in this same context. The intended meaning here is when combinations of difficulties and concerns amount to a barriers that stands in the way of effective learning.

In common with other researchers, it is notable that I 'approached the data analysis without any pre-formed hypotheses', 'but with personal perspectives based on my own experience in the area' of intercultural/transcultural education and internationalisation of HE (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.48). This approach was thus used to support the development of both first-person and second-person inquiries through the action research, which provided 'a useful viewpoint to frame the research questions' (Ibid, p.48) of this thesis, as well as to conduct action-based research through the development of interventions (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4). Berry's (2005) and Knight's (2003) perspectives on intercultural education, and Deardorff's (2006) 'pyramid' model for intercultural competence development, present a 'spectrum of situations' (see Section 2.2.1.2, page 26). Against which a series of dichotomous statements reinforcing the polarised understandings of student groups and cultural differences have been supported by the research data and findings. These reveal that in a real-life situation, intercultural competence is not developed through the amount of exposure to a multicultural environment but through positive engagement of the stakeholders with the intercultural learning processes.

The findings also support Gesche and Makeham's (2008, p.243) acknowledgement that the 'transcultural process is an ideal and life-long journey'; and reveal that to some extent advocating the concept of 'Third Space' in HE is not applicable for the current educational situation, where both students and UK tutors are involved. This is due to the students' prior experiences, which influence their perceptions of new environments and situations; their prior experiences cannot be forgotten or transformed in a short period of time, thereby enabling their appreciation of such an ideal learning environment as the 'Third Space'. It can be perceived that a more effective approach is to support both students and tutors to develop 'meaning relations' which can correlate their current educational experiences with their previously acquired knowledge and skills in order to create new knowledge which has meaning to every individual in this context. Although it might be ideal to approach the 'Third Space' in the current educational situations, the nature of negotiation and co-creation embraced by this concept influenced the development of the LEP. Combining with the influences of my own critical reflections on this programme, these influences are further refined into interrelated themes that include:

- The nature of the interventions
- The pedagogical strategies and approaches of the interventions
- The stakeholders of the interventions

The section 6.2 presents an overview of the nature of challenges in relation to educational experiences identified within the subject-specific context, 'before turning to a discussion of the themes identified above, in relation to the literature' (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2011, p.48).

6.2   The nature of challenges

The research began, as mentioned above, by considering challenges to effective learning and adaptation. At this early stage the study reviewed literature on the broad context of globalisation and internationalisation of HE along with aspects of subject-specific A&D concepts and practices. This approach interacted with reflections on my personal experiences as a student and observations of other Chinese students. This guided the parameters of the study and the development of a diverse set of factors for investigation. These factors include study experiences at UK Master's level that were specific to Chinese students' motivations, language proficiency, learning skills, attitudes and their study expectations. These factors also included:

- Teachers' experiences, attitudes and expectations
- The overall learning environment and educational cultures involved in the study
- Institutional pedagogical strategies

These factors became the basis for the questions, which guided interviews, observations and intervention experiments when I conducted the empirical research.

Applying a diverse set of indicators echoed the complexity and multifaceted nature of internationalisation of HE (Altbach and Knight, 2007), which reflected this study – where the investigation of challenges also tended to be complex. By analysing the findings, the challenges – which show the strong correlation with the aims of this study – can be recognised at three levels:

- Level of HE institutions
- Level of the subject of A&D
- Level of actors: students and teachers

6.2.1   Challenges at the level of HE institutions

'Universities are effectively communities within communities and recruitment of international students alters their demographic (and that of their surrounding communities), increasing structural diversity. If internal cohesion and balance is to be maintained this – at the very least – requires a shift from being a monocultural to becoming a multicultural institution.'

(Caruana and Ploner, 2010)

As suggested above, the cultural shift of HE institutions in the major receiving countries means expanding the numbers of international students and increasing the internationalisation of HE. Finn and Darmody (2016) suggest that 'the term 'internationalisation' is best seen as a series of strategies and polices moving towards closer cooperation between academic institutions' (see Section 2.2.1.1, page 16). However, this shift requires 'a particular set of institutional values, vision and leadership' (Caruana and Ploner, 2010) in order to support the changes and challenges faced by 'intercultural encounters' at every level.

Considering the complex and multifaced nature of the internationalisation of HE, the challenges could be caused by many factors. According to the findings of the research, for example, external 'push-pull' factors (see Section 4.3.3, page 94), reflect not only the desire of the international students to learn overseas but also the pressure felt by institutions to 'recruit international students in the face of financial shortfalls' (Caruana and Ploner, 2010). This 'commercial advantage' (Altbach and Knight, 2007) could then turn out to be a motivating factor for the internationalisation of HE for many institutions. Together with other incentives, a range of 'specific initiatives' – described by Altbach and Knight as 'branch campuses, cross-border collaborative arrangements, programs for international students, establishing English-medium programs and degrees, and others' – have been put into place as part of internationalisation. However, these 'specific initiatives' are more likely to be 'laden with theorising about internationalisation' (Hyland et al., 2008, p.5.6), and less able to either consider the diversity and complexities of intercultural encounters or create an environment where those intercultural encounters can unfold effectively. In addition, failure to manage those diversities and complexities at non-home campuses has further impact on what happens inside the institutions.

Researchers suggest that the culture of HE institutions can be influenced by internal factors, such as 'different history, particularly in terms of the legacy of inclusion, current characteristics and efforts to deal with recent trends and respond to new challenges,

structural diversity, mission, location, market position and the psychological and behavioural climate' (Altbach, 2006; Shaw et al., 2007; Shaw, 2009; cited by Caruana and Ploner, 2010). Stenasker et al. (2008) state that individual students and academics establish the 'deeply embedded values, cultures and traditions' of HE; Otten also suggests that 'intercultural encounters tend to become more complex because they take place in specific institutional contexts which require a more or less well-defined set of communication rules and strategies' (Otten, 2003; cited by Caruana and Ploner, 2010). Therefore, institutions should make adjustments to cope with diversity and complexities by carefully considering these internal factors. Whereas, in actual fact, critical inquiry rarely focuses on individuals and, by implication, over generalises (Stenasker et al., 2008). Diversity cannot be assimilated to the frame of reference under the existing institutional routines; and 'failure to adapt as those once perceived as 'minority group' and designated 'non-standard' increasingly become the norm' (Caruana and Ploner, 2010). These facts tend to result in the existing organisation of HE institutions becoming less effective. As such, those internal factors can in turn become challenges to the way that HE institutions adjust themselves to internationalisation in terms of 'shaping and delivering student diversity policies' (Caruana and Ploner, 2010).

In addition, Internationalisation of HE has been seen as a global phenomenon, which involves not only the educational bodies of the receiving countries but also those of the sending countries. Current perceived challenges are generally focused upon the areas where international students transit, adapt or adjust into the host HE institutions; whereas the challenges in relation to the institutions of the sending countries, in terms of their perspectives and policy-making towards the internationalisation of HE, are rarely considered.

According to Burneet (2008) and Liu (2009), countries will respond differently to globalisation due to their individual histories, traditions, cultures and priorities (see Section 2.2.1.1, page 16), which means that there is no single standard to the globalisation of HE, and thus internationalisation can appear to have different meanings to different countries.

The research findings indicate that in China, despite the particular emphasis in national policy on the internationalisation of HE (Liu and Metcalfe, 2015), many HE institutions have embraced the internationalisation of HE as a concept that has a different meaning to its recognised meaning as the Western norm (see Section 4.3.1.1, page 90). They see internationalisation as a range of activities, such as learning abroad, learning and teaching

exchange, inter-institutional cooperation, curricular adaptations and transnational programmatic development. However, these activities have been less successful in either functionally shaping the traditional educational practices of these Chinese institutions, or successfully developing international perspectives of learning for their students. The learning and teaching practices in these institutions are still connected to their educational traditions and policy operations, as well as industrial relations in the Chinese education context (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4.5.2). So, students from these Chinese institutions have fewer opportunities to develop their awareness and abilities for coping with different educational cultures in international contexts, and this, as a result, can also be one of the important factors that brings challenges to the host institutions.

Caruana and Ploner (2010, p.12) indicate that:

> *If a university simply replicates the social life of the local community it serves, that impedes the personal struggle and conscious thought that are so important for students in developing their sense of identity. Since internationalisation in principle, means less replication, it is potentially beneficial to the student learning experience. However, simply 'reacting' to diversity will not provide a positive campus climate. Internationalisation should embrace the principle of inclusion acknowledging the 'partiality inherent in the curriculum', affirming students' identities rather than just avoiding discrimination.*

They further suggest that:

> *The principle of inclusion can be viewed in two different ways each of which will influence the nature of student support and engagement: no one should be disadvantaged or all should be helped to learn by a curriculum designed to achieve success.*
>
> *(Ibid)*

However, many host institutions 'have moved to the second position in policy terms' (Ibid), in which the simple implementation of such principles in learning and teaching tend to be problematic because there is a lack of guidance on how to either find a balance between different educational traditions or how to deal with the competition between cultural capitals, in inclusive rather than dominant ways.

6.2.2 Challenges at the level of the subject of A&D

With the expansion of HE institutions in the global context, Coertjens, et al. (2016) indicate that 'HE institutions are held more accountable for students' success'. However, other than the challenges to HE institutions discussed in the last section, in the light of diverse student groups, the decision of how to organise the learning and teaching practice for a particular subject and/or a certain study programme has been challenged in many ways and become even more complicated.

As an illustration of the findings in this research study, in A&D subjects a range of differences in relation to the educational experiences and expectations of Chinese students and UK tutors has been perceived. By exploring the nature and impact of their experiences and expectations, it has been further identified that a number of gaps or contradictions between these differences offer particular pedagogic challenges to the subject-specific settings.

One of the pedagogic differences which tends to be the most compelling is that Chinese students entering UK A&D PGT education with expectations based on 'the concrete and the certain' and 'often seek 'clarity'. Whereas in the UK, according to Austerlitz et al., 'a central, although largely unspoken, tenet of A&D pedagogy would appear to be the centrality of 'ambiguity' to the creative process.' (2008, p.127). Austerlitz et al. also indicate that 'this value is implicit rather than explicit in our teaching practices' (2008, p.127). Thus, these factors cannot only create vagueness and insecurity for Chinese students when learning within their new educational environments, but they can also contribute significantly to the challenges identified and discussed throughout this thesis.

As the literature reviewed indicates, (a) ambiguity is likely to exist across most UK's A&D disciplines, and (b) implicit or unspoken pedagogical approaches, which value ambiguity as an intrinsic to the creative process, translate into important teaching principles and practices. The evidence of this study suggests that all students, international and 'home', are expected to be able to understand this norm, and that there is a need to give more attention to 'personal forms of knowledge' that 'may be either explicit or tacit' (Eraut's, 2000, p.114). In this regard, it is argued that without recognition of the different educational routines and experiences of the students, in practice, fundamental problems associated with transition, as explored throughout this study, may continue to be unsolved.

Based on the research findings, there is a realisation of 'knowledge gaps' (see Section 5.2.3.3) existing between Chinese students and UK tutors. These 'knowledge gaps' generally reflect the following two features:

a) Different curriculum and programme principles (Chinese and UK HE jewellery programmes)

This finding was drawn from the Phase 3 intervention experiment at GIC in China. Although this was only based at one Chinese HE institution (GIC), the findings indicate a gap between Chinese and UK educational practices. That is, that the MA Jewellery programme at GIC, which runs over three years has different discreet stages. The curriculum links one stage to the next quite prescriptively, such that the students tend to be less able to make their own connections across these stages. By comparison, the MA in the UK, which runs over one year and is therefore much more intensive and continuous in character, enables the students to learn more holistically. (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1).

b) Mismatched acquisition of learning skills

This has a strong correlation with the various perspectives on A&D education and the different emphases on the application of pedagogical approaches, such as 'result-focused' and 'process-focused' approaches, where learning skills are centred on particular educational and industrial needs and do not necessarily appreciate different educational cultures (see section 5.4.5.2, page 178).

These perceived differences therefore lead to learning situations within which it can be difficult for Chinese students to respond in the way that UK tutors expect from them; and it can be equally problematic for UK tutors to understand what the Chinese students expect from them.

In addition, the research findings also suggest that there is a need to give more attention to how and to what extent tacit knowledge impacts on A&D education in the context of Chinese / international students' learning.

Polanyi asserts in 'The Tacit Dimension' we should start from the fact that 'we can know more than we can tell' (1967, p. 4). In line with this famous dictum, Holden and Glisby (2010) further indicate what the authors refer to as 'a strange problem' that 'we are unable

to spontaneously articulate knowledge that we take for granted' (p. 17). The following discusses the implications of these ideas in the context of this study.

As discussed previously in Section 5.2, within a practice-based subject, such as jewellery, in one way, it could be considered that (a) when a Chinese student, observes the working methods of others in the studio or workshop, what they might draw from such observations may not be reliant on their English language capacity, and (b) that the student's learning can be embedded within the object they make. Therefore, through these processes, the student necessarily engages with subject-specific tacit knowledge. However, in another way, how does the student communicate explicitly about what is embedded in the object they have made or the observations they draw from their surroundings? As identified in this study, the MA JSRP course places emphasis on concept development and process. Typical questions in tutorials and critiques are therefore: can you describe the processes that led you to make this object? - What is your concept? Thus, the student is expected to be able to communicate, in depth and detail, about their process and explain how their concept is embedded in the object. Responding to questions such as these requires sophisticated thinking and communication skills, and the ability to demonstrate these skills not only through the object, but also through what the student communicates in writing and orally about their work.

Based on the findings of this study, the expectation that Chinese students, on entering their MA course, are already equipped to demonstrate an ability to negotiate and translate tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge is likely to problematic. The Chinese students' ability to communicate in Mandarin and English languages allows them opportunities to negotiate and translate concepts in different ways, but because their formative first language (Mandarin) is deeply embedded within their early life and educational backgrounds in China, the comprehension of UK general and subject-specific academic terms becomes complex. (see discussions in Chapter 5, Section 5.2 & 5.4).

The above challenges that affect Chinese students and UK tutors are further discussed in the next section. However, it is worth noting that due to the insufficiencies of intercultural awareness and related teaching and learning approaches (Hellsten and Reid, 2008), 'commonly these [problems] are attributed to Chinese students' failure to adapt or understand the challenges presented to them within the UK A&D higher education environment' (Austerlitz et al., 2008). This not only generates challenges in the development of UK A&D HE with respect to internationalisation, but delivers an even

greater challenge to Chinese international students who are confronting uncertainty with respect to how to learn, and to the UK tutors who are confronting anxieties with respect to how to approach their teaching.

6.2.3 Challenges at the level of actors: students and teachers

Based on the discussions in above two sections, it can be seen that although ''internationalization' has become a persistent word in higher education' (Caldwell and Gregory, 2016, p.117), as argued by Stohl (2007), if we want to internationalise the University, we have to first internationalise the faculty and its subjects. At the operational level, Montgomery (2013) also suggests that internationalisation should count on the institutional responsibility with regard to the learning experience of the academic community which consists of international students, home students and teachers as a whole in an intercultural environment. According to Stipek et al. (2004), the institution's responsibility can be described as:

> *School's must make students believe and feel that they are respected and that they belong, that they can learn what they are required to learn, and that the lessons of school 'make sense' within the context of their own lives.*

At teachers' level, Teekens (2000, p.26) believes that academics are the 'core player in the process' of intercultural learning and teaching in terms of facilitating students learning. HEA (2014) also indicates that teachers should play a pivotal role in taking curriculum content and the pedagogical approaches as vehicles for improving the quality teaching and learning for all students.

However, taking such responsibility can be complex. Based on the findings of this study, the impacting factors – the lack of clearly operational guidance at the institution level and insufficient intercultural awareness and related pedagogical approaches at the subjects' level – have strong influences on intercultural encounters. With the impact of perceived 'knowledge gaps', the challenges tend to be more complex, as shown through HE programmes' learning and teaching practices. Through this research study, the findings indicate that these challenges are perceived at both levels – by both the UK teachers and the Chinese students.

In relation to the UK teachers, findings indicate that academics hold different instructional beliefs when responding to their institution's internationalisation strategies. For example, there is a tendency for some UK teachers to be 'unclear about what internationalization means' (Leask, 2013; cited by Caldwell and Gregory, 2016). For some, the traditional focus on the understanding of the host educational cultures, and how to function within the learning and teaching practices of their institutions and environments, is being challenged, which might make them feel uncomfortable and suffer a lack of confidence when putting an internationalised curriculum into practice (Caruana, 2010; Magne, 2015). For others, internationalisation may be countered as an increasing experience of teaching international students, by which they believe that the 'tutor's experience over time might make the experience better', such as the perspective that 'the more years I taught Chinese students I might be better in teaching Chinese students and Chinese students might do better' (Expert G). This perspective echoes the literature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.1, page 31) where a 'myth' related to the internationalisation of higher education was suggested by Knight (2011) and then was interpreted by Abermann and Gehrke (2016). That is, 'more foreign students on campus will produce more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum', resulting in universities believing that 'the increase in the quantity [of international students] is often equated with growth in quality' (p.1). However, it is difficult to understand how a 'more internationalized institutional culture and curriculum' could result from taking account of quantity alone. Based on the evidence of this study, it is argued that there will always be a need to give attention, in detail and depth, to specific educational cultural contexts, subject perspectives, language abilities, including conceptual translation and negotiation, and how individual students can bring to and develop through their studies, their personal experiences.

There is also another tendency, which is that without sufficient guidance, the 'binary approach' (see Section 2.1.1, Student transition, page 8) may be applied by many UK teachers in order to cope with the differences of cultures and education traditions. This binary perspective tends to see a situation where the teacher's 'own cultural orientations remain relatively unchanged' (Gesche and Makeham 2008, p.242), and to see Chinese students as 'educational others' (Harley et al., 2008). This attitude is likely to foster perspectives such as: "on whose terms' internationalisation takes place – they want our education and this is our system, so they have to adapt to us' (Caldwell and Gregory, 2016). Welikala (2011, p.7) also indicates that:

> *[s]ome teachers … are honestly believing that students cross geocultural boundaries only to learn the Western ways of knowing. … the success of international higher education reflects the degree to which the students can adjust to the host university's pedagogic practices. … (and) meeting different people and a different way of knowing (Western ways of knowing) itself is the international experience.*

However, a situation can occur when Chinese students do not act in the way UK teachers expect them to, the criticism then 'takes the form of a quality debate – the participation of international students lowers the quality of education' (Harley et al., 2008).

Austerlitz et al. suggest that in the environment of A&D HE 'where the pedagogy of ambiguity is the norm, tutors and institutions need to learn to acknowledge the nature and importance of students and tutors' expectations and to respond to them as part of the educational process' (2008, p.140). However, it is argued by Turner and Robson (2008) that learning and teaching principles still remain unexamined for the extent to which they are culturally mediated; Trahar states that 'such lack of examination can result in ethnocentric pedagogical approaches that are less sensitive to diversity' (2011, p.46); and it is argued by several experts, who were interviewed through this research study, that teachers could be seen as less empathetic to the cultural differences of their Chinese students.

In addition, as 'engaging students is another fundamental concept of art and design pedagogies' (Ibid), teachers thus expect their students to positively engage in the learning activities in order to achieve effective learning. This has been termed 'active learning' and is advocated by many researchers and theorists: 'student-centred, leading to deep approaches to learning as opposed to surface approaches' (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; cited by Austerlitz et al., 2008, p.140). However, Austerlitz et al. argue that 'not all students experience engagement in the way intended and they do not approach their studies in the same way (Drew, Bailey et al., 2002). For many students there is a conceptual gap between the way we teach, the way we intend our students to learn and the way they experience it' (2008, p.140). So, without empathy or awareness of the need for appropriate pedagogical approaches, such 'ethnocentric' perspective in A&D HE can create a tendency for certain teachers to problematise the differences in educational experiences and expectations between teachers and Chinese students. For instance, Austerlitz et al. (2008) realise that in many situations, students' expectations tend to be managed and constructed

in a particular way by their teachers in order to avoid cultural conflict in education. Moon also indicates that 'educational orientated experiences are often 'engineered' by a facilitator and tend to include what we could regard as the more objective views of what experience might be' (2004, p.106). Through the intervention experiments of this study, it has been examined and evidenced that either 'managing' student expectations or focussing on fulfilling every learning expectation, can be problematic. This then reflects upon the Chinese students' learning, resulting in them being seen as struggling to find the proper way to adapt themselves into the new learning environment. This researcher views this as one of the major barriers, which stands in the way of developing effective of learning and teaching practices for both Chinese students and the UK teachers.

According to Pachuau (2015), the act of communication and interpretation across cultural boundaries has to be conceived as a two-way or a multiple-way activity; once the educational experiences and expectations are seen as constructed, the wider challenges in this activity can be recognised. So, findings have also reflected challenges at the student level, which have been perceived as a range of issues initiated by educational experiences and expectations.

It is argued by many researchers (Edwards and Ran, 2009; Welikala, 2011; Hubbard and Maloley, 2013; Bartram and Terano, 2016) that Chinese students are not a unified group and given that their motivations, expectations and prior experience to overseas study are varied, this diverse student body should not be homogenised. The undertaking of this research study also stands upon this viewpoint, by which the binary view of the educational cultural differences between China and the UK is criticised as inadequate. However, this should not mean that the study of cultural differences in relation to educational experiences and expectations is less important. On the contrary, findings indicate a range of challenges encountered by Chinese students are strongly related to those differences. Compared with the binary perspectives which perceive Chinese students as 'rote leaners' conditioned by 'Confucian ideology' (Edwards and Ran, 2009), the research findings here provide an insight into the specific nature of of Chinese educational traditions in relation to the student participants and the influences these traditions had on their learning in the UK A&D HE context.

Drawing from the findings of the scoping exercise, this research focused on the challenges that Chinese students encountered in the UK's A&D HE, including academic communication skills, learning skills, and subject specific knowledge. Further investigation

of these obstacles was then undertaken through the development and application of the Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP). Through the process of gathering findings for the review, it was found that a number of factors challenge Chinese students in a variety of ways and to different degrees during their initial experience of their study in the UK. Such factors are presented as follows:

a) Many Chinese students were seen as less independent than their UK peers.
b) Some of the Chinese students were struggling with the issues of time-management and self-engagement.
c) Sometimes, Chinese students were perceived as tending to be less positively engaged in learning activities, or even perceived as resisting or failing to respond accordingly.
d) Many Chinese students appeared to have a lack of confidence in their learning and a fear of taking risks.
e) Many Chinese students appeared to be struggling to understand subject specific vocabularies and academic terms and often fail to interpret their ideas effectively, which is a reflection on their lack of communication skills.
f) Chinese students tended to have lower abilities to think and reflect deeply and critically.
g) Chinese students expressed surprise at the emphasis on process rather than product, and through their learning process tended to be more focused on the product and final result in the sense of marks achieved.

These above factors are drawn from both interviewed experts' perspectives and my own observation findings from the workshops. However, based on the initial analysis of the findings of LEP, it is revealed that these factors are interconnected and are impacted upon strongly by Chinese students' prior educational experiences and learning expectations, constructed before they enter the UK A&D, HE environment. These experiences and expectations reflect their perspectives of what identity is in terms of both teacher and student, what learning skills are required and how the learning requirement can be fulfilled in the particular Chinese A&D HE context. However, the culture-oriented binary perspective was argued to be inappropriate as a way in which to view Chinese students' learning issues; countering this, Haggis (2009, p.389) also argues that there are 'different types of dynamic process through time in relation to learning situations in higher education' and that motivations of students who go abroad for their education can make the understanding of these issues more complex. It is worth reminding the reader that this research has moved

beyond the factors of binary perspective, which Welikala (2011) argued were a 'static nature' of the concept of culture and 'generally on unquestioned assumptions about cultural other' (Welikala, 2011, p.19). Taking into consideration the real-world situation, the research looked in depth at the fundamental differences between China's and the UK's HE, in particular where knowledge is constructed differently with respect to how students experience and how students learn. However, without understanding of each other's way of constructing knowledge, empathising with the differences can be unreal and advocating the importance of diversity of individuals can also be inadequate.

Despite the above, although current research studies have tended to move from cultural binary perspectives toward the idea of embracing 'a broader view of the cultures and communities beyond, underscoring the significance of enabling all students to experience wider engagement' (Montgomery, 2013, p.82) with varied academic opportunities. It has been previously discussed in the literature review that positive intercultural interactions do not occur 'naturally' (Reid et al., 2010; Berardo and Deardorff, 2012; Baldassar and Mckenzie, 2016), especially when questions of how to equip internationalised curricula and pedagogies remain unanswered at either institutional level or amongst academics, thus resulting in students engaging with internationalising the curriculum (IC) initiatives in often unintended ways. In contrast, this research also looked at challenges by considering the diversity of individuals, as a way in which to seek the meaning of learning. The findings revealed that a person does not have to have only one identity; in many cases, students have to switch from one identity to another to present themselves in different situations. For example, Chinese students come to the UK to undertake Master's study, sometimes they stay, but most of time they return to China or travel to other parts of the world, or if they do not physically move, they look at learning resources globally. So, why would they have to become the same as a UK student? Why would they have to be fully integrated into the UK educational system or the UK ways of thinking and acting? If a curriculum is to be successful in with respect to the ideas of internationalisation discussed in this thesis, the evidence of this study suggests that learning styles and requirements should enable the integration of different approaches, rather than adhering strictly to one dominant approach. However, since it has been perceived that the existing dominant perspective in each educational system is not easily changed and the real practical translation of internationalising HE is still beyond reach, it may be necessary to consider alternative methods that could be more effective in supporting real-world situations of learning and teaching in the intercultural environment.

6.2.4 Summary of the nature of challenges

In summary, this section has interpreted and discussed key findings and initial interpretations from the empirical research, with a focus on the nature of the challenges that stakeholders are encountering in relation to Chinese students journey of learning in the UK, at PGT level and in the contexts of art and design (A&D) and educational internationalisation. As previously explained, the study has given specific attention to the initial stage of their PGT course. Analysis of the findings of the empirical study reveal that the factors, which influence the students' learning, with respect to the challenges identified and explored throughout this thesis, are interconnected at each of the three levels discussed above: actors: students and teachers; the subject of A&D; HE institutions. The study as a whole suggests that these factors are, governed by current policies and strategies operated by HE institutions, and that combined with the nature of the pedagogical approaches discussed, all of these factors interact with each other, thus making the nature of challenges complex and multifaceted. It is therefore argued that it is necessary to approach intercultural education challenges holistically, and that addressing these challenges by focusing on certain separate aspects, are likely to be inadequate to the task of enabling real-world practices that have the potential to result in effective learning and teaching in intercultural contexts.

This holistic approach is proposed as an ideal by Harley et al. (2008, p.168):

> [I]deally the process of embedding international, intercultural and global perspectives within all aspects of an institution's programmes, structures and environment should provide a richer educational experience for students by challenging cultural stereotypes, enhancing the understanding of the cultured self, promoting subject-subject relationships and creating a positively destabilising, and therefore, potentially transformative experience.

However, the perceived challenges explored and discussed through this study indicate that the actual experiences of Chinese students' overseas studies can be very different to the ideal pictured in the above quotation. Institutions are responsible for developing policy, curricula contents and pedagogical approaches as they respond to the increasing diversity of the student body in the context of internationalisation. In this regard, at the level of academic programmes, disparities between perceived ideal international study experiences and students' actual experiences need to be recognised. This study acknowledges that the

concept of internationalising HE, in the sense proposed by Harley et al. (2008, p.168), probably remains beyond reach. Therefore, in order to achieve positive intercultural interactions under current educational circumstances, it is argued that it is necessary to move beyond "wishing and hoping ... and dreaming" (Leask and Carroll, 2011, p.648) with regard to embedding internationalisation and to progress by developing effective pedagogical strategies and approaches that can be owned, further researched and developed, and utilised constructively by all of the stakeholders, according to their specific educational contexts.

6.3   Moving towards solutions

Having identified and explored the challenges, the study has answered the Research Questions 1, 2, 3 & 4 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3, page 49-50). However, based on the research findings, the study has found that in order to facilitate effective learning in an internationalised context, there is a need for teachers, in addition to teaching subject skills and knowledge to be engaged in developing knowledge of how a student's perceptions and behaviour might be formed and how they learn. The study also recognised that it is important for a Chinese student encountering UK HE learning for the first time to develop skills and knowledge that can support giving meaning to their learning. The study further proposes that this process is best supported when the student is able to acquire and construct new knowledge through interactions between their past and present learning experiences.

Therefore, Questions 5 and 6 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3, page 50) were adjusted, with deeper questions emerged. These were:

> **Question 5**: What provisions are made in the UK A&D/Jewellery HEI sector to support Chinese PGT students in giving meaning to their learning?

> **Question 6**: To what extent and in what conditions are these methods and techniques in the UK A&D/jewellery HE effective?

> **Question 7:** Is there more that can be done to improve these methods and techniques in order to develop meaning and create new knowledge for Chinese students' UK learning in the A&D context, as well as transition into future situations?

By answering the above questions, the ultimate aim of this research study is to develop and examine a range of interventions, which can effectively support intercultural learning and teaching and provide meaningful experiences to all the stakeholders at Master's level in the context of the UK A&D HE. The LEP was thus particularly created to meet this intention. It was conducted and developed according to three phases of interventional experiment. The focus and location for each phase was carefully considered, as was selection of the cohort of participants. Through the development of the programme from Phase 1 to Phase 3, the nuanced effects of participants' educational experiences have been perceived, which provided an insight into the nature of the challenges. It therefore, enabled the researcher to adjust pedagogical approaches quickly and in real-time where necessary, and to keep developing the interventions through all the phases as well as maintaining their meaningfulness.

As discussed in the previous section, the perceived tension between educational traditions and the sense of education cultural centrality and superiority are hampering the progress of the internationalisation of HE. Responding to this situation, Caruana and Ploner (2010, p.12) suggest that there is a need for 'a critical organisational practice' which:

> [i]s balancing two academic theoretical positions, understanding and negotiating the potential tension between affirming students' funds of knowledge and identities and bridging the gap in cultural academic capital for success

Harley et al. (2008, p.168) also suggest that:

> [t]o fully realise the potential benefits of an internationalised curriculum a shift in mindset is needed within higher education in the UK: away from the old structures of self and other which implies a hierarchy where the 'other' is marginal or peripheral to the European perspective

They further suggest that this shift in UK A&D HE could move towards 'what has been called a 'Third Space': a generative, incorporative, dynamic, experimental space of mutuality and exchange' (Ibid).

Inspired by the idea of 'Third Space', Caldwell et al. have further explored 'the scope for internationalization by creating spaces where intercultural dialogue could take place' (2016, p.11), and they suggest that the intercultural challenges existing in UK A&D HE could be

'mitigated by the interactive nature of studio teaching' and 'the studio environment has the potential to embody the characteristics of a 'Third Space', through the communicative, open dialogue that can take place there' (Ibid).

The design of the Experimental LEP has also been influenced by the idea of 'Third Space' and been developed in the studio environment. However, the findings of this research indicate that simply advocating the advantages of the studio environment to inculcate positive intercultural dialogue would be insufficient to facilitate a real 'Third Space'. It also shows that without giving attention to different educational traditions and guidance on how to negotiate competition between cultural capitals in ways that allow for inclusion, achieving the 'Third space' is also unlikely to happen. Therefore although, the LEP was developed from the basis of 'Third Space' in an abstract sense, more attention was paid to the potential applications of the theory through the learning and teaching practice in the real-world situation of this study. In this section, the discussion is based on the influential aspects to the development of the programme, which are refined into supporting themes as:

- The theoretical basis: 'Third Space'
- The pedagogical strategies and approaches of the interventions
- The stakeholders of the interventions

6.3.1   The theoretical basis: 'Third Space'

Since the term of 'Third Space' emerged in Bhabha's (1994) work, as a concept it has been adopted in many fields of research and practice (Hulme et al., 2009). Bhabha coins the term from the consideration of the provenance of the postcolonial era and emphasises its nature of radical openness and cultural 'hybridity' (1994, p.38) in 'defiance of ethnocentric traditions' (Waterhouse et al., 2009, p.3). This idea has been acknowledged, differently interpreted and widely applied by many researchers (Harley et al., 2008; Waterhouse et al., 2009; Caldwell et al., 2016; Chapman, 2016) – they use 'Third Space' as an ideal type of thinking against the 'colonial epistemology' (Chapman, 2016) in the context of intercultural education.

In addition, what Bhabha (1994) suggests – that the 'Third Space' 'is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture' (p.38) – has also inspired the following researchers and practitioners who have seen challenges in A&D education. They advocate the potential benefits and that

'Third Space' thinking may be able to change current pedagogical strategies and approaches. For example, Stevenson and Deasy express that the advantage of applying the idea of 'Third Space' in A&D education is that 'it helps draw our attention to a space that is essential to learning and the creation of community – the space where connections are made' (2005, p.7); Harley et al. suggest the 'Third Space' is a paradigm for internationalisation to deal with the challenges in current A&D HE, and describe the idea of 'Third Space' as 'a space where new ideas and identities emerge through negotiation and co-creation: a space underpinned by values of mutuality, recognition of multiplicities, a belief in the transformative power of international and intercultural dialogue and a commitment to active listening' (2008, p.168).

The previous researches have contributed to my understanding of how effective learning and teaching could happen in an ideal space; in which the quality of openness and mutual and equal relationships (Dyrness and Hurtig, 2016) are essential to achieve the cultural 'hybridity'. The underpinning concepts of these researchers' work also clearly resonated with the central purpose of in this study; improving the effectiveness of learning and teaching by overcoming barriers. Therefore, the idea of 'Third Space' is applied in order to set the context for the LEP, which offers the theoretical basis for exploring pedagogical strategies and approaches for the development of learning and teaching practice of the programme. In addition, the ideas developed in 'Third Space' add further layers of interpretation to the experiences of participants[25]: students and teachers who work in emerged intercultural settings where what is often most at stake is seeking the meaning of learning and the creation of new knowledge which is meaningful for all the participants.

It is worth noting that the idea of 'Third Space' is advocated as an ideal solution for the challenges perceived in the intercultural learning environment. There are many studies working on the advantages of how effective that learning could be within the 'Third space'. However, the relationship between learning in the 'Third Space' and learning in the real-world situations, where the mainstream pedagogical strategies and approaches are followed, is less discussed. The method of how the 'Third Space' thinking can guide the transformation of learning and teaching practice from current educational environments to the ideal place also remains unquestioned. In addition, the findings from this research indicated that in the current A&D HE situation, the tension between different educational traditions is still compelling, and the challenges in relation to differences of motivations,

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[25] The term of participants here is applied to both teachers and students, and it is applied in the following context of this thesis.

expectations, languages and educational experiences are at stake. These are factors, which thus cause leaning in 'Third Space' to be less possible within the current actual A&D Master's course in the UK.

Thus, the LEP was designed with greater attention to the potential application of the 'Third Space' theory through the development of interventions, which could support and deal with real-world situations.

6.3.2 The pedagogical strategies and approaches of the interventions

It is worth noting that it was not the initial focus of the LEP to create contexts and conditions for the participants, which enabled the dynamics of moving, translation and negotiation between different educational traditions and experiences. Initially, the intention was to stay very much the same as many other researchers', i.e. trying to better support the student participants' integration into and adaptation to their Master's study. However, it was perceived that the pedagogical strategies and approaches, which constituted interventions, were challenged by participants in many aspects through the development of the programme.

The progression of the programme through three phases provided me with opportunities to accommodate, reflect and adjust issues happening through every phase. It also gave me time to add further layers of the interpretation to these issues by not only reflecting on my own learning and teaching practice, but collecting and viewing different perspectives from others, for example: observations of educational practice from different A&D Master's course, and interviewing educational experts from different A&D disciplines. Embedding these activities throughout the whole process of the programme, it thus broadened my view of what makes it really meaningful. It also provided me with an insight into the purpose of application of pedagogical strategies and approaches, regarding to what extent the meanings of learning can be created between teacher and students.

Based on the findings of the study, this section discusses the pedagogical strategies and approaches which were applied and developed, and which have delivered positive effects on learning and teaching practices through all the phases of the programme. These include:

- An idea of 'in-between space'
- The application of Bloom's Taxonomy

- The application of 'reflective and experiential learning'
- The application of 'Game-based learning' approach
- The application of bilingual approach

6.3.2.1 An idea of 'in-between space'

It has been discussed in Section 6.2.3, Chinese international students do not necessarily have only one identity – their identities may change in different situations as they move to different places. Thus, theoretically, the idea of supporting Chinese student's adaptation or adjustment to the UK's educational tradition by following UK ways of learning actually seems unimportant, or at least it does not have to be the main aim for the UK academics and institutions. Based on the findings of this research study, what seems to be more essential is to create powerful contexts and conditions for learning – contexts and conditions which enable the dynamics of moving, translation and negotiation between different educational traditions and experiences.

However, given the perceived educational tensions discussed in the previous section, contexts and conditions are less able to be created in current actual learning environments in the A&D Master's course. Through the development of the LEP, it seems that these contexts and conditions for learning have been gradually created as an 'in-between space'. A triangular model (see Figure 6.1) is thus developed by the researcher to illustrate relationships amongst participants' past and current educational and sociocultural experiences and their experience within the in-between space. Therefore, with the interactions happening amongst these experiences, 'the burden of the meaning of culture' (Bhabha, 1994, p.38) is carried and the feature of 'translation and negotiation' (Ibid) was highlighted; where also the impacts of tensions between educational traditions and between 'personal and [sociocultural] knowledge' (Räsänen, 1998) were generally diminished.
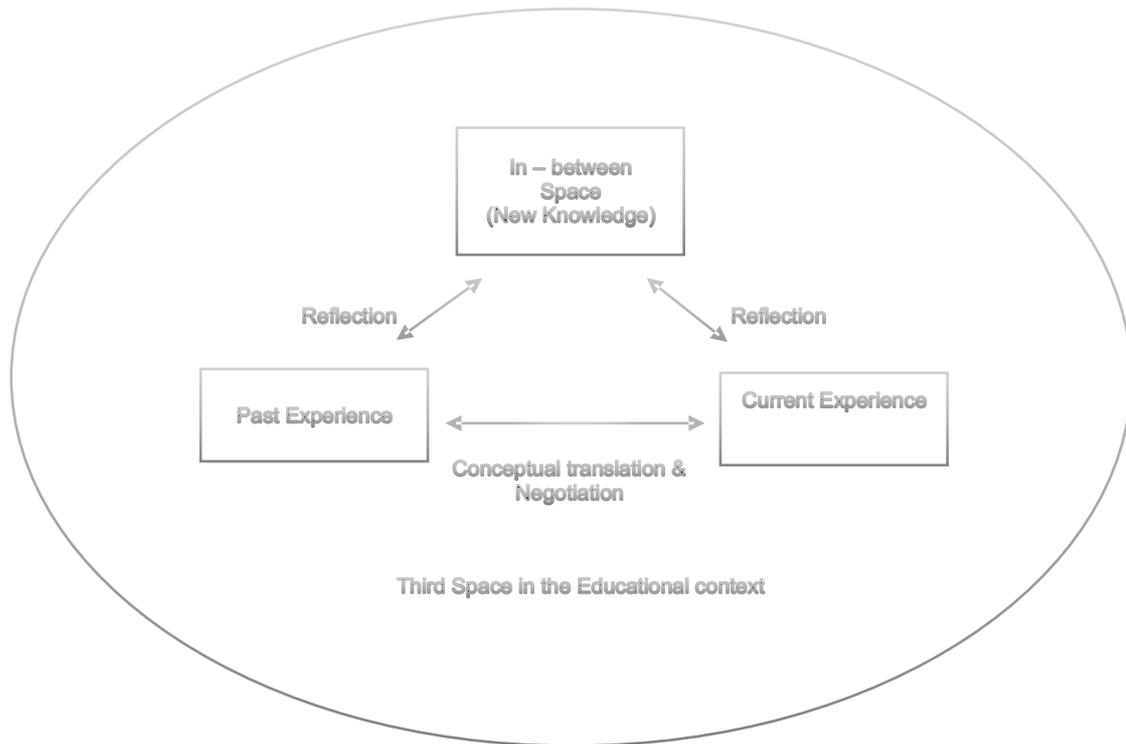
Figure 6.1: A model of relationships between students' experiences of past, current, and within in-between space

An important difference between the 'in-between space' where the LEP was taking place and the actual Master's course was that within the former, it stood upon neither the context of participants' past experiences from previous educational environment nor the context of their current experiences from the Master's course. The intention of the workshops conducted through the programme was therefore to help the participants to begin to construct a conceptual picture of their course, its learning challenges and developmental processes by reflecting on the different experiences of learning and teaching and moving in between different ways of thinking. This intention can thus help to create a less intensive and more flexible learning environment where participants were allowed to seek the meaning of leaning with more possibilities.

In other words, the meaning of the EIs was not about using a responsive way of dealing with the current Chinese students' learning situations. Instead, through the development of the programme, one of the main concerns was about how those students would apply what they've learnt in the UK and how the knowledge and skills that they have learnt would be applied when they returned to China. In this respect, participants were expected to be able

to contextualise the experiences from different cultural contexts and give meaning to the learning and teaching practice. In addition, by acquiring these abilities, participants were expected to be able to apply them in order to deal with the real-world situations in a broader context. And this is what makes the study more profound.

Räsänen's (1998) work that was discussed in Chapter 2 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3.1, page 43) has informed the central theme of my study: how processes of applying 'higher order' learning skills – conceptual translation and negotiation – can improve the learning experience of Chinese jewellery design students as they move from studying at Bachelor's level in China to Master's level in the UK. As two key strengths of this study, the idea of 'conceptual translation' could be understood as:

> The ability of translating the academic and subject-specific vocabularies, concepts and theories that relate to the Master's education in the UK by conceptually comparing and interpreting their past and current educational experiences.

On the other hand, the idea of 'negotiation' is:

> The ability of comprehending the differences between educational cultures and situations that participants find themselves in by negotiating their meaning and presentation.

So, based on the centrality of the concept of 'in-between space', the programme developed means of interventions as a form of mediation, in which the application of the ideas of conceptual translation and negotiation made the connections of participants': 'past and recent [educational] experiences'; '[sociocultural] and personal knowledges' (Räsänen, 1998). In addition, the concept of 'in-between space' allowed participants to see the different educational systems as a mirror that can reflect the advantages and disadvantages on each other's side. With the pedagogical strategies and approaches developed within this space, its intervention thus further allowed participants more adaptability and flexibility to get involved in different learning situations.

6.3.2.2 The application of Bloom's Taxonomy

An important finding drawn from this study is that for a 'Home' student, her/his previous learning at Bachelor's level gives them the platform for Master's study within one education

system; whereas a Chinese student's learning platform is a first degree in China, which means that her/his learning experience, knowledge and skills do not connect very well to the learning requirements and expectations of the Master's study in the UK. Therefore, an important aim of the intervention was to help students to connect their previous learning to new learning, and connect previous skills and knowledge to the process of acquiring new skills and knowledge. So, Bloom's Taxonomy was applied to meet this aim.

HEA in its paper 'Critical thinking' – developed as part of the Teaching International Students project – indicates that 'Blooms' taxonomy is a useful tool for encouraging students to move beyond knowledge comprehension and application and to 'higher order' thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation' (2014, p.6).

Through reference to Bloom, et al.'s (1956) 'The Taxonomy of educational objectives', the design of the programme proceeded from beginning to build practical knowledge, to aspects of active learning engagement and finally to conceptual translation and negotiation skills. In more detail, the first phase centred on enabling the participants to develop the basic skills and knowledge needed to integrate into their new environment and adapt to different learning and teaching practices, for example, knowledge of discipline-specific terminology and UK HE learning and teaching practices. The second phase experimented with ways of encouraging active engagement in learning and improving self-reflection skills. As mentioned previously, the third phase changed significantly, moving from supporting practical knowledge and skills connected to integration and adaptation, towards a greater emphasis on the development of cognitive skills. Specifically, this phase, through focusing on conceptual and negotiation skills, considered the journey of the Chinese student, not only with respect to moving from China to studying in the UK but also to graduating from the UK with a Master's degree to live and study or work back 'home' in China and/or other parts of the world.

With respect to the above, the Taxonomy, therefore, can be gradually seen as a mediation tool. Through the processes of conceptual translation and negotiation, it mediates the conflictions between the participants' prior and current experiences. In a more particular way, as a mediation tool, the Taxonomy offers concepts and terminology that are neither specific to the Chinese education system, nor to the MA JSRP course, and this can be reflected as:

- supporting the participants to begin translating general developmental processes

– 'knowledge dimensions', based on Bloom's Taxonomy – into their own specialist course of study;

- • supporting the participants to identify, reflect upon and connect knowledge and skills that they obtained previously to what is expected in the MA course.

6.3.2.3 The application of 'reflective and experiential learning'

As discussed previously, failing to comprehend the nature of diversity of educational experiences and expectations was perceived as one of challenges for UK teachers. This challenge might result in (a) the application of 'ethnocentric pedagogical approaches that are less sensitive to diversity' (Trahar, 2011, p.46), and (b) a reduction of positive engagement in learning among Chinese students. In A&D HE, these are generally reflected in the contradiction between the clarity-seeking nature of Chinese students and the tendency towards ambiguity of the UK teachers. I thus realised that to facilitate learning, teachers are not only required to teach thorough subject-related skills and knowledge but also be equipped with some knowledge of how students' experiences are formed and how students learn. Fundamental to their preparation of embracing the real meaning of learning in the UK, students must obtain knowledge of potential experiences and be aware of how they are expected to learn in the new learning environment.

Based on Rasenen's (1998) idea of 'meaning relations', there is an important finding – that students encountering UK HE learning for the first time need to develop skills that: support giving meaning to their learning, based on or through their 'past and present learning experiences' (Ibid); and support the acquisition or 'construction' (Ibid) of new knowledge. Jarvis also indicates that an experience has no inherent meaning in itself unless the meaning is given by an individual 'who mainly draws on socially constructed meaning' (1987, cited by Moon, 2004, 105). In this sense, the skills that support giving meaning to leaning and aid construction of new knowledge were less easily developed through verbal instructions. In contrast, the methods of encouraging positive participation in learning activities and those supporting critical reflection on the learning process tend to foster skill development more effectively. Therefore, in this programme, the idea of 'reflective and experiential learning' and related ideas from Kolb's learning cycle are applied to guide a range of critical organisational practices for the purpose of balancing different educational positions; understanding and negotiating the potential tensions between different educational experiences and expectations; and 'bridging the gap in cultural academic capital for success' (Coertjens et al., 2016, p.358).

As a theoretical approach, Kolb's learning cycle is applied as a tool for learning. It was used to support participants in translating the meaning of learning processes that they were currently experiencing and to build the connection between their past and present learning experiences in order to find 'meaning relations' (Rasenen, 1998) to their study. As a practical approach, Kolb's cycle was used to guide participants' learning practice; by referring to its function of 'the management of learning' (Moon, 2004) participants are able to purposefully manage their own learning process. On the other hand, the idea of 'reflective and experiential learning' was applied to guide the design of experiential learning activities. As discussed in the last section, the 'in-between space' offered interventions a special position as mediation for learning. Thus, activities were designed in a way that was neither specific to what participants have experienced in China, nor to what they were experiencing on the MA JSRP course. However, these activities were designed in a way that ensured that the material of learning was 'relatively challenging to participants who has the intention of attaining meaning' (Moon, 2004, p.123). Meanings therefore will be discussed and negotiated amongst all the participants by reflecting on the process of learning, which 'will bring them to stages in which they will recognize that there are alternative interpretations that require reflection' (Moon, 2004, p.162) on their actual Master's course learning. Therefore, 'meaning relations' (Rasenen, 1998) can be developed.

6.3.2.4 The application of a 'game-based learning' approach

The idea of 'game-based learning' has been developed as a pedagogical approach, and was embedded as a primary tool throughout the learning activities of the programme. It was first developed when an issue was perceived in relation to participants' lower levels of confidence when participating in learning activities in Phase 1. This issue was generally reflected in the participants' uncertainty as to what extent they could benefit from the learning in the workshops. In addition, there was a tendency that most of participants came to the workshop with the motive of seeking direct solutions which would help them cope with the challenges they were confronted with in their Master's study. These issues emerged at the initial stage of the programme and caused a dilemma, which forced me to face how the level of learning engagement can be enhanced. At the same time, the intention of making learning happen in the 'in-between space' where the aim was developing 'meaning relations', rather than being seen as a learning consultation, can also be achieved.

To tackle this problem, an environment where participants feel more comfortable and under less intense pressure was suggested by expert interviewees. Therefore, the activities were designed and tested in a game form in order to encourage participants' level of engagement. Through the continued use of this approach, certain effects – in a sense of advantage – emerged. Findings indicate that:

a) A game-like form of learning helped to create a calm and comfortable environment, in which the trust between student participants and facilitator was easier to build.

b) By considering the nature of 'in-between space', embedding the idea of learning through the game can also lower the intense levels of participants that were influenced by motivations, expectations, languages, financial status, living and learning environments, and employability while they were studying on the actual Master's course. It thus fostered their willingness to participate in the activities.

c) Since the learning discourse was changed – in the sense of a game – and a 'gamification environment' was formulated in the learning and teaching context, the notion of risk-taking in learning was more easily adapted by participants. It was an essential step towards the deeper and further learning interactions.

d) Embedded within group discussions, the game-based experiential learning activities also fostered participants' reflections on the learning process and the different interpretations to learning experiences from their peers. Supported by the facilitator's explanation of the learning aims, these reflections can be thus connected with participants' actual Master's study, where they can meet the purposes of meaning giving and knowledge construction.

As a pedagogical approach applied in this programme, 'game-based learning' can be seen as an effective way to perform the idea of conceptual translation and negotiation, by which the experience that participants have had from playing the game can be translated and negotiated by giving meanings to learning. Thus, it can be transformed and used to guide their Master's learning. In addition, the approach also reinforced the notion of contexts and conditions created within 'in-between space'. Its important features, presented above, also further distinguish 'in-between space' from the actual educational practices of participants' experiences. They were all deliberately constituted as spaces of belonging, self-definition and knowledge construction based on relationships of mutuality and equality.

6.3.2.5 The application of a bilingual approach

The bilingual approach was applied since communication issues were perceived through the first phase of the programme. It was perceived that participants tended to feel that it was somewhat difficult to capture information when communication was in English. It was also perceived by many experts, who described communication with Chinese students as a constant dilemma due to their limited English proficiency. The concerns were particularly focused upon academic and subject-specific terms and concepts that the Chinese students were unable to fully comprehend. Additionally, depending on their English vocabulary and ability to articulate and express ideas in English, some students were seen to lose their momentum for involvement in deeper-level communications. These concerns therefore further impacted on many UK teachers' perceptions of Chinese student's acquisition of learning skills, through which limited English proficiency is seen as one of the most compelling problems hampering the adoption of 'higher order' learning skills, for example self-reflection and critical thinking skills.

Certainly, languages provide an important tool in terms of conducting effective learning activities through verbal communication. However, it is also worth noting that simply attributing limited English proficiency as the obstacle to Chinese students' acquisition of learning skills is inappropriate. Abji (2005, p.1) cites Thomas and Collier's (1997, 2000) work and indicates that:

> *Thomas and Collier's (1997, 2000) have symbolised the relationship between the socio-cultural, linguistic and cognitive dimensions of language acquisition as a multi-dimensional prism with the learner at its centre, surrounded by the social and cultural processes of everyday life which have impact on the cognitive, academic and language domains of development. Within a supportive socio-cultural environment, the language, cognitive and academic dimensions must develop together in an interdependent way – 'If one is developed to the detriment of another, this may be detrimental to a students' overall growth and future success' (Thomas and Collier, 1997, p.21).*

Richard and Toffoli also indicate that languages are 'the carrier of cultural values' (2009, p.987), they are 'an inseparable part of culture' (Li and Guo, 2012, p.221), which means that different languages can carry different forms of expression of reasoning in the context of their own cultures. So, based on this, it can be argued that without understanding of this

cultural-based logic of reasoning behind the English language, Chinese students will be unable to express themselves in ways that UK teachers might expect. In addition, based on the findings of this study, it has been acknowledged that Chinese students need to develop skills that support giving meaning to their learning, based on and/or through their 'past and present learning experiences' (Rasenen,1998), and this involves a cognitive process of conceptual translation and negotiation. Yet, without being involved in such a process, Chinese students will also be unable to understand the real notion of learning skills that are required in the context of English.

Bialystok (2005), in his study of 'Consequences of Bilingualism for Cognitive Development', examines the bilingualism effects which have an influence on one's learning, and indicates that bilingualism impacts upon specific cognitive processes: 'concepts of quantity, task-switching and concept formation, and theory of mind' (Ibid, 2005, p.417). Wierzbicka (2011, p.213) also indicates that 'Bilingual experience is a crucial source of insight into human cognition and into the inadequacy of purely English-based 'data gathering' aimed at discovering cognitive categories of speakers of different languages.'

However, according to Martin's study, he argues that the in UK – as one of the major receiving countries – students 'are from widening participation backgrounds and are multilingual', however 'multilingual resources are given scant recognition in many universities across the country' (2010, p.9). Through the study of the cases of ethnic minority students' learning stories in the UK, he further indicates that there is a tendency that 'UK universities reproduce the monolingual ethos common in much of British society, either by ignoring the linguistic repertoires of their minority ethnic students, or by treating these as problematic' (Ibid, p.9).

Therefore, in this programme, it is believed that rather than treating the whole process of improving one's English, in isolation and with negative connotations, as a way of solving the problems, it would be better to create the contexts and conditions, which allow 'the language, cognitive and academic dimensions' to be developed together in a 'supportive socio-cultural environment' (Abji, 2005, p.1). Taking the effect of bilingualism into account, in order to create such contexts and conditions – other than the strategies and approaches mentioned in previous sections – the use of bilingual experiences to support learning was a crucial approach.

In contrast to the bilingual approach that has been used in some experts' classes, where someone translated the English learning content into Mandarin, the approach applied in this programme emphasised the development of 'higher level' cognitive skills: conceptual translation and negotiation, which were involved in working between two languages. In other words, participants would explore key subject concepts, ideas and practices through the learning activities bilingually rather than firstly in English and then Mandarin. When working through the learning activities in two languages, they were involved in a process of conceptual translation and negotiation between the instructor, peers and self, through which they could explore, negotiate and translate the meanings of subject-specific concepts, ideas and practices based on their own experiences in different cultures. It thus further supported participants' development of 'meaning relations' (Räsänen's,1998) to their learning in the Master's course.

6.3.3   The stakeholders of the interventions

The pedagogical strategies and approaches that were applied in the programme have been discusses in previous sections; they are important and interconnected factors that were developed to serve the purpose of creating contexts and conditions of learning in order to enable a negotiable and transferable learning experience. However, it is also worth noting that there is one crucial factor – one which stands above all these factors to enable the idea to work effectively – that is the relationship of stakeholders. The relationship of the stakeholders in this programme was generally reflected on how I, as an instructor, defined my position; how the student participants decided to be engaged; and how the interactions happened.

As mentioned previously in Section 6.3.2: The pedagogical strategies and approaches of the interventions, the focus of the programme gradually moved from the initial idea of supporting a better integration and adaptation of student participants to their Master's study in Phase 1, towards more profound thinking of creating contexts and conditions for the participants which enable the dynamics of moving, translation and negotiation between different educational traditions and experiences in Phase 3. As such, my position in the workshops was also adjusted by that time, which directly impacted on student participants' engagement and the nature of the interactions through learning and teaching practices.

According to HEA's (2014, p.3) document, '[l]ecturers interested in internationalising their pedagogy and curriculum…need to learn about other possible forms of expression of reasoning and writing in other cultures so that they can recognise and reward these.'

Considering my own being 'in-between' – with an ability to understand languages and educational traditions in the both Chinese and UK contexts – initially I assumed that I was in an appropriate position to fulfil the HEA's idea. I thus played a role of a 'bilingual consultant'[26] and assumed that my experiences and ability to understand languages and educational traditions would impact on student participants' adjustment to their Master's study. Whereas, when the study involved deep reflection and responsiveness to student participants' behaviours, views and reactions through the learning and teaching practices, I realised that this idea could be problematic. Firstly, HEA (2014) suggests that it is possible for lecturers to 'learn about other possible forms of expression of reasoning and writing in other cultures so that they can recognise and reward these' (2014, p.3). Based on the evidence of this study, this approach could be questioned. That is, is it possible or to what extent is it possible for a lecturer to learn in the way the HEA document suggests? And depending on the makeup of a group of students, how could this learning be achieved across a range of cultures? Even if the interventions conducted in this programme – with bilingual skills and practical knowledge of study and practice – were successful, this would only indicate that rather than an individual teacher being able to 'learn about other possible forms of expression of reasoning and writing in other cultures so that they can recognise and reward these' (2014, p.3), improving the student experience could be achieved through 'international' teaching teams, with appropriate bilingual skills. These could be constructed according to student intakes, but this could never be precise and could disadvantage some students (for example: a bi-lingual team – English and Mandarin working with a typical group in one class, but the group is made up of more than English and Mandarin speaking students – the students from other countries, who speak neither English nor Mandarin, would be disadvantaged.

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[26] The term of 'bilingual consultant' is explained by Wierzbicka (2011, p.214) as

> *[t]hey can't be expected to analyze their own thoughts and categories into semantic primes, they can understand explications couched in primes … or in primes and molecules… test them against their intuitions and propose adjustments. This means that such consultants can be treated as conversational partners capable of understanding the meaning of their own words and sentences, instead of being reduced to silent objects of the investigation carried out in English.*

Secondly, there may be a danger in this approach to the concept of conceiving education/cultural practices as binary opposites, as my educational experiences and the understanding of languages and traditions might be not applicable for all the student participants. Compared to graded and more complex interactions to learning activities, the findings indicate that in an A&D discipline, such as jewellery, the culture in which a student has been predominantly immersed means that 'forms of expression of reasoning' will be deep within that individual. So, the HEA's approach could also be questioned, that is, to what extent a teacher from a culture other than that of the student would be able to 'recognise and reward' 'other' 'forms of expression of reasoning' (HEA, 2014, p.3). In addition, as discussed previously, this word 'other' is laden with meaning in cultural studies theory and is a contested concept – with 'other' often meaning other than Western (Harley et al., 2008; Welikala, 2011), because the concept of otherness is dependent on the binary perspective. The HEA document, in this respect, perhaps sees the way of internationalising pedagogy as teaching-led, that is, with greater emphasis on the role of the teachers. However, in doing so, learning is led by the perceived dominant educational traditions (Gesche and Makeham 2008, p.242) and the idea of managing expectations (Austerlitz et al., 2008) of students might be still challenging.

This study therefore realised a real situation that is somewhere between local/regional/national practices and internationalised practices. Although the HEA document points to solutions, the evidence of this study indicates that students do experience impeding factors. So, a more student-focused approach was developed to provide opportunities for the student participants to use 'forms of expression of reasoning' that would best enable them to achieve the expected learning outcomes. This would require processes of conceptual translation and negotiation involving all the stakeholders in a method of constructing spaces of belonging, self-definition and knowledge mediation and creation, based on relationships of mutuality and equality. This approach has thus broadened the meaning of the application in the real situation of learning; no matter where the student or teacher group is from, they can be seen intrinsically as an international group that provides the contexts and means for internationalising the curriculum – because the group is international.

6.4   Summary of the findings and interpretations as a whole

In summary, this chapter analysed and interpreted the findings of this research study. It provided three dimensions: institutions, subjects of A&D, actors (teachers and students) to

enable deeper insight into the challenges that are encountered in the current intercultural educational environment in the UK, with a particular focus upon Chinese students' learning experiences. It further discussed the potential solutions that have been developed as interventions through the progression of LEP.

Based on the findings of this research study, I realised that in the context of internationalisation of HE, the traditional idea of supporting Chinese students' adaptation or adjustment to the UK's educational tradition by following UK's ways of learning might be not necessarily be seen as the main aim for the UK academics and institutions. I also realised that it is important for a student encountering UK Higher Education learning for the first time, to develop skills that support giving meaning to their learning – based on and/or through their past and present learning experiences – and which sustain the acquisition or construction of new knowledge. There are multiple layers of dialogical process relating to this situation. Firstly, there is internal dialogue of these student processes where the new knowledge is contextualised against one's existing culturally-funded knowledge. Secondly, there is a dialogical relationship between teacher and students and the process that the learning needs go through to ensure that knowledge is being absorbed in an appropriate way against their cultural background. Thirdly, there is a dialogical process between two cultures or traditions, which exists in the institutional environment; it is also the context where the learning takes place and where it may impact upon responses.

Therefore, what seems to be essential to this study is to create powerful contexts and conditions for learning – contexts and conditions that enable the dynamics of moving, translation and negotiation between different educational traditions and experiences. The LEP was thus developed as an attempt to meet this aim. Inspired by the concept of 'Third space', an idea of 'in-between space' was developed with two key strengths: conceptual translation and negotiation. These strengths enabled the programme to stand upon neither the context of participants' past experiences from previous educational environments nor the context of their current experiences from the Master's course. Based on the centrality of the concept of 'in-between space', the programme developed a means of intervention as a form of mediation, through which a range of conceptual translation and negotiation tools – for example, the application of Bloom's taxonomy, game-based learning approach and bilingual approach – made the connections of participants' 'past and recent [educational] experiences'; '[sociocultural] and personal knowledges' (Räsänen, 1998). By doing this, the participants could therefore see the different educational systems as a mirror, reflecting the advantages and disadvantages on each other's side. They could also foster

greater adaptability and flexibility to be involved in different learning situations. Alternatively, this study emphasises the importance of the development of an international group amongst all the students and teachers. That is, by deliberately setting-up a learning environment, teachers and students could therefore work together in a way that involves the use of different languages by focusing on conceptual translation and negotiation based on relationships of mutuality and equality. In this way, it thus broadens the meaning of internationalisation of HE to all the stakeholders.

In addition, this chapter also argues that the skills and knowledge developed through the interventions are transferable, which means they not only aid students in dealing with the transition from Bachelor's in China to Master's in the UK but can also enable students' transitions into future situations – no matter where the student might be, these skills and knowledge can be continually applied because they help to provide insights into the ways in which learning is culturally mediated.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

This chapter provides a general review of the research study. It examines how the aims of the study and research questions have been addressed. It concludes the research by discussing the contributions of the main findings for both theory and practice. It also discusses the limitations of the research, as well as how the limitations might drive the future research agenda.

7.1   A review of the research study

Before reviewing the research findings, a review of the aims of the study is seen as apposite. Namely, an examination of the nature of learning challenges encountered by Chinese students through the transition from Batchelor's study in China to the Master's study in the United Kingdom (UK) with a particular focus on the aspects of Chinese students' learning experiences at the initial stage of their UK Master's study. By identifying how and to what extent the challenges have impacted on Chinese students' learning experiences, a key aim was to develop effective interventions to address these challenges as well as enhancing students' learning in the context of internationalisation of higher Education (HE).

However, as the complex and multifaced nature of globalisation and internationalisation, and the existence of an inadequate understanding of the actual transition experiences of Chinese international students, the study was therefore designed from the outset to be exploratory, fundamentally inductive and action-oriented in nature. Also, in order to ensure the meaningfulness of this study, it was undertaken within the specific discipline and location, which enabled both a holistic approach as well as a focus on individuals, in contrast to the general theory

Being driven by both of the aim and the nature of the research, the study commenced with a notional set of research questions:

> **Question 1**: What are the learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles that most commonly operate in HE relating to the subject of jewellery in both China and UK?

Question 2: To what extent is it possible and meaningful to identify and classify (a) learning and teaching methods and pedagogical styles, and (b) differences in approaches to learning across the two countries?

Question 3: In what ways and to what extent do notional differences in approaches and styles influence Chinese postgraduate taught (PGT) students' learning experiences and perceptions with respect to their jewellery education?

Question 4: What are the perceptions of Chinese PGT students with respect to UK jewellery pedagogical styles, and in what ways do they influence students' preparedness or readiness for their transition from Bachelor's study in China to PGT study in the UK?

Question 5. What provisions have been made in the UK School of Jewellery (SoJ) system to support Chinese PGT students in accommodating and adapting to learning in the UK HE context?

Question 6: To what extent are adaptation methods and techniques in the UK HE jewellery sector, and particularly the SoJ, adequate and effective? Is there more that can be done to improve the student experience of transition from one learning culture to another?

7.1.1   Findings in relation to Questions 1-4

The first four questions were presented in Chapter 4 and were answered through a range of research activities conducted at the first stage of the empirical study. The researcher investigated informants' learning experiences to explore and discuss:

- What are the informants' perceptions of their educational experiences in the UK A&D HE context?
- To what extent do the informants perceive these experiences as 'challenges'?
- How those challenges represent themselves in stakeholders' day-to-day learning and teaching practices?
- How the informants perceive and engage with those challenges?

This, therefore, determined the scope of the study and gave the study general explanations

to the nature of challenges.

However, being driven and shaped by the data collected over time, the scope of the study was extended and the above questions were not uncovered at student level but at the teacher and institution levels. It thus provided much richer and deeper explanations to the nature of challenges.

In summary, challenges in this study were recognised at three levels:

- Level of HE institutions
- Level of the subject of A&D
- Level of actors: students and teachers

At the institution level, the challenges were recognised to be not related to the educational bodies of the sending countries but the receiving countries. Due to a variety of motivations, ''internationalization' has become a persistent word' (Caldwell and Gregory, 2016, p.117) in the receiving UK higher education institutions (HEIs). Yet, these 'specific initiatives' are more likely 'laden with theorising about internationalisation' (Hyland et al., 2008, p.5.6) and therefore less able to either consider the diversity and complexities of intercultural encounters or create an environment where those intercultural encounters can unfold effectively. This factor generally reflects the failure of providing adequate guidance on how to balance the tension between different educational traditions, and how to deal with the competition of the cultural capitals between the dominant and inclusive ways. In turn, Chinese institutions, as the educational bodies of the sending countries, tend to interpret the meaning of internationalisation of HE differently to what has normally been recognised in the Western norm. They see internationalisation as a range of activities, such as learning abroad, learning and teaching exchange, inter-institutional cooperation, and transnational programmatic development. Whereas, due to the impacts of their educational traditions, policy operations and industrial relations, the idea of internationalisation has neither functionally shaped their traditional educational practices, nor equipped their students with the necessary learning abilities that are expected in UK HE. These factors thus further challenge the learning and teaching practices at both the subject and stakeholders' levels.

At the subject level, the study realises that there is a pedagogic contradiction existing between China and the UK in the context of A&D HE. This contradiction is recognised as that many Chinese students expect their learning based on 'the concrete and the certain'

and 'often seek 'clarity'; yet, 'a central, although largely unspoken, tenet of A&D pedagogy' in the UK 'would appear to be the centrality of 'ambiguity' to the creative process' (Austerlitz et al., 2008, p.127). In addition, the existence of such 'ambiguity' nature across most of the UK A&D disciplines tends to become a norm, and is expected to be understood by all the students learning in such an educational environment. Therefore, it is often less possible to count the educational differences between China and the UK when applying pedagogical approaches.

The impacting factors perceived at both the institution and subject levels bring significant challenges to the UK A&D HE's development towards internationalisation. They also bring even more significant challenges to Chinese international students who are confronting the uncertainty of how to learn, and to the UK teachers who are confronting anxieties of how to approach their teach.

The study identified a range of 'knowledge gaps' between Chinese and the UK educational traditions. However, because of the impacting factors discussed above, both Chinese students and the UK teachers are possibly less aware of these gaps. They include:

(a) Mismatched acquisition of learning skills

(b) Different interpretations and understandings with respect to the academic terms and subject-specific knowledge

(c) Different principles of settings the curriculum and programme

Additionally, the study recognised that learning and teaching principles remain unexamined in the extent to which they are culturally mediated (Turner and Robson, 2008). This recognition reflects upon the situation where many UK teachers tend to be less empathetic to the cultural differences of their Chinese students. When coping with the needs of internationalisation, this group of teachers tend to see their 'own cultural orientations remain relatively unchanged' (Gesche and Makeham 2008, p.242), and to see Chinese students as 'educational others' (Harley et al., 2008). A tendency was therefore perceived that certain teachers tend to problematise the differences in educational experiences and expectations between teachers and Chinese students. Hence, it then considers how either students' expectations tend to be managed and constructed in a particular way in order to avoid cultural conflict in education, or how students' engagement in active learning tends to be expected in order to fulfil all the learning requirements.

The study further examined the above findings and proved that either 'managing' student expectations or being obsessed with fulfilling every learning expectation can be problematic. Hence this then reflects upon the Chinese students' learning in the UK, resulting in (a) the application of 'ethnocentric pedagogical approaches that are less sensitive to diversity' (Trahar, 2011, p.46), and (b) a reduction of positive engagement in learning among Chinese students. Also, this is perceived as one of the significant challenges, which hampers the effectiveness of learning and teaching practices of both Chinese students and UK teachers.

7.1.2 Findings in relation to Questions 5-6

By analysing the factors which caused challenges under current educational circumstances, the study recognised that – governed by current policies and strategies operated by HE institutions – these factors, at each level, are interacting with each other and making challenges more complex and multifaceted. With regard to this nature, it is necessary to view these challenges, which constitute the phenomenon of intercultural education, as a whole; and any view of how to address these challenges by looking at certain aspects of their nature is inadequate and might cause failure to embrace the real notion of effective learning and teaching in the intercultural context. The study also realised that positive intercultural interactions do not occur 'naturally' (Reid et al., 2010; Berardo and Deardorff, 2012; Baldassar and Mckenzie, 2016). In the real-life situation, in turn, intercultural competence is developed not through the length of exposure to a multicultural environment; but through positive engagement in the intercultural learning process by all the stakeholders.

With the challenges identified, the ultimate aim of this research study is to develop and examine a range of interventions, which can effectively support intercultural learning and teaching and provide meaningful experiences to all the stakeholders at Master's level in the context of the UK A&D HE. The Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) was thus particularly created to meet this intention. It was conducted and developed according to three phases of the interventional experiment. Through the development of the programme from Phase 1 to Phase 3, the nuanced effects of participants' educational experiences were perceived, which provided a deeper insight into the nature of the challenges.

The study realised that by having the sense of education cultural centrality and superiority, efforts to support Chinese students' transition and adaptation have been made by the UK

institutions and their teachers. Yet, in general, these efforts have been seen as a range of remedial actions. That is, seeing the challenges – in the sense of obstacles – to be tackled. However, through the LEP, the study examined and proved that such efforts were still unable to balance the tension caused by different educational traditions. The study also realised that in the context of internationalisation of HE, the traditional idea of supporting Chinese students' adaptation or adjustment to the UK's educational tradition by simply following the UK's ways of learning might not necessarily be seen as the main aim for the UK academics and institutions.

Based on the above findings, the study thus realised that to facilitate learning, teachers are not only required to teach thorough subject-related skills and knowledge but also be equipped with some knowledge of how students' experiences are formed and how students learn. The study also realised that it is important for a student encountering UK HE learning for the first time, to develop skills that support giving meaning to their learning – based on or through their past and present learning experiences – and which sustain the acquisition or construction of new knowledge.

Therefore, Questions 5 and 6 became adjusted due to the realisation, based on the research evidence, that deeper questions had emerged and needed to be addressed. These questions were:

> **Question 5**: What provisions are made in the UK A&D/Jewellery HEI sector to support Chinese PGT students in giving meaning to their learning?

> **Question 6**: To what extent and in what conditions are these methods and techniques in the UK A&D/jewellery HE effective?

> **Question 7:** Is there more that can be done to improve these methods and techniques in order to develop meaning and create new knowledge for Chinese students' UK learning in the A&D context, as well as transition into future situations?

Then the LEP was developed, driven by the notion of action research to address those questions. The programme took the highly experimental evolution of the approach in order to be flexible and responsive to what going on through the EI process. It was therefore realised that what seems to be essential to this study is to create powerful contexts and conditions for learning – contexts and conditions which enable the dynamics of moving,

translation and negotiation between different educational traditions and experiences.

Inspired by the concept of 'Third Space', the idea of 'in-between space', with two key strengths: conceptual translation and negotiation, was developed and adopted as the key concept that was central to this study. Within 'in-between space', the programme developed means of interventions as a form of mediation, in which the development and application of a range of pedagogical strategies and approaches made the connections of participants' 'past and recent [educational] experiences' and '[sociocultural] and personal knowledges' (Räsänen, 1998). These include:

- The application of Bloom's Taxonomy
- The application of 'reflective and experiential learning'
- The application of 'game-based learning' approach
- The application of the bilingual approach

At the theoretical level, on the one hand, through reference to Bloom, et al.'s (1956) 'The Taxonomy of educational objectives', the design of the programme proceeded through building practical knowledge, to aspects of active learning engagement. On the other hand, the idea of 'reflective and experiential learning' was applied to guide a range of critical organisational practices for: balancing different educational positions, understanding and negotiating the potential tensions between different educational experiences and expectations, and 'bridging the gap in cultural academic capital for success' (Coertjens et al., 2016, p.358).

Firstly, at the practical level, Bloom's Taxonomy was applied to:

- support the participants to begin translating general developmental processes – 'knowledge dimensions', based on Bloom's Taxonomy – into their own specialist course of study;
- support the participants to identify, reflect upon and connect knowledge and skills that they obtained previously to what is expected on the MA course.

Secondly, the 'game-based learning' approach was applied to create an environment where participants could feel more comfortable and under less intense pressure in order to encourage their level of engagement. Through formulating a 'gamification environment' in the learning and teaching context, the notion of risk-taking in learning was more easily

adapted by participants. This was an essential step towards the deeper and further learning interactions. More importantly, the game-based experiential learning activities fostered participants' reflections on the learning process and the different interpretations of learning experiences from their peers. Supported by the facilitator's explanation of the learning aims, these reflections can be thus connected with participants' actual Master's study, where they can meet the purposes of meaning giving and knowledge construction.

Finally, the bilingual approach was applied to encourage participants to explore key subject concepts, ideas and practices through the learning activities – bilingually rather than firstly in English and then Mandarin. Through involvement in the process of conceptual translation and negotiation between the instructor, peers and self, they could then negotiate and translate the meanings of subject-specific concepts, ideas and practices based on their own experiences in different cultures. It thus further supported participants' development of 'meaning relations' (Räsänen's,1998) to their learning on the Master's course.

By undertaking the above, the idea of learning in the 'in-between space' enabled the programme to stand upon neither the context of participants' past experiences from previous educational environments nor the context of their current experiences from the UK Master's course. It therefore allowed participants to see the different educational systems as a mirror, which can reflect the advantages and disadvantages on each other's side. It then further allowed participants more adaptability and flexibility to be involved in different learning situations.

7.2   Contributions to Knowledge

The study has generated a spectrum of findings that relate to a range of levels (institutional, disciplinary and stakeholder) in the context of A&D HE. These findings, both theoretical and practical in nature, can be perceived as useful and applicable for those that are researching, educating, managing, planning and developing policy in parallel and similar contexts. The most important contributions to derive from the study can be divided into four themes, specifically:

a) From negative to positive: unpacking and re-framing perceived 'problems' of (and for) Chinese PGT learners in UK HE

By unpacking carefully the problems and challenges that are perceived by stakeholders, the study provides an enhanced and significantly more nuanced understanding of the complexities of Chinese students' learning experiences as they transition from studying at Bachelor's level in China to Master's level in the UK. The study highlights a common perception (among HE teachers and managers) that Chinese learners' transition into UK learning is one that is 'problematic' (Martin, 2010). Thus, the discourse in relation to Chinese students' learning experiences and educational development has become one that focuses fundamentally on remedial actions, repair and re-education. However, the research reported above makes clear that the necessary processes of *conceptual translation* and *negotiation*, where encouraged, supported and positively nurtured, can equip students with highly valuable learning skills to be acquired when moving from one educational system to another.   Here the focus is shifted from thinking of problems, obstacles and remediation to a more critical and insight-led view of *in-situ* and real-world processes and how these can be adapted to provide more positive experiences and outcomes. The study has indicated that the 'problem' mind-set is not a profitable one. The notion of 'challenge' is both more pertinent and productive: that is, we should see the challenges that confront Chinese PGT learners as a potentially beneficial component in their education. Where this is achieved, the entire issue of past and current experience can be turned around into a positive, and perceived problems re-cast as an asset.

b) Development of appropriate pedagogical strategies, approaches spaces

The centrality of the concept of 'in-between space', as developed and applied through the LEP, provides effective contexts and conditions for learning. It enables learning to stand neither upon the contexts of participants' past experiences (their previous educational environments), nor upon the contexts of their current experiences (studying for a UK Master's degree). In this way, it enables the development of a learning environment of belonging, self-definition, knowledge construction and mediation, based on relationships of mutuality and equality.

Based on this strategy, the pedagogical approaches (for example, the application of Bloom's taxonomy, reflective and experiential learning, game-based learning, and bilingual negotiation) gives a range of flexible possibilities for all the stakeholders to develop 'meaning relations' and high level cognitive skills - not only in ways that can support stakeholders' current studies at the Master's level, but can positively impact on the development of their continuing academic and/or professional life and skills in different

international and global contexts.

It is also important to recognise that the LEP experimented with moving to another territory. That is, the workshops used leaning and teaching contents and approaches that were tangential to the participants' specific study and they applied aspects of educational theory, which are normally, in an explicit sense, outside the subject. The findings from the LEP proved the effectiveness of supporting stakeholders' study at the Master's level by using this strategy.

c) Re-framing the internationalisation debate in the context of A&D HE

Addressing a real situation that is somewhere between local/regional/national and internationalised practices, a student-centred approach was developed to provide opportunities for the participants to use 'forms of expression of reasoning' that would best enable them to achieve the expected learning outcomes. This approach requires processes of conceptual translation and negotiation, involving all the stakeholders in a method of constructing spaces of belonging, self-definition and knowledge mediation and creation, based on relationships of mutuality and equality. This research has thus broadened the meaning of the real situation of learning; no matter where the student or teacher group may be from, they can be seen intrinsically as an international group that provides the contexts and means for internationalising the curriculum – because the group is international.

d) An evolving and adaptive model for learning

Via combination of the second and the third contributions, and in the context of the principles and content of the LEP, the study has moved towards the creation of a new model for learning. The model is based on (a) the centrality of the concept of in-between space, (b) the core principles of conceptual translation and negotiation, and (c) the development of trust and minimisation of 'stake' (in comparison with formal learning settings) via use of gamification approaches. Therefore, it has been possible to move towards the creation of a flexible programme, one that both facilitates positive transitions and contributes to enhance longer-term orientations to learning in wider contexts.

7.3   Limitations driving the future research agenda

With qualitative research, it is difficult to convey that the findings are entirely generalisable to 'the entire population' (Ali and Yusof, 2011, p.35). However, rather than a snapshot, this research used relatively small sizes of the sample to study the context in a very rich and deep way to generate indicative findings. This approach can thus 'make logical generalisations to a theoretical understanding of a similar class of phenomena' (Popay et al., 1998, p.348), which can then guide further research in more extensive settings.

Another limitation is reflected in the timescale of this study. The interventions developed through the LEP, to some extent, have seen to be effective. This reflected upon the participants' positive engagement through the workshops and their subsequent feedback, in which they expressed the successful attempt to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through the workshops to their Master's learning. Therefore, short-term outcomes regarding peoples' responses to the effectiveness of the interventions have been seen as positive. However, the study also realised that there would be a need for greater time and distance in order to map the immediate impacts, through which a medium or longer-term outcome could be seen in relation to how and to what extent the skills and knowledge that participants acquired on the workshops are used to build their own practice. These are the questions to be addressed or opened up with another research agenda, which in turn may require the involvement of more institutions with more significant number of students to bring further insight into this area.

Also, considering the timescale and capacity of the PhD, this research was developed by adopting a first- and second-person action research approach. While, as suggested by Reason and Bradbury (2007, p.6) 'attempts at third-person research which are not based in rigorous first-person inquiry into one's purposes and practices is open to distortion through unregulated bias.' This research therefore provides a good foundation for developing third-person action research for future research agenda.

In addition, another potential to drive future research is embedded in the digital way of learning. Because the study established connections between the Chinese Batchelor-level students, the UK Master's students and the Master's alumni, there was an intention to conduct an online element in this study. The idea of developing an online intervention seemed to fit with one of the most important purposes of the intervention developed through this study – that is the emphasis on 'meaning relations' in learning by connecting

stakeholders' 'past and present' experiences. However, because of the pressures on addressing the research questions, the study had to withdraw this idea and leave this for future research.

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Appendix 1

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Chronology of the empirical study</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Timeline Activities</td><td colspan="2">Outline of The Key Information</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stage 1</td><td>Timeline activity 1 : The interview of the MA (2013-2014) JSRP graduates, SoJ, BCU, UK</td><td>Date</td><td>09/2014</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Number of the participants</td><td>31 student participants</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Brief of the findings</td><td>This study reveals a range of learning challenges being encountered by Chinese participants when undertaking UK Master's study. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the nature of the challenges, a further investigation into Chinese students' prior experiences before entering the UK is needed.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Timeline activity 2 : The visit of two of jewellery institutions in China:

a. Jewellery Department of The Gemmological Institute (GIC), China University of Geosciences,</td><td>Date</td><td>09/2014</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Number of the participants</td><td>45 student participants

3 teaching staff</td></tr>
</table>

	Wuhan b. Jewellery Department of School of Design, Central Academic of Fine Art (CAFA), Beijing	Brief of the findings	The findings of this study reveal that there is a general lack of awareness of the differences existing between China and UK HE educational traditions, which may mean that the potential challenges of UK study might be underestimated by many Chinese students. In addition, the findings also indicate that the learning skills of Chinese students before entering the UK are less compatible to what is expected at the UK Master's level. Thus, a further situation might be perceived when Chinese students study in the UK, in that the UK Master's course cannot meet the students' learning expectations, nor are their preparations sufficient to support their adaptation to the course.
	Timeline activity 3 : Undertaking a mentoring project for Chinese international students studying on the MA (2014-2015) JSRP course at SoJ	Date	12/2014
		Number of the participants	28 student participants
		Brief of the findings	Through the development of the project, such effects are perceived as instant in their nature, rather than a constant impact on improving students' study abilities in order to achieve self-directed leaning. It can be perceived that students tended to

			seek the solutions from me in order to deal with specific issues, for instance, improving making skills, developing design ideas, dealing with technical issues; while there was less evidence showing their intentions of exploring the real meaning of the MA learning. It is therefore understood that the supports provided to Chinese students in this project are not the interventions expected within the aim of this research study. As it provides fewer contributions to this research study, Phase 3 is not presented in this thesis, however, a project report is attached in Appendix 2 as a reference to the study.
	Links with the next stage	The scope of the study after this stage of research practice is further determined: by identifying the weaknesses of Chinese students in relation to the learning skills which are required for Master's study, the research aims to further explore the pedagogical approaches that have been applied in UK A&D HE, as well as to further develop a range of interventions that can support and improve Chinese student's learning experiences in the transition from China to the UK.
Stage 2	Timeline activity 4 : Learning Enhancement Programme: Phase 1	Date	11/2016
		Number of the participa	22 students perceptions 7 academic experts

		nts	
		Brief of the activity	Phase 1 of the programme focused on the piloting of experimental learning interventions, and an initial analysis of their results. Informed by the expert interviews, as detailed in the Research Methodology Chapter, this provided the researcher with the first opportunity to observe student responses to the methods and approaches of the interventions and to begin to identify what was missing or what could be improved.
	Timeline activity 5 : Learning Enhancement Programme: Phase 2	Date	11/2017
		Number of the participants	9 students participants
		Brief of the activity	Based on initial analysis and instant reflections upon the Phase 1 data, the second Phase enabled adjustments to be made. These included moving methods and techniques that were intended to be tested in Phase 1 to the second Phase and revising plans so as to to give more attention to the student engagement. This latter adjustment introduced a game-based approach, with the aim of testing the hypothesis

			that the concept of gamification, "the use of game elements in non-game contexts" might result in motivating engagement.
Timeline activity 6 : Learning Enhancement Programme: Phase 3	Date	12/2018	
	Number of the participants	18 student participants	
	Brief of the activity	The third Phase changed toward exploring how to support more "abstract" dimensions of knowledge ("procedural" and "metacognitive"), and in particular, crititcal thinking (Ref: Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives). This included comparing concepts of critical thinking between student learning contexts in the UK and China.	
The combination of all three Phases facilitated an initial analysis of the extent to which the experimental interventions could be specific to the discipline of jewellery and / or transferable across different university disciplines. The interpretation of the findings of this anaysis is discussed in Chapter 6.			

Appendix 2

Project Evaluation Report

The Academic mentoring for Chinese international students on the MA in Jewellery,
Silversmithing and Related Products
December 2014 – September 2015

Report prepared and written by Yi (Roger) Liu,

June 2015

Acknowledgements

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Report

This Report attempts to evaluate the impact of mentoring on a group of MA Jewellery, Silversmithing and Related Products students over a period of a 2014-2015 academic year from December 2014 until September 2015.

Mentoring as it was conceived in the context of this project is essentially about a current Chinese PhD student, Yi (Roger) Liu, an alumnus of the MA JSRP, working as Teaching Assistant Mentor and supporting MA JSRP Chinese students to achieve something that is important to them.

The mentee is encouraged to discuss their needs and circumstances in confidence with Yi who is in a position to provide positive assistance. Help and support is given in a way that the mentee understands and values with the aims of empowering them to move forward with confidence towards what they want to achieve.

The Report is divided into ten sections:
Section One gives the background to the Mentoring Project and Section Two looks at the aims. Section Three describes the mentoring model used during the project process. Section Four describes the three mentoring techniques that were used, in theory and in practice. Section Five describes the actions undertaken by mentor. Sections Six provides a summary of the effective factors.

Background to The Project

In order to fully appreciate the significance of what the Mentoring Project has tried to achieve, it is important to understand the cultural student cohort composition of the MA JSRP and the educational background of the Chinese international students.

As an international student, deciding to attend UK University to embark on a course of study is a significant step in one's life. The conflicting emotions of apprehension and excitement that accompany this decision indicate that the transition to university life is far from easy, especially when studying a master course.

Currently, about one-third of non-EU international students enrolling in the UK higher education are from Mainland China (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2014).

Chinese international students bring with them expectations and perceptions of educational needs different from the local UK students. The learning behaviour of Chinese learners is recognised to deviate from the practices and values of Western HE students.

> "Western learners accept involvement and learning through their own discovery and exploration. Chinese learners expect the teacher to lead and provide learning points, and they prefer a passive approach to learning." (Wang and Moore 2007, 32)

The dissonance is attributed to the two different 'cultures of learning' (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; 1998), termed Eastern and Western culture of learning or academic culture respectively. These dispositions are also perceived as the antithesis of the characteristics viewed as desirable in Western education, such as a capacity for independent learning and critical thinking (Ballantyne, Bain, & Packer, 1999; Ramsden, 2003). It is thus a result that Chinese learners often find adapting to this alien-learning environment difficult and they may experience an educational culture clash. These difficulties severely show in Art and Design (including Contemporary Jewellery) educational domain.

Craft and design education in England has been established for two centuries. Contemporary jewellery, as a more-or-less identifiable category, began with isolated individuals and in isolated national and regional centres through the 1950s and 1960s, emerging as an international movement in the early 1970s. (Watkins, 1993. p. 6). However, jewellery and adornment had no place in Chinese society after the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, when even flowering plants were declared to be frivolous. Evidence of thousands of years of material culture was lost or set aside as offensive reminders of elitist hierarchies. A rich, evolving tradition of adornment simply vanished for almost three generations, an invisible cultural void (Kate, 2008). The development of the modern Chinese jewellery industry did not start until 1982. Jewellery Education in China is nearly non-existent until the end of the 20th century (Song, 2004). Contemporary jewellery, the entirely new concept of jewellery to Chinese students, would be a big challenge to understanding.

Over the last 5 years, School of Jewellery has experienced an increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate Chinese international students, who are prepared to pack their cases and venture out to this new land, in the hope of obtaining high-quality jewellery education. The MA programme at the School of Jewellery is one of the most massive postgraduate courses at the Faculty of the Arts, Design and Media and has one of the

largest Chinese student cohorts while being over 90% international. The coursework is primarily studio-based material investigation, which requires a high level of engagement, critical review, good reflective thinking and cogent understanding of the independent self-directed study, while it must be safe and conducted with professional understanding.

However, previous research showed that the Chinese international students were extremely stressed and traumatised about adapting to the MA course at the initial stage of their UK study. They were often isolated and vulnerable in an alien educational environment; they are also confronted with different cultural conventions. A range of course requirements is unfamiliar to students with Chinese educational experiences and backgrounds, including the required level 7 self-directed study culture, academic expectations and methods of structured thinking and designing. It has been identified that additional support would be hugely beneficial to support the students in their emerging understanding, would impact on the student experience at transition points in a positive way and would support the development of their ability to succeed at a higher level and with much better employability.

Aims of The Project

Yi (Roger) Liu was and will be able to work with the student cohort as Teaching Assistant Mentor while working with staff in developing possible interactive pedagogic initiatives to enhance the student experience and achievement. There exists a semantic gap between English and Mandarin, which does not seem to be a matter of direct translation, but a matter of understanding knowledge transfer, which is very different in the two language systems, and which is vital for us to understand better. Yi understands both language systems and has been educated in both educational philosophies; he can support by bridging the discrepancies, which exist between staff, who represent the course requirements and academic expectations, and the students, who are often caught up in un-verbalised culture shock. Chinese students are observed to be passive, surface learners and appear to study without critical thinking (this is absolutely not a comment on their creative talents and abilities, but strictly on their study styles!). The perceived and evidenced dissonance between Chinese culture of learning and Western including British norms of teaching and learning has triggered discussion about how institutions meet the educational, socio-cultural and psychological needs of these Chinese learners in order to provide responsive pedagogy and practices to make them benefit most from their overseas study. This project aimed to lead the way and to achieve this.

The Mentoring Model

By discussing with MA JSRP course director Professor Jivan Astfalck, the mentoring model was agreed based on the following principles:
• Yi (Roger) Liu is the project lead in the role of mentor.
• Project beneficiaries are MA JSRP Chinese-speaking international students.
• The English language is required during the mentoring meetings. In rare cases, mandarin could be used as a second language for better communication.
• At an initial one-to-one meeting, the mentor will meet the students and explain what mentoring is and how they will work with their mentor. He will use a series of structured questions to ask about the students' background, current circumstances and needs, and he will also discuss their perspectives on the MA course.
• The mentor can help each mentee to draw up an individual action plan containing a set of goals and discuss the actions they will take towards achieving these goals.
• The mentor will agree on the mentoring plan with course director where possible, this decision is based on the type, degree and complexity of need of mentees, the timescale of mentoring required and the level of contact. Where possible, other factors such as gender, background, nationality and geographical location are taken into account during the mentoring process.
• A schedule of mentoring meetings is agreed once or twice a week. In rare cases, the mentor deems more intense contact necessary after discussions with the course director. A venue is also agreed, and will usually be at the MA studio or pre-booked seminar room. The structure and precise purpose of the meetings remain flexible at first in order to let the mentoring relationship develop.
• Records are kept of all meetings. Moreover, professional contacts and issues are noted on the record sheet. Mentees are encouraged to express their views and feelings through artwork and writing as well as verbally.
• Mentees' action plan, if necessary, is monitored and reviewed weekly or monthly, which enables both mentor and mentees to review and to mark progress, identify difficulties, and set further goals where appropriate.
• The project's overall progress and impact will be reviewed by the mentor with the course director. Meetings with other staff and artists in residence will also be an opportunity to hear ideas and exchange work experiences and knowledge.

Mentoring Techniques

Working holistically, adopting a position of positive regard towards mentees and setting realistic goals has been the overarching mentoring approach taken by the Mentor. As the project developed, this approach was enhanced by three different mentoring techniques (Non-directive Mentoring, Directive Mentoring and Motivational mentoring) that were developed and used to help ensure that mentees got the most from their mentoring experience.

These techniques have been used differently with mentees depending on their level of understanding, their needs and goals as expressed at the initial meeting with the mentor. In some cases, all three techniques were used in sequence, in other cases mentoring started with the directive or motivational mentoring. In a few cases, the mentoring relationship started and remained with a non-directive mentoring technique.

The three techniques are described in more depth below, along with illustrative case studies.

• Non-directive Mentoring

Misunderstandings are common and shifting the previous experiences can be particularly challenging at the initial stage of studying in the MA JSRP course. It is evident that some Chinese international students need more initial input before they can begin to recognise the aims and objectives of the MA course in order to fulfil their potential. However, this may often be the case if a student has not fully understood the benefit of participating in the mentoring project and they are not feel it's helpful. In such cases taking a non-directive mentoring approach may be the most appropriate.

The key to this approach is to befriend and listen. It could be described as a pre-mentoring stage where the mentor has identified a student who could benefit from mentoring and sets out to build a friendship with them in order to reach a stage where he is accepted and trusted by the student. In addition, this pre-mentoring stage can be a crucial element to developing a successful mentoring relationship in the future.

An example of non-directive mentoring: Sichu (Sayid) Xia

At the initial mentoring meeting, the mentor got to know Sayid, an 22-year-old boy from East of China. Sayid had no interest in studying the MA course. The decision of studying abroad was totally made by his parents just for getting a master degree certificate. He had already failed on Module One assessment and was deemed to be

still in danger at the forthcoming reassessment as he struggled for understanding the demand of the MA course and felt that it was extremely hard to develop design ideas.

The mentor befriended Sayid and encouraged him. Sayid proved to have remarkable picture taking skills, and in the time he spent with the mentor he practised taking a series of fascinating pictures. And then, the mentor helped him to analyse the value of these pictures and generate the design ideas through this process. In the longer term, the mentor aimed to encourage Sayid to take part in the Mentoring Project and to build his confidence for his studies.

• Directive Mentoring

The key to this approach is that the mentor believes that he has an insight into the mentee, their circumstances, their aspirations and also possibly how they respond to certain situations. Therefore the mentor will give specific advice and encouragement. Sometimes directive mentoring will follow on from a period of non-directive mentoring.

An example of directive mentoring: "Christmas Matters" Project
After initial meetings with mentees, certain issues were found in most of the Chinese Students.
1. They did not show enough attention to the work they made.
   - *Some of the students treat their work like rubbish. It was unprofessional to put or carry their work without any protection and care.*
   - *Rarely students would prepare the display of their work properly before the meeting.*
   - *They did not see the importance of the test pieces. Most of them were used to show their finished pieces to mentor and ignore the test pieces as evidence of the process of development.*
2. Lack of visual materials
   - *Only a few students were using their sketchbooks well*
   - *Lack of thinking about the relationship between the pictures or drawings and the work they made.*
3. Lack of making evidence for module two
   - *It was more than a month past after module one assessment. However, some of the students hardly produced enough evidence of their making process. Some of them had shown nothing, not even any test pieces to mentor.*

4. *Material matters*

    - *Lots of students were showing more concern about the materials. Some of them even believed the MA course is just about exploring materials. However, they rarely thought about the jewellery-related concerns.*

5. *Lack of focus*

    - *This particularity showed on certain students, who came with lots of ideas but could not focus on one and think deeply.*

6. *Lack of independent thinking*

    - *It seems difficult for certain students to make a decision on their own. They were easily influenced by the others' opinions.*

Based on these findings, the mentor decided that making mentees better understand the western way of teaching and learning was an essential step towards achieving positive outcomes for them. The mentor decided to do a one-day design project so that he could work more effectively with mentees by using a variety of communication techniques.

In this project, students have been asked to explore, analyse and re-design the Christmas related objects they found. It aims to develop a critical awareness of the nature of all objects, which surround us, exploring cultural, contextual and symbolic aspects of object design as well as functional and aesthetic qualities. Social issues relating to the making, use and disposal have also been discussed. The project aims to increase appreciation of the found objects, focusing on Christmas as an example and encourages students to explore the diversity of thinking and making skills with their selected objects, including emerging alternative materials.

The project requires students to pay enough attention to their thinking and to make process, and show their respect to the others in the group. Realising that the importance of every task required during the workshop is essential. A completed form of self-reflection at the end of the workshop will be asked of every individual to demonstrate a better understanding of the sub-meaning of the MA course.

The mentor aimed to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. *The ability to present the appropriate design and making process*
2. *The application of a variety of approaches to develop the original ideas*
3. *The ability to work with a team*
4. *The application of a variety of approaches to test target market*

5. *Understanding the importance of paying attention to the learning process*

• Motivational Mentoring

Motivational mentoring is a technique that can be used in cases were a mentee is in a position to identify their problems and is able to consciously work towards resolving them. Mentees can benefit from reviewing their goals and get a sense of achievement when they see what they have achieved.

The key to the motivational mentoring approach is that a mentor is primarily responsive to their mentee, answering questions and through this process helping them to understand that they have choices. The approach can also involve the mentor simply as an example by sharing his own matched experiences.

An example of motivation mentoring: Chenjiajing (Elle) Shao
Elle had passed every module without problem until she was failed on Module Four assessment, and confused by the reason for failure. The mentor realised that there was not enough evidence of development in Elle's work, and rarely have been new design ideas demonstrated, which resulted from the development of earlier pieces.

It seemed she was going to a dead end. As the mentor had experienced the same situation on his MA, he decided to share his own experiences with her, and showed her different options of development. Elle's thinking was reflected by mentor's similar experiences and was encouraged to move forward by generating ideas bravely.

After Elle came out from the dead end, the mentor was continuing to support her on different aspects and details of developing her work. "I'm happy to have your help when I feel down. You helped me get out, and learnt to view my design project from different angles which gave me many choices of developing my work further", Elle said.

Mentoring in Action

To gather better and in-depth information and to create a better match of expectations and achievements, mentor assisted by conducting structured and timetabled discussion groups and one-to-one mentoring sessions in line with MA JSRP module aims and objectives. On a regular one or two-weekly basis, he was/will discuss observational data with the Course Director to devise suitable interaction and experiential learning situations.

Based on the mentoring techniques mentioned above, some actions were addressed during the previous mentoring process.

- Course Induction Mentoring – to provide an introduction into how to access module briefs and gain a better understanding of terminology and expectations. To introduce the expectations of the University along with giving a student perspective of the course and delivering induction sessions throughout the year as and when they are needed (timetabled in the first and second mentoring meetings).
- Discussion Group Mentoring – to associate with a specific module and provide extra assistance with disseminating module content (group tutorial with failing students)
- Workshop Mentoring – to create opportunities for students to apply new information in a practical environment ('Christmas Matters' project).
- One-to-One Academic Assistance Mentoring – to provide academic assistance for modules on a timetabled basis (weekly one-to-one tutorials).

Summary of Effective and Ineffective Factors

Effective Factors
• The range of mentoring techniques and approaches used by the project have been effective in helping Chinese students to increase their confidence, skills and levels of happiness and success.
• Adopting an explicit attitude of positive regard towards each of the mentees has helped to foster a positive relationship between mentors and mentees.
• The project has operated from the belief that each mentee is an individual and comes to mentoring with complex experiences that influence their "starting point". The mentor recognised that achievement could mean something different depending on the life experiences and the starting point of each mentee. For this reason, mentor tried to help mentees set realistic, achievable goals that were significant to the individual.
• In order to meet the diverse needs and circumstances of the Chinese students, the project started out with an extensive and flexible interpretation of mentoring. This approach took into account the fact that the concept of 'being mentored', especially by someone not previously known to them, was an entirely new experience for these students.
• The mentor received monthly support and supervision from the course director, who managed the project and was able to provide practical support and guidance. Similarly,

other MA members of staff have been available to support or collaborate with a mentor as necessary.

Ineffective Factors
• Poor collaboration, manifested by a lack of communication or a failure to establish clarity of aims and responsibilities, which can undermine a mentoring relationship, e.g. non-participation of the Christmas Matters project, where some students were not willing to participate in the project because of misunderstanding the aims.
• Certain mentees were always avoiding meeting with the mentor. It felt tough to access to these students (for example, a student is so confident about his/her design project and is not willing to hear any different voice from the others). In that case, the mentoring actions were rarely used with these students, and the situation was reported to the course director for seeking advice.
• Mentoring was ineffective with the student who characterised lazy and passive learning. In such case, any kind of support was useless.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, this project study has verified that the majority of students included within this project are most worried about making the transition to the MA JSRP course, which reflects fears about whether they will settle in and be successful at the end of the course.

It has shown that the mentoring support helped most of the students and helped them to gradually find out where they belong, partly by addressing such fears and partly by sharing their experiences with their mentor.

In order to further enhance the students' learning experience, it is recommended that future studies should consider:
• Gathering evidence of the pedagogic value of mentoring by applying data collecting and undertaking a comparative analysis of the learning outcomes of those students who engaged with mentoring compared with those who did not.
• Looking at the issues around the mentoring process for both sides of the educational and managerial perspective in order to enhance teaching facilitation, student cohort management, and to prevent problems through strategies, which enable early identification and offer techniques aiming at the resolution and positive support.

Appendix 3

Letter of Informed Consent Form

Study title:

An Experimental and Critical Exploration of Strategies for The Enhancement of Academic Achievement for Chinese Postgraduate Jewellery Students in UK Higher Education

Researcher:

Yi(Roger) Liu

Research Participants name:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Before participating with the interview, you are strongly encouraged to read the following explanation of this study. This statement describes the purpose and procedures of the study. Also described is your right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

Yi's research focuses on the experiences of Chinese students entering postgraduate study, particularly during the early transitional stage of their learning programme in the UK. The research aims to develop knowledge and understanding of how, and to what extent, differences between Chinese and UK education cultures and systems, affect incoming Chinese students' social and educational experiences, their learning journey and achievement.

The aim of this interview is to investigate the experiences of Chinese postgraduate Jewellery students through the perceptions of academic experts in the disciplines of practice-based art and design. The interview concerns the experience of Chinese students as they transition from their undergraduate experience in China to their new social and academic environment in the UK. The interviews will help to identify common and / or different transition experiences issues across practice-based art and design postgraduate courses. The objective of the interviews is to gather and analyses first-hand information

and insights from discipline experts, in order to inform the development of proposed solutions.

Based on the research findings, the research further aims to effectively support future Chinese Jewellery students as they transition from their home to their new learning and social environment. In order to achieve this aim, the research objective is to design, create and test an academic transition programme, based on face-to-face mentoring and web-based bilingual (Mandarin / English) knowledge and experiences of sharing approaches.

The outcomes of the transition programme will be used to support Chinese students in being better prepared for tackling their transition. The programme is expected to include generic topics: academic conventions, types of knowledge (practice-based/tacit knowledge), communication skills, reflective practice, issues of engagement and critical thinking and subject-specific topics related to workshop and studio practice and seminar/lecture-based activities in the MA JSRP course. During this process, current MA students will be expected to learn how aspects of tacit knowledge can be shared and acquired; and how critical thinking and self-reflection skills can be explored and addressed. The data collected and findings from the project will also contribute to the completion of Yi's PhD thesis.

Interview Consent Form

This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will take around one hour.
- participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this interview at any time without prejudice or penalty. You are also free to refuse to answer any question researcher might ask you.
- there are no risks or discomforts that are anticipated from your participation in the study. Potential risks or discomforts include possible emotional feelings of sadness when asked questions during the project.
- the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Yi(Roger) Liu as research

investigator

- any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through research thesis or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed
- you are welcome to ask the researcher any questions that occur to you during the project. If you have further questions once the project is completed, you are encouraged to contact the researcher using the contact information given at the beginning.
- any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

By signing this form, I approve that I have read the above information. I freely agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that my responses will be used for academic and research purposes, and my personal and professional information will be provided under my own consent.

_____

Printed Name

_____   _____

Participants Signature   Date

_____   _____

Researchers Signature   Date

Contact Information

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Yi(Roger) Liu
Faculty of Arts, Design and Media
Birmingham City University
(+44)07915558431
Yi.Liu3@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Appendix 4

Seminar Workshop
PhD Research Practise
Yi (Roger) Liu
July 2014

Review of MA year and explore of adjustment trajectory of learning experience

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Aim: • As part of my research practise, this seminar attempts to shed some light on the complex experiences and perceptions Chinese international students have about their study in School of Jewellery, BIAD, Birmingham City University. Using qualitative approaches it is anticipated that a greater understanding of students' learning experiences would be uncovered and ways to improve their general wellbeing and satisfaction could be explored.

Objectives: • To review the whole year MA study that will reflect to the final stage as a deep consideration;
  • To assess the extent to which students were experiencing psychological and sociocultural adjustment problems;
  • To identify which of the domain(s) 'university academic life', 'contact with people' and 'daily life', and which specific issues were perceived as (a) most/least difficult and (b) most/least important to adjust to;
  • To identify a detailed, individual adjustment trajectory of learning experience;

Seminar guide

Seminar will be conducted in 2013 MA Jewellery, Silversmithing & Related Products course with (amount of student) of the participants, who will be assured of the confidentiality of their comments. Seminar is consisted by three parts, Introduction, Group interview and One to one interview. Prior to conducting the Group talking, the researcher who will conduct the Introduction session with whole students, and get to

know the students by several warming up questions. In this way rapport and a sense of trust will be built up.

1.
Introduction

- Self-introduction
- Explain purpose of interview
- Outline topics that will be discussed
- Explain purpose of tape recording
- Assure anonymity and remind the participants of their right to decline
- Dividing students into 5-6 groups

In selecting students for different groups, the aim was to include an appropriate range and balance across the following criteria: age (young and mature), field of previous study (jewellery, art and design, other) and type of accommodation (university hall, host family, house shared with Chinese, house shared with UK/non-Chinese students).

Questions:

Where are you from?

How old are you? (less than 20, 20-30, 30+)

How long have you been in the UK?

Where are you staying in the UK?

What was your education background before you join into MA Jewellery, Silversmithing & Related Products course?

2.
Group interview

The student will be asked about the issues probed in the questionnaire: namely to talk about their experiences of daily life, their social interaction with others (Chinese, British and other nationalities), and their academic studies. In addition, they will be asked about issues that could affect their anticipatory adjustment, such as their reasons for studying abroad, factors affecting their choice of destination country and institution, how the arrangements were made study, and their prior knowledge of Britain, their chosen institution, and their course of study. The interviews will be semi-structured, so that all the issues were covered

in each of the interviews, but not necessarily in identical orders. The interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Pre-arrival expectations

Show a card giving the three topics to be discussed under "Pre-arrival expectations"

A. Making a choice about where to study

- What were the reasons for choosing UK as a study destination? What were the reasons for choosing MA Jewellery, Silversmithing & Related Products course?
- Who made the decision?
- Was this course your first choice as a place of study?

  If "yes," why?

  If "no", which couse was your first choice? Why?
- How do you feel about the reasons for choosing this course as a study destination now?
- Looking back, what are the three most important things you should consider in choosing a study destination?
- If you are free to choose again, would you make the same choice? Why or why not?

B. Getting information about study abroad

- Did you use an agent to help you find a place to study in UK? If "No", go to next question. If "Yes", what types of information and services were provided? Which were the most useful?
- How easy or difficult was it to get information about UK study before you came here? Where did you go to get information? (e.g. my teacher, education fair, internet) What types of information were the most useful? Where did you get the information? What types of information were not accurate? Where did you get the information? What types of information were not available?

C. Perceptions of MA Jewellery, Silversmithing & Related Products course

- What were the things you looked forward to when you had made the choice of going to study into this course?
- What perception did you have of study in this course before coming here? Were these perceptions accurate or not? Which aspects were different?

Educational experiences

A. Learning experiences

- What is the different between study in the UK and your own country? (What makes MA different comparing with your previous study experiences?)
- Did you come across any difficulties in your studies during the first three months? If "Yes", what were they?
- Do you still have the problems you encountered in the first three months now?
- What steps did you take to overcome these problems?
- How difficult are these educational activities for you?

    Show a card showing a list of the following educational activities.(indicated by A.easy / B.difficult / C.very difficult)

    a) Understanding teachers/lectures
    b) Making skills
    c) Working on group projects
    d) Taking assessments
    e) Making presentations
    f) Managing your study workload
    g) Asking questions
    h) Thinking critically
    i) Expressing yourself in English
    j) Studying in a different educational system

    For those activities that are considered to be difficult/very difficult, encourage the participants to talk about what their experiences were like.

- Looking back, what do you think working effectively in terms of learning method?
- What is your plan after graduate?

B. Educational support services

- Where is your knowledge from? How knowledge is acquired?
- What do you think of the roles and relations of the teacher and the student? (What do you expect from the teacher here to help you to learn effectively?)
- What services have you used? How useful are they?

    If the participants can't name any, remind them of some services like:

    Language service; Library service; Artist in Residence programmes;

    Technician supports; Facilities in School of Jewellery; and societies.

3.

Interview with volunteers

A further interview with certain Chinese students will help to find out implicit information, which they don't want to share in the group.

- Do you like this course? Why?
- Do you still think it was a right choice to stay in this course now?
- What does contemporary jewellery mean to you?
- How did you generate idea of your project proposal?
- How did you cope with the course requirements?
- Is it easy to go through every module or not? If not, what difficulties have you meet?
- What qualities are needed to make your learning successful here? (How do you make sure to keep development of your idea?)
- What the gains have you benefited from studying in the MA course?
- What difference would it make if you had never studied here?
- What advice do you give to the new students from China?

4.
Closing the interview

- Thank the participant for taking part in the seminar and interview.
- Inform the participant that a follow-up focus group interview will be held (give date of meeting) to feed back the findings from these interviews and to explore with them further on practical solutions to the problems identified by the research.
- Ask the participants to consider joining a focus group and how they can contact me for further information.

Appendix 5

Self-evaluation of learning abilities

The following chart presents a range of learning abilities, which are normally expected to be equipped or developed when learning on the MA JSRP course. Please evaluate yourself and tick the box below by considering to what extent you might feel to acquire these learning abilities is challenging.

Level of challenges / Learning abilities	Easy	Normal	Difficult	Very difficult
Interpretation of learning requirements				
Subject-specific knowledge and terms				
Making skills				
Working with group				
Self-management				
Self-reflection				
Innovative thinking				
Critical thinking				
Academic reading and writing				
Presentation				

Appendix 6

The introduction to the selected institutions

Gemmological Institute, China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)

China University of Geosciences is one of the national leading comprehensive universities. It has over eight faculties and institutions, which cover a range of disciplines, such as science, engineering, literature, management, economics, law, education and philosophy, art and design, gemmology and jewellery.

As one of the institutions of this university, the Gemmological Institute consists of two departments – gemmology and jewellery. It is well known for its training and research in gemmology and offers a range of gemmological programmes across a range of levels (foundation, UG and PG). Thus the brand of 'GIC' is made up of its great reputation for training a great number of gemmological professionals for the jewellery industry in China.

With great educational success in the area of gemmology, the GIC launched an UG jewellery programme in 2001. Over a decade of development, the students graduating from this programme have been largely employed by the jewellery industry in China. The relationship between the institution and the jewellery industry has thus been reinforced, and the nature of the jewellery programme has tended to be very much industry-oriented.

Jewellery Department of School of Design, CAFA

Located in the capital city of China – Beijing, where culture, history and art are flourishing – CAFA is one of the best art resources in the country. As one of the leading HE institutions for modern art and design education in China, CAFA (2017) 'provides a rich land for those who wish to learn experience and engage in creativities, which has nurtured quite a lot of pre-eminent artists in the past ninety years'.

Under the umbrella of CAFA, there are six schools, including: the School of Fine Art, the School of Chinese Painting, the School of Design, the School of Architecture, the School of Humanities and the College of City Design. The School of Design was established in 2002, its predecessor was the Design Department founded in 1995. The school attributes itself

'as artistic, experimental, visionary and international teaching, aiming at cultivating sensual, imaginative and decisive designers' (CAFA, 2017).

The jewellery department was founded in 2000 after several years when the Experimental Materials class became a subject of study at the Design Department (now named the School of Design). With a strong influence from the Western notion of jewellery in HE, the jewellery programme leader emphasises inspiration and initiates students' creative understanding of jewellery with the aid of a wide variety of design and making practices. In order to develop strength in both teaching and research at a global level, the jewellery department also actively seeks international cooperation opportunities with a range of leading jewellery institutions around the world.

Appendix 7

The facilitator's script for Phase 1 workshop briefs

Phase 1: Workshop 1		Image
Key Words	Time management and self-engagement	
Activity 1	*Self-introduction of participant* Brief: Participants present a one-minute introduction to their MA design project, imagining that they are presenting to a group of strangers. They are asked consider: Q1: What is your design project about? Q 2: Why did you choose this project? Q 3: How is the project progressing so far? Following the presentations, a group discussion is conducted, based on the following questions: Q 1: Do you consider that one minute is enough time for the introduction? Q 2: How clearly did think that you presented your project? Q 3: With a chance to introduce your project again in one minute, what, if anything would you change? And what information would you not leave out?	
Activity 2	*Studio practice* Brief: Thirty minutes is given to the participants to write a one-week action plan, which relates to their on-going MA study. The only rules are that the plan should be clearly present goals to be achieved and details of how time would be allocated for achieving those goals.	Figure 1

	Each participant then shares their completed plan with the group and discuss:	
	Q 1: What is your plan before starting practice? Q 2: What have you achieved? Is that meeting the plan goal? Q 3: How efficient was the one-hour time occupied? What works/did not work?	
Activity 3	*Action Plan* Brief: Group discussion: Q 1: What is your action plan about? Q 2: Why do you make this specific plan? Q 3: Do you think this plan is feasible in terms of workload and time scale? Q 4: Do you think an action plan would support effective learning? And if so, why do you think it would? At the end of the discussion, I present my research action plan as an example illustration of the kinds of benefits that can come from making, following and adjusting an action plan; how time management and self-engagement were considered as part of this plan; and how effective planning one's time and actions can support the development of 'self-directed' learning for learners like us, who are not used to learning in that way.	Figure 2 & 3
Activity 4	*Conclusion* Brief: The conclusion is initiated by presenting a group of photographs taken before the workshop started (the workshop is planned to start at 9:00 am). These	Figure 4

| | photographs are a) the daily registration at the reception desk of the school; b) the MA studio's wall clock; and c) an empty space of the MA studio. These images are used to highlight the aims and objectives of this workshop and to explain the reason for choosing to focus on 'time management and self-engagement' as the starting point for this series of workshops. | |

Phase 1: Workshop 2		
Key Words	'Christmas Matters' – Idea generation, management and development	
Activity 1	*Preparation of the workshop* Brief: The layout of the classroom is prepared in advance for the purpose of this activity; a pack of Christmas crackers is prepared in advance; participants bring an object to the workshop, which relates to their own sense of Christmas; refreshments are provided to promote a fun (or sociable) and relaxing environment.	
Activity 2	*'Who am I?'* Brief: The workshop starts with the game – 'Who am I?' Participants sit in a circle based on a prepared layout. One participant sits in the centre of the circle with a sticky note on her/his back. The sticky note has a 'well-known' name written on it. Every participant knows this name. When the game starts, the person who in the center of the circle ask questions to the rest of the group by which she/he can guess the name on her/his back. The members of the group, however, can only provide the answers by answering Yes or No. If the questioner can get the right name within two minutes, then she/he wins the game.	Figure 5 & 6

	Introducing a Christmas related object Brief: Each participant introduces the object brought in to the workshop and tell the story of choosing the object and how it relates to the sense of Christmas.	
Activity 3	*Mini project: Christmas gift design ideation* Brief:	& 9 & 10
	i) Christmas cracker Participants collect 'surprising treats' from the crackers. These will be used as design materials together with the Christmas related objects.	Figure 7 & 8
	ii) Mind mapping A group discussion is conducted to discuss the basic rules/checklist of designing the Christmas gift.	Figure 9
	iii) Idea generation Participants are organised into 4 groups. Through writing / drawing on paper, each group is given a maximum of fifteen minutes to generate at least six ideas, Following basic rules the participants consider these questions: a) what materials have been chosen?; b) what are your design ideas; c) how do those ideas meet the basic rules.	Figure 10
	iv) Idea management and development Conditions of the activity are presented and '360' Tools' as an approach to idea management is introduced to support idea development: Conditions: a) The design work must be finished in ten days. b) The product of the work has to be saleable and the price of the product cannot exceed £50.00. c) It product must be designed with certain	

	functions d) The object / product must be sufficiently stable to perform its function	
Activity 4	*360 degree Tools* Brief: Based on the above activities, each group: reviews the ideas generated and determines if they are feasible and if they meet the design purposes. Each group then reviews all the ideas and group them according to their relative potential as proposals. Following this review, each group develops six ideas from which to form two design proposals. The group validates its proposals as a result of going as deeply as the group can into how successfully the proposals meets the design purposes and conditions. i) Critical reflection Each group gives a short presentation of their design proposals. By sharing their experiences of developing the proposals, the participants are asked to form a group critique, in which they analyse the proposals: considering four aspects of the 360 degree Tools development process.	Figure 11 & 12
Activity 5	*Conclusions* Brief: Reflecting on the use of the game of 'Who am I?', apart from the purpose of 'warming up' the activity, the process enables the participants to develop a sense of how a question can help problem solving. Then, the workshop facilitator presents the aims and objectives of this workshop and its aims to encourage creative idea generation and innovation toward problem solving. this presentation concludes by recapping the knowledge and	Figure 13 & 14 & 15 & 16

	skills that have been covered through this workshop.	

Workshop 3		
Key Words	Academic Communication Skills	
Activity 1	*Photography practice* Brief: This workshop starts with an activity outside the classroom. The participants visit a Victorian cemetery located in the Jewellery Quarter. Following a brief introduction to the cemetery's history, each participant is given a maximum of thirty minutes to take ten photographs. The photographs should communicate how the participant sees aspects of this space.	Figure 17 & 18
Activity 2	*Discussing experiences and selections* Brief: On returning to the classroom and working in pairs, the participants are given twenty minutes to discuss their experiences of taking the photographs and the aspects of the space they selected to record.	Figure 19 & 20
Activity 3	*Mind map* Brief: Following the above discussions, the whole group come together. Each participant is encouraged to contribute a key word which relates to her/his selected aspect of the cemetery: what came across to you while taking the pictures? These key words are writen down on paper and illustrated as a mind map.	Figure 21

Activity 4	*Presentation practice*	Figure 22
	Brief: Following a short introduction to presentation approaches, the participants are invited to consider why they chose their aspects or themee, in which ways did they take their photographs and how these images could be related to design development. Each participant considers the following questions based on their own experiences: Q 1: What is the aspect or theme of the photograph? Q 2: Why did you choose this aspect or theme? Q 3: How did you approach taking this photograph? Q 4: How could this image relate to your design development? Each participant provides a key word for each question and this is connected to the 'Mind map', through which the participants organise key words into a logical thread in order to communicate their thoughts effectively.	
Activity 5	*Reflections* Brief: This part of the activity begins with a discussion on ways that could support effective academic communication in the context of Jewelery. Firstly, the participants are invited to reflect on their own learning experiences with regard to academic communication. Secondly, by reflecting on the activities of this workshop, the participants are encouraged to consider the ways that might help them to build communication skills and to tackle any problems they may be experiencing. Finally, the importance of utilising a design journal is particularly emphasised and discussed, not only in the context of it being one of the requirements of the MA	Figure 23

	course, but also as an effective tool for building communication skills and supporting effective academic communication.	
Activity 6	*Conclusion* Brief: This part of the activity recaps on the knowledge and skills of communication, introduced and practised through this workshop. In addition, one of the MA course module briefs is analysed and discussed by highlighting key words that might need to be given particular attention, interpretation and negotiation. This aims to reinforce awareness that a module brief is the first step that your tutor communicate with you, and it is very important to get clear of the context of the brief, then you will be able to react in a right way.	Figure 24

Workshop 4		
Key Words	*Creative thinking and critical reflection*	
Activity 1	*The Guessing game* Brief: Brief: A word is projected on the screen. One member the group has her/his back to the screen. The rest of the group have to help the member with her/his back to the screen ,to guess the word projected on the screen. The participants playing this game can use any method to communicate with each other, but without mentioning the word itself. When finishing the game, participants reflect on the process of playing the game, considering following questions: Q 1: How does this game relate to the knowledge from last workshop? Q 2: What methods have been used when playing the game? Q 3: To what extent do you think the methods used are	Figure 25

	creative?	
Activity 2	*Creative stories* Brief: A range of real-world stories of creativity are presented through videos. By watching these videos, the participants are asked to answer the questions: Q 1: How would you describe creativity in art and design? Q 2: What is it about creativity that is most important to you?	Figure 26
Activity 3	*Direction game* Brief: In this game, the participants look at a map. A speech bubble above map shows the instructions that a little boy has provided an old lady with in order to guide her in reaching her destination. Education gets caught in the tradition trap. Those making the decisions have experience and values based only on the past. But the world is changing. De Bono (2006) At the end of this activity, the above quotation of De Bono's (2006) is presented. Participants are required to find out the connection between the process of game playing and this quotation and consider how it could relate to their MA learning.	Figure 27 & 28

Activity 4	*Conclusion*	
	Brief:	
	The participants review the combined activities of this workshop and try to consider moments when they engaged, even at the time unconsciously, in critical thinking and reflection. Based on this, each participant is encouraged to answer the question: 'what, for you, is cirtical reflection?' They are asked to respond to this question based on their own understanding of critical reflection.	
	I then presented examples of design development from my own MA course and highlighted certain moments when I considered that critical thinking and reflections had been applied. In addition, a range of techniques and skills related to creative and critical thinking were discussed.	

Workshop 5		
Key Words	*Session of rehearsal*	
Activity 1	*Poster tour*	Figure 29 & 30 & 31
	Brief:	
	The participants are organised into three groups. Each group is given a fictional scenario associated with a real-world situation relating to the MA course. Each group then collectively respond to a challenge involved in the scenario, prepare a detailed solution and a poster is presented on the wall. A group viewing of the posters is then orgnanised, with at least one member from each group standing by their poster, to provide explainations.	
	Following this part of the activity, a group discussion is conducted, considering following questions:	

	Q 1: What have you learnt from this activity? Q 2: To what extent have you been able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through previous workshops?	
Activity 2	*What is knowledge?* Brief: This activity starts with by reviewing the knowledge and skills addressed through the previous activities. The following questions are then used to lead the way for a group discussion: Q 1: What does knowledge mean to you in the context of your MA course? Q 2: Does knowledge always help? Q 3: Is the knowledge you are acquiring through the workshops affecting your MA learning, and if it is - how is it doing this? Finally, The participants are encouraged to apply what they have learnt through this workshop and to consider how they can transfer what they have learnt to dealing with the real-world learning challenges of their MA course.	

Appendix 8

The facilitator's script for Phase 2 workshops

Phas 2: Workshop 1:		Image
Key Words	Key words: difference, observation, perception, description	
Activity 1	Language use: English	Figure 32
	'Who am I?' Brief: The activity commences by playing the game 'Who am I?' (see Phase 1 for full description of the game) Discussion A group discussion is organised for the participants to share their experiences of and reflections upon playing the game. The following questions are considered: Q1: What methods did you use when you were trying to guess the name on your back? Q2: What characteristics relating to the name on your back did you ask?	
Activity 2	Language use: English	Figure 33
	'see the unseen' Brief: This is a game in which an object is given to one of the participants (the describer) who is asked to describe as many properties of the object as she/he can, using any method, but without physically seeing the object. The rest of the participants sit in a row with their backs to the describer. They then guess what the object is, based on the information provided by the describer. All the participants, including the describer, are asked to write down their answers on notes and to post them on the wall.	

	Discussion The generation of the group discussion is based on the following questions: Q 1: What methods have been used when you were trying to describe the object? Q 2: What properties of the object have been mentioned?	
Activity 3	Language use: Mandarin	
	The Reflection and Interpretation Brief: By considering the question of how the experience of playing the game reflects on design practice, participants are encouraged to share their opinions with the group. I then conclude these two sessions by explaining the purposes of the design of the games; as well as interpreting the process of game playing based on my experience and reflections as an observer in the game.	
Activity 4	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Video – 'Moment of Perception' Brief: By watching the video of 'Moment of Perception', participants are asked to catch the key words based on the background description; then based on their own understanding, they are encouraged to explain the meaning behind the story that the video tends to present. *Sensation and Perception* Brief: It is generally explained that the concepts and connections of the terms of 'sensation' and 'perception', which have been particularly mentioned in the video. It then initiates the discussion of how the story presented in this video can relate	Figure 34

	to your understanding of what learning is.	
Activity 5	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure
	Discussion	35 &
		36 &
	Brief:	37
	Participants are encouraged to share their sense of feeling in relation to the difference learning experiences between in China and in the UK, and to discuss from what aspects they have perceived differences might be as obstacles that affect their learning.	
	Then, the different learning styles based on their learning experiences are concluded based on two learning models.	
	It is furthermore introduced the basic concept of 'Bloom's Taxonomy', and participants are encouraged to consider their level of learning skills by reflecting on the Taxonomy and to try to identify the learning gaps in between.	

Workshop 2:		Image
Key Words	Key words: reflection, description, inductive/deductive reasoning	
Activity 1	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure

	Discussion	38
	Brief:	
	The workshop is initiated by presenting a quotation of Sudjic's (2014) book 'B Is for Bauhaus: An A-Z of the Modern World' and asking participants to collect information that they think is important of helping their understanding of those sentences. They then are asked to be considering of what an effective way should be when you are trying to describe something clearly by reflecting the areas that are highlighted in red colour.	
	At the end of the discussion, I conclude this by explaining the purpose of showing this quotation and suggesting them to use this as an example to construct their thinking and the way of description, in which they need to at least take three questions into considerations, which is:	
	Q 1: What is it? Q 2: Why is it important? Q 3: How is it impacting on your next decision?	
Activity 2	Language use: English	
	Recap	
	Brief:	
	It begins with the recapitulation of last workshop, in which participants are encouraged to describe that what they have learnt in the workshop in English and construct their words by applying the method that they have learnt in the last session.	
Activity 3	Language use: English/Mandarin	

	'Direction Game'	
	Brief:	
	Participants are invited to play with the 'Direction game'. When finished the game, they are required to answer the following questions:	
	Q 1: What methods did you use when you are playing the game? Q 2: What is your perception when you are playing the game? Q 3: What have you learnt through this game playing?	
	In conclusion, I explain the purpose of evolving the direction game in this workshop, and leave a question for their consideration:	
	'If there is no judgement of right or wrong towards approaches of using in this game, how will you evaluate the values between the process and the result; and How these values can be reflected on your learning?'	
Activity 4	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure 39 & 40
	Deductive/Inductive reasoning	
	Brief: The concepts of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning are introduced to the participants, and an example of 'egg box design' is used to support their understanding of the concepts in the context of art and design.	
	Then, a video is played, which presents a process of how a ring is produced by a jewellery designer. By viewing the video, participants are asked to analyse that to what extent the process of designing and making can be attributed as deductive or inductive reasoning.	

| | In conclusion, the deductive and inductive reasoning are suggested to use then as approaches to support their idea generation and design development, even as the method to construct the logic thread when there is a need of presentation. | / |

Workshop 3:		Image
Key Words	Key words: critical reflection, critical analysis	
Activity 1	Language use: English	
	Recap	
	Brief: It is a short session or activity to recap the knowledge that has gone through in the last workshop. Participants are required to apply the approaches that have been told previously to articulate their thoughts and reflections.	
Activity 2	Language use: English	Figure 40 & 41
	'Line-ups'	
	Brief: Participants are asked to engage into the activity, which is called 'lines-up'. It is a little test of participants' abilities of analysis and self-reflection. Based on the provided notices, they are asked to stand as a role and need to adjust and locate themselves to the appropriate positions in this role by communicating with the others in the group.	
	In conclusion, the approaches that are applied in this activity are suggested to be used when there is a situation that they have to make decisions among a lot of choices through their design development.	
Activity 3	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure 42 &
	Discussion	

	Brief:	
	A group of assumptions about what is critical thinking is proposed and leave for participants' consideration. Then, they are encouraged to share their own perspectives to the concept or meaning of critical thinking.	
	A short film is presented, which captures the processes of how artist Zoe Arnold creates her jewellery work that links craft and value. By viewing this film, participants are encouraged to reconsider the question of what the critical thinking is.	
Activity 4	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	'CAPES Analysis'	
	Brief:	
	It is suggested that a way of initiation of effective critical analysis by introducing the principle of 'CAPES Analysis'.	
	Then, I use my jewellery work as an example to share the design and making process, in which the critical analysis and reflections have been involved; whilst participants are encouraged to give comments to my work critically.	
	Finally, they are encouraged to reflect on their own learning experience and to consider that to what extent the critical skills can support their learning.	

Workshop 4		**Image**
Key Words	Key words: creativity, problem solving	
Activity 1	Language use: English	Figure
	Recap	44
	Brief:	

	Based on a short summary of the previous workshop, participants critically reflect upon the knowledge and learning skills they acquired - how and to what extent the workshop may have impacted on their own learning.	
Activity 2	Language use: English	
	'The Guessing Game' See the description of this game in Phase 1.	
Activity 3	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure
	Poster tour Brief: In this session, participants are divided into 4 groups and they are required to deal with different sets of problems that relate to different scenarios, which are given to each group. Every group has to work out and write down their answers or plans of solution on an A3 paper, which has to be shown and explained to the other groups when the job is done. I and the rest of groups will give comments and provide suggestions at the moment when each group has finished their poster presentation.	45
Activity 4	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Discussion Brief: A group discussion is conducted based on the questions of Q 1: What is creativity in your perception? Q 2: To what extent the creativity has been shown when you were playing the game in the session 2 and solving the problems in the session 3? After group discussion, two videos which relate to the idea of being creative are presented. Based on which, participants are asked to collect key information that they think might help for	

	their better understand of the notion of creativity.	
Activity 5	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Conclusion of the workshop	
	Brief: In this session, the possibly negative components on the path of being creative are concluded. The solutions of how to deal with these negative components are also discussed and suggested. In addition, the Kolb's learning cycle is introduced as a guide of practicing one's ability of problem solving, as well as one of the method of approaching the possibilities of creative moment.	

Workshop 5		**Image**
Key Words	Ideation, evaluation, knowledge	
Activity 1	Language use: English	
	Christmas related object	
	Brief: One week before the workshop, each participant had been requested to select and bring an object to this activity, related to their sense of Christmas. Each of the participants introduce their selected object.	
	Christmas cracker	
	Brief: The Christmas crackers are opened and the gifts from the crackers are collected at the end of this session.	
Activity 2	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Christmas gift challenge	

	Brief:	
	Participants are engaged in an activity named 'Christmas gift challenge'. The participants are divided into three groups and each group is required, to practice idea development in relation to a selling event of a Christmas Fair. Through the process and techniques of general mind mapping, idea initiation and idea refining, each group is expected to develop two detailed ideas and a selling plan. At the end of the project, a group discussion focuses on the analysis and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each group's ideas and plans. The participants are also asked to critically reflect upon what they have learnt and how their experiences could be connected to their MA learning.	
Project 3	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Analysis and evaluation Brief: This project uses the MA assessment feedback form as an example of a learning and assessment method. Through analysing and evaluating one's learning attainment - based on the assessment criteria provided on the form - participants are encouraged to consider how they can better understand the expectations of their MA course, and self-initiate the evaluation of their own learning.	
Project 4	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Knowledge Brief: This project introduces a short extract from 'De Bono's thinking course' (De Bono 2006). Participants are asked to consider and discuss what this extract means to them in relation to self-reflecting upon the process of acquiring knowledge.	

| | As a conclusion to the five workshops, the participants are invited to consider and discuss their reflections on the processes of acquiring knowledge, with a focus on the importance of being able to transfer and apply acquired knowledge in creative ways. | |

Appendix 9

The facilitator's script for Phase 3 workshops

Phase 3 - Workshop 1:		**Image**
Day 1	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Brief:	
	Introduction It introduces my own journey of learning, teaching and research in both China and the UK, which includes the initiation of my choice of the subject of jewellery design; the journey of teaching in China; the motivation of learning in the UK; the journey of learning in the MA course at SoJ; the experience of being an artist in residence at SoJ; the decision making of undertaking the PhD research; and the initiation and the progress of the Learning Enhancement Program.	
	Students' self-introduction Students are given five minutes to consider the following questions: what is your name; where are you from; what was your learning experience before the Masters course; what is your motivation for studying the postgraduate course? Then, each student is asked to give a one-minute self-introduction to the group by following the thread of these questions.	Figure 46
	The objectives of the workshops My research focus and Bloom's taxonomy are the fundamental ideas, which drive the learning and teaching practices and the control the pace of student acquisition of and engagement with knowledge. It also helps to explain what the skills are that students need (or can expect to) to acquire at different levels of learning.	

	What do you think Jewellery is?	Figure 47 & 48 & 49 & 50 & 51 & 52
	What do you think Jewellery is? Students are asked to share their own perspectives on the question 'what is jewellery' and to discuss this question in a broad sense. Then, I conduct a further discussion of this topic by presenting a group of jewellery pieces, which include the jewellery pieces made in either conventional or contemporary way. In addition, students are asked to think about the question of 'what makes jewellery distinctive'.	
	What do you think makes jewellery distinctive? By introducing Skinner's (2013) writing on the subject of contemporary jewellery, students are given five minutes to discuss the relationships among materials, skills and ideas within the group. Then I introduce a debate based on Skinner's writing and encourage students to share their opinions of agreement or disagreement.	Figure 53
	Contemporary thinking in jewellery A general perspective on contemporary jewellery that was written by Skinner (2013) is introduced to the students. It leads students to a contemporary thinking of the aspects that relate to the nature of jewellery, which include the thinking of decoration, wearability, body, objects, craft practice, art and design, as well as visual arts.	Figure 54

Phase 3 - Workshop 2		Image
Day 2	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Brief:	

	Materials The human body, materials, values and technology are central contextual themes in contemporary jewellery practice and theory. These themes and related discourses are therefore often discussed on the Master's course. Because of limitations time, this workshop was designed with a focus on materials. Discussions explored questions of contemporary thinking about the relationships of materials to jewellery practice; to what extent and how materials can be explored; how materials can be experimented with toward the development of creative ideas and approaches and what relationships can be explored between the materials and processes of idea generation.	
	Materials exploration 1: 'Materials Library' Students were organised into three groups. Each group was asked to collect 100 different kinds of materials in one hour. Then, each group was asked to select 30 of their most favourite materials from the 100, and to analyse and list the properties of each materials of those 30 materials. The students were required to complete this I task within a half hour. The outcomes were presented on a blackboard at the front of the classroom as references for the activities to follow.	Figure 55
	Learning through the games As part of the group activities, students were invited to play with the games 'who am I?' and 'see the unseen'. Students were asked to consider and discuss several questions within the group at the end of each of the game sessions: Q1: What methods/solutions have been attempted when you are playing the game? Q2: What properties of the people/objects have been considered? Q3: What have you reflected upon through the process of playing these games?	Figure 56 & 57 & 58

	Sensation and perception	Figure 59
	It introduces 'how did sensation and perception generally work with human's cognition process?'. Students are asked to consider the question of 'how this concept relates to the design process?'	
	Deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning	
	It introduces the basic concept of the approaches of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning. The produce of 'Egg Box' is used as an example for students' consideration of how these two approaches could support idea generation and design development. Alternatively, students are asked to consider and discuss the connections between these approaches and the games they just played with.	
	Conclusion	
	In conclusion, through the above sessions, students are expected to acquire the knowledge that can support to be better equipped learning skills, such as observation, description, self-reflection, and design management.	

Phase 3 - Workshop 3		Image
Day 3	Language use: English/Mandarin	
	Brief:	
	Materials exploration 2	Figure 60 & 61
	Each student selects up to 3 materials from the 'Materials Library', created for this workshop and experiments with the properties of each material, using the methods learnt from the previous workshop. The students also consider the following questions:	
	Q 1: Why did you select these materials?	
	Q 2: What properties have you found within the materials?	
	Q 3: How do you think these materials and their properties	

	can be used to support your design ideas?	
	After finishing the above activity, students make 5 objects in 2 hours, using one of the materials that they have selected. There are 3 questions they have to consider through their making process:	
	Q 1: What aspects of your material exploration have supported or led to the generation of ideas?	
	Q 2: What is the most important element or property that you would like to keep in your design work?	
	Q 3: What do you consider are the relationships, which exist amongst the objects you have made?	
	Following the students finishing their making, a group critique is conducted based on the questions above.	
	Photography practice	
	Students are asked to take 10 pictures in 1 Hour. Then, a group discussion is conducted based on the following questions:	
	Q 1: Where have these pictures been taken?	
	Q 2: What is the story behind the scenes?	
	Q 3: Why do you take these pictures?	
	Q 4: How these pictures relate to your design idea?	
	Q 5: What did you reflect on taking these pictures?	
	Theories of learning	
	Kolb's learning cycle and Dewey's model of experiential learning are introduced to enable students reflect on the learning sessions that they have gone through previously. Alternatively, students are required to think about the connections between these learning theories and their own	

	design practice.	
	Design journal A range of methods for the build of design journal is introduced. Students are required to build their own design journal in which, it is necessary to show the evidences of their design development, such as primary research, secondary research, self-reflection, sketches, the record of making process, analysis and evaluation.	

Phase 3 - Workshops 4		Image
Day 4,5,6	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure 62
	Brief: *Design development and materials exploration 3* Participants are asked to develop a design proposal based on their original idea and make as many attempts as possible to experiment on the materials that they selected within 3 days. There is a group critic at the end of each day in which, students need to report their design progress to the group by presenting of the design journal, test pieces, 3D models and any evidence that can support their thinking and making process. Students are also asked to contribute their comments to the others work.	

Phase 3 - Workshops 5		Image
Activity 3 Day 7,8,9	Language use: English/Mandarin	Figure 63 & 64
	Brief: *End of the project*	

| | As the end of this module, participants are given 2 days to finish at least 3 pieces of object, which need to show a strong connection with their design proposal and the results of the materials exploration. The module focuses on a build of understand the knowledge and skills that can benefit the design development, so, the final 3 pieces of object has not to be perfectly made. However, the learning outcomes need to be displayed at the end of the project as the evidences, which can prove the development of their making and thinking skills. Alternatively, students are given an assessment form and explained the grading system, which is used for the aim of peer-assessment and summative assessment. | |

Table of Figures:

Figure	Image
1	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

2	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
3	

	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
4	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

5	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
6	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

7	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
8	
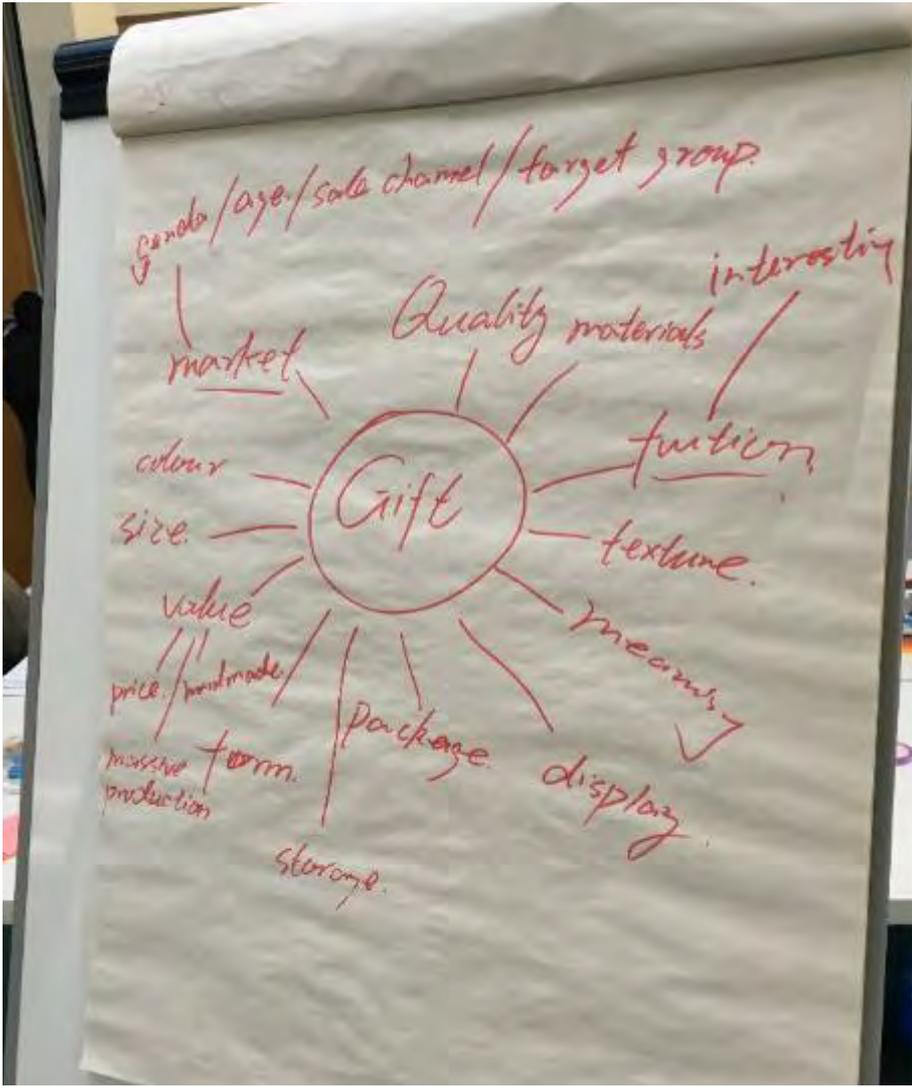
9	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

10	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
11	
	Workshop Slide – designed by the researcher
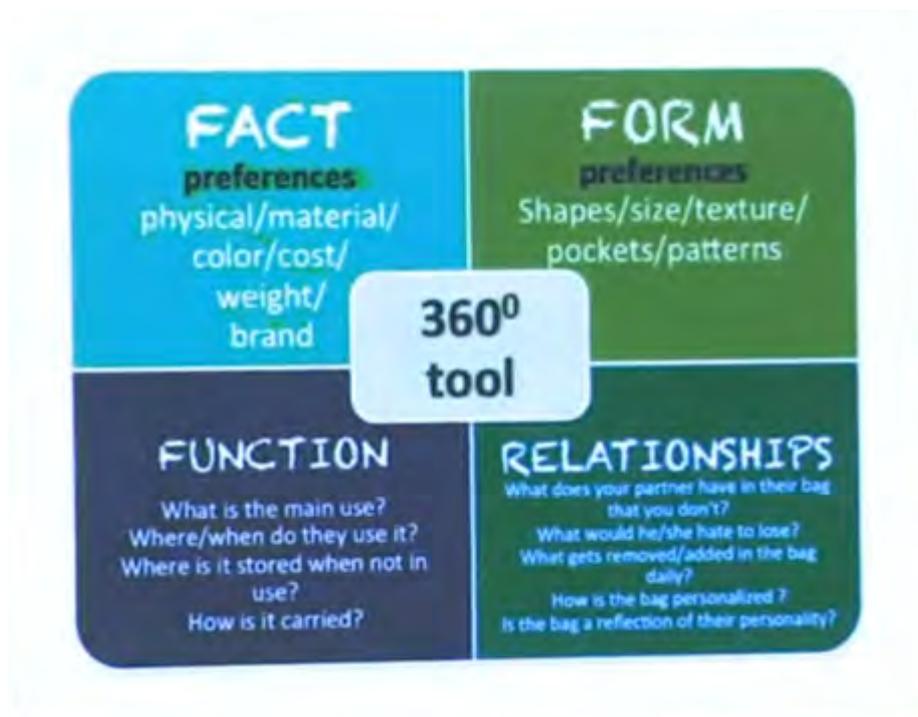
12	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
13	

	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
14	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

15	# Conclusion
	• Ideation techniques • Creative/innovative thinking during the ideation process • Apply 'W' questions approach (a way of reflective/critical thinking) in the action(during)/on the action (following) • **Nebulous Ideas** Most ideas are never brought to life successfully because ideas aren't explicit enough. • **Make creative ideation a daily habit**
	Workshop Slide – prepared by the researcher
16	# Creative Thinking Behaviors
	• **Raising Questions, Formulating Problems, Understanding Context** • **Gathering and Assessing Relevant Information** • **Synthesizing and Generating Multiple Ideas** • **Considering Alternatives** • **Reaching Reasoned Conclusions and Choosing a Solution or Approach** • **Effectively Communicating and Elaborating**
	Workshop Slide – prepared by the researcher

17	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
18	
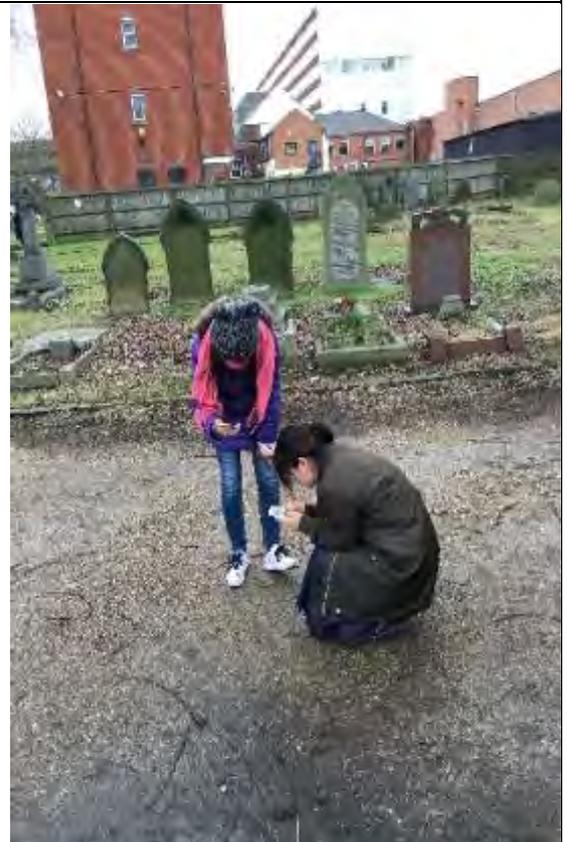
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
19	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

20	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
21	

	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
22	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
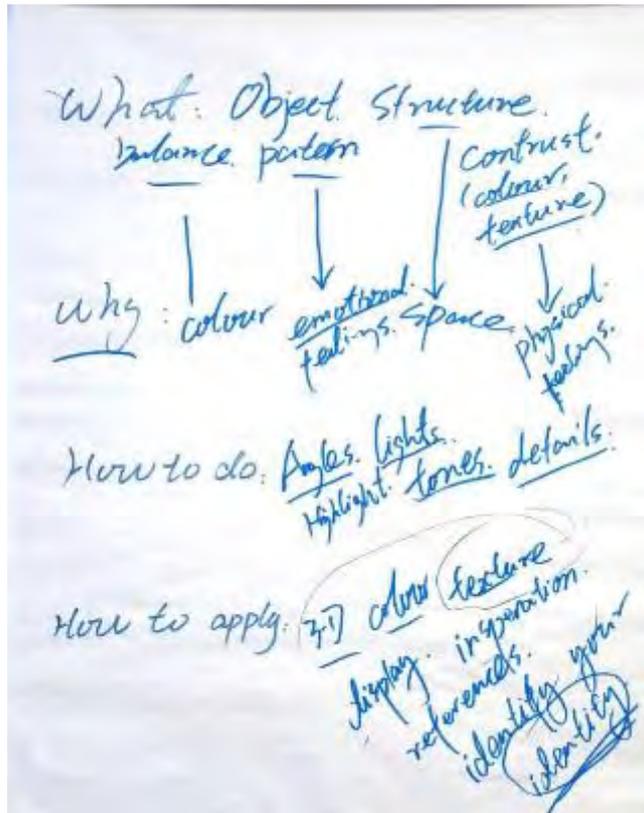
23	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
24	

Module 4	DESIGN PROJECT: RESEARCH & INNOVATION	4
Level	Postgraduate Diploma (45 credits)	

Aims This module provides the opportunity to expand your range of technical knowledge, including development of a broader understanding of the use of up-to-date technologies, manufacturing processes and materials leading to experimental product/object development. Alternatively, traditional methods of production might be explored with the aim to 'reinvent' applications within a new design agenda.

This module requires you to choose between two pathways:

A) Development of an individualised creative studio practice within the context of contemporary authored, innovative and gallery orientated one-off work

B) Development of a distinctive and innovative range of work designed for others, with attention to specific market/audience requirements, entrepreneurship, possible on-line selling potential and manufacturing options.

Learning Outcomes
- The investigation of unfamiliar and/or new technologies
- The application of appropriate current and new technologies to design development
- An awareness of a range of technologies applicable to the subject area
- A critical understanding of the appropriate use of technology within an individualised design project

Brief

Starting the project:

1. Review the range of production (manufacturing, assembly and finishing) processes and materials that are available and relevant to your design enquiry. Identify those with which you are already familiar and those with which you are unfamiliar.
2. Choose a process (with associated materials), and/or a material (with associated processes) and/or a target market (an audience you wish to sell to) with which you are unfamiliar, of which you wish to acquire further experience, and which you would find useful in your design development.
3. Research your chosen process or material thoroughly using sources of reference from books, articles, supplier's specifications and processors as well as your own primary experimentation to explore the properties and characteristics of the selected processes and materials.

	Workshop learning material –Prepared by the researcher Sourced from: Course material, MA JSRP (2016 – 2017),
25	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
26	

27

Directions Game

Where does this woman want to go? Follow the directions on the map and write down the name of the place.

WALK STRAIGHT ON TO THE END OF THE ROAD. THEN TURN RIGHT. TAKE THE SECOND TURNING ON THE LEFT. GO DOWN THE ROAD TILL YOU COME TO A CROSSROADS. TURN RIGHT. THEN TURN RIGHT AGAIN AT THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS. GO DOWN THE ROAD UNTIL YOU COME TO A PARK. THEN TURN LEFT. KEEP STRAIGHT ON FOR ABOUT TWO HUNDRED METRES AND IT'S ON YOUR RIGHT.
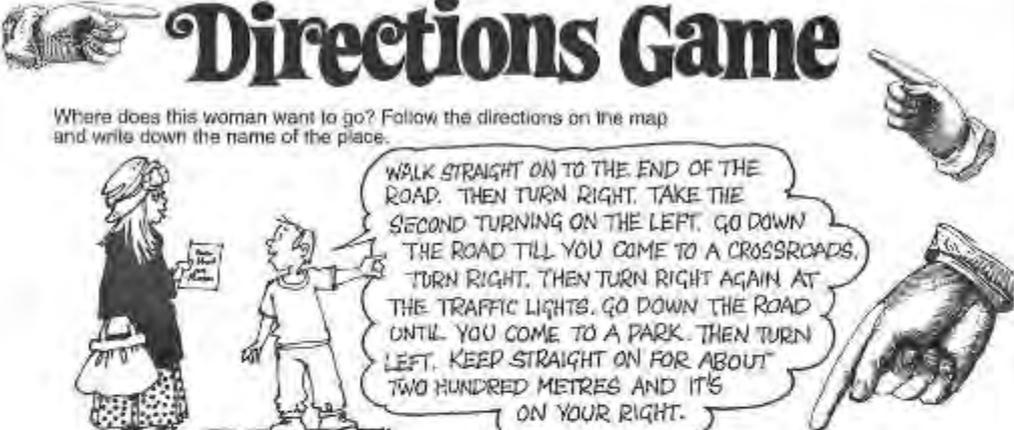
She wants to go to ....
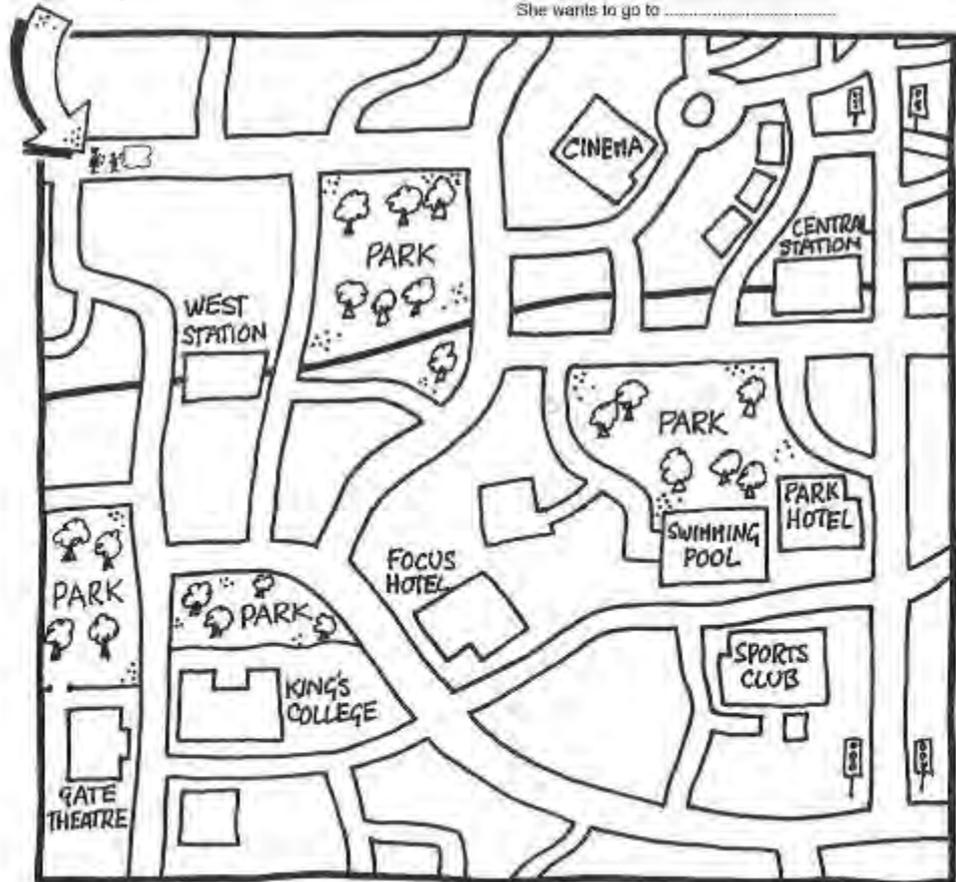
© Colin Granger and John Plumb 1993

83

Workshop learning material – sourced from:

Granger, C. (1993) Play games with English; **with illustrations by John Plumb. 1, Teacher's resource book.** Oxford Heinemann - Heinemann games series. p. 83

28	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
29	Your work is largely relying on the laser-cutting machine. There is only three weeks heading to the final assessment. But, there are still ten pieces, which have to be finished by laser cutting. Unfortunately, the only technician, who can operate the laser-cutting machine, is going to leave for a two weeks holiday after five days later. And he can only finish three pieces for you before he leave.

What will you do? Think about alternatives as many as you can. |
| | Workshop learning material –Prepared by the researcher |

| 30 | There is only one week left for Viva, however, one of your most favourite piece is broken by accident. You have no enough time to make another one within a week.

What can you do? |
| --- | --- |
| | |
| 31 | You and another 10 classmates are asking to run a group exhibition on 28th next month. However, there is no any information has been provided. Your group has to prepare everything by yourself, which might include choosing the exhibition place; looking for sponsors; advertising and promoting the exhibition; setting up the exhibition...etc.

Setting up an action plan, which should include as many details as you can think about. |
| | |

32	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
33	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

34	
	Workshop learning material – Images sourced from:
	http://www.eyeopening.info/wp-
	content/uploads/2016/01/magical_optical_illusions_01.jpg
	http://www.thethingswesay.com/img/402.jpg
35	
	Figure 2. John Dewey's concept of experiential learning according to Kolb (1984: 23)
	Western-based educational theory
	Workshop learning material – sourced from:
	https://reflectionforstudentaffairs.wordpress.com/models/experiential-learning-
	models/

36	
	Chinese learning cycle reflected on findings of empirical studies
	Workshop learning material – Prepared by the researcher
37	
	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from:
	http://rationalexpressions.blogspot.com/2014/05/blooms-taxonomy-and-ease-of-

38	

'I have a green fishtail parka that I bought in a shop on a backstreet by a canal in Milan... I wanted it because the cuffs are held in place by strips of webbing and slightly chipped green buttons, because it has a detachable rust coloured quilted nylon lining, and because it has a complicated stock number with a narrative description of the garment, and its function instead of a maker's brand name on the label.

I wear my parka now, not because I feel nostalgic about teenage memories of the mirror-decked Vespa that I never had, but because every time I pull the zip with the six-inch-long green braided cord, designed to be used in conditions that would be unendurably cold without gloves, I have a sense of the thoughtfulness that went into every detail. The parka seems like a garment beyond fashion, yet it is a category that has clearly taken a conspicuous place in the language of fashion. The parka is far removed from its Inuit origins and its subsequent military incarnation, so much so that it now carries multiple mutually contradictory meanings. It is both authentic and self-conscious, the sign of a youthful hipster, and an ageing museum director.'

'B Is for Bauhaus: An A-Z of the Modern World.'
– Sudjic, D (2014)

Workshop learning material – sourced from:

Sudjic, D (2014) B is for Bauhaus: An A-Z of the Modern World. Penguin

39	
	What is the material?
	How has it been made?
	What's this?/What is it for?
	Why it could be used for this purpose?
	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from:
	https://www.istockphoto.com/es/foto/vac%C3%ADo-cart%C3%B3n-de-huevos-gm160333580-22913312
40	
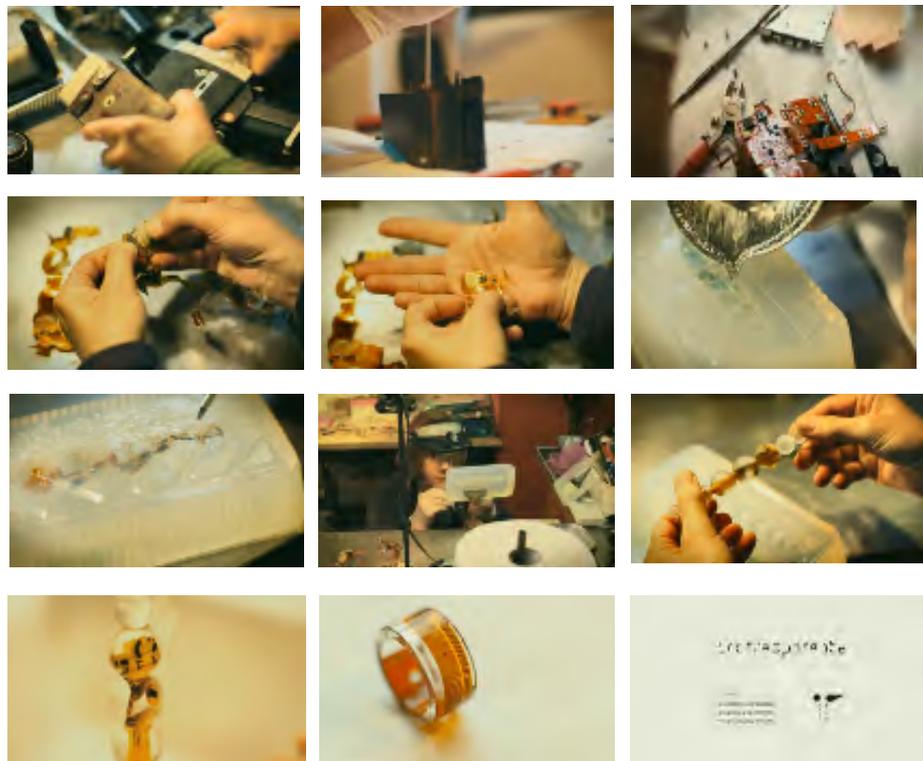
	Workshop learning material – Vedio sourced from: Cirkùita making of - Handmade jewels from the future. Available from : https://vimeo.com/22250210
40	### Line-ups For the love of the subject!! Increase the chances of getting a job!! Have no idea why I'm choosing The MA JSRP!! I'm confident with my learning I'm a little bit worried about my learning I'm really worried about my learning I'm a critical thinker I can think critically sometimes I have no idea what is the critical thinking
	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from: http://whysoblu.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Guardians-Of-The-Galaxy-5.jpg
41	 workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

42	
	Workshop learning material – Prepared by the researcher
43	

44	## CAPES Analysis **ulture**: What is the culture of the design, product and context? Is there any cultural symbolism? **esthetic**: What is the value of its appearance? Is there a theme? Is it effectively juxtaposed? Sized? Scaled? Textured? /Colours? **olitics**: What is the purpose of the design? Is it related to any current/past affairs that have occurred? Does it relate to current political agenda and policy? **conomics**: What's the price? What's the budget? How much is the labour? Is this type of design supported by the current political climate? Who is the client? Who is funding this? **emiotics**: What message is being visually communicated? Does it look light-hearted, political, skilled, Asian, Western, modern, traditional, nostalgic, retro, appreciative? Is there any symbolism?
	Workshop learning material – Prepared by the researcher

| 45 | Scenario:
There is only one week left for Viva, however, you most favourite piece is broken by accident. You have no enough time to make another one to instead within a week.

Question:
How can you tackle the problem?

Scenario:
You have provided sufficient pieces of work for an assessment, however, the mark, which has been given by your tutor, is still quite low.

Question:
What are the reasons that might cause this situation?

Scenario:
Your work is largely relying on the laser-cutting machine. There is only three weeks heading to the final assessment. But, there are still ten pieces, which have to be finished by laser cutting. Unfortunately, the only technician, who can operate the laser-cutting machine, is going to leave for a two weeks holiday after five days later. And he can only finish three pieces for you before he leave.

Question:
Would there be any alternative choice?

Scenario:
You and another 10 classmates are asking to run a group exhibition on 20th next month. However, there is no any information has been provided. Your group has to prepare everything by yourself.

Question:
What's your plan of the exhibition? |

46	
	Workshop learning material – Prepared by the researcher
47	
	Workshop learning material – **Otto Kunzli**, 1980 'Gold Makes Blind' Bangle
	Rubber, gold ball
	Image sourced from: https://klimt02.net/events/exhibitions/31985

48	
	Workshop learning material – **Pierre Degen,** 1982 Large Loop, glass fiber rod, paper, string, 145 cm dia Image sourced from: https://vads.ac.uk/results.php?page=1&cmd=advsearch&mode=boolean&words=tnj*&field=id_number_digital_image&oper=or&idSearch=boolean&DCADB=1&rpp=90
49	
	Workshop learning material – **Lisa Walker**, 2006, Brooch: Untitled, Rubbish from workshop floor

50	
	Workshop learning material – Ted Noten, 2007, Object: Paraphernalia, Pearl necklace, 0,25K diamond, cocaine, Kabbalah string, cross 20 x 46,7 x 3,7 cm Image sourced from: https://klimt02.net/jewellers/ted-noten
51	

	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from: https://nga.gov.au/cartier/
52	
	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from: https://item.jd.com/8229475.html
53	"That makes jewellery distinctive, in which materials and skills are placed in the service of ideas, rather than being celebrated as ends in themselves." (Skinner, 2013:7)
	Workshop learning material – sourced from: Skinner, D. (2013) Contemporary Jewellery in Perspective, Lark Books, New York

54	
	Workshop learning material – sourced from:
	Skinner, D. (2013) Contemporary Jewellery in Perspective, Lark Books, New York
55	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

56	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
57	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher

58	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
59	
	Workshop learning material – Image sourced from:
	https://www.quotemaster.org/extrasensory+perception#&gid=1&pid=18
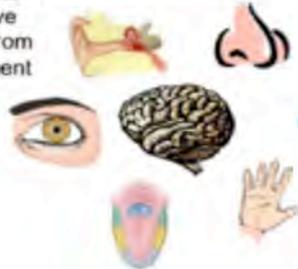
60	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
61	

	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
62	
	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
63	

	workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
64	 workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher
65	 workshop progress picture – photographed by the researcher