CHINESE, KOREAN, AND TAIWANESE STUDENTS IN DISCUSSION-ORIENTED

GRADUATE EDUCATION: EMIC PERSPECTIVES ON INCREASING

ORAL PARTICIPATION

by

ELIZABETH ANNE MAY

(Under the Direction of Michael Orey)

ABSTRACT

Students from China, Korea, and Taiwan make up a large percentage of international students in many Western graduate programs; however they often have difficulties with participation in class discussions. Their less participatory class behavior is in stark contrast to their vocal behavior outside of class; therefore my research began with a curiosity about these contextually quiet students. This study was designed to elicit firsthand accounts of factors that hinder full participation, as well as suggestions for instructors to use in culturally sensitive course design. The data was gathered via two hour instant messaging interviews with six participants, one male and one female each from China, Korea, and Taiwan. The results showed that while the inhibitive factors that participants cited were similar to what was found in the literature, an additional factor of personal resolve seemed to affect participation levels. In addition participants suggested contextual items that could be addressed in course design that they felt would have a positive impact on their participation. The results led to the development of a model for instructors that included structure, time, attention, and relationship as aspects to

attend to (S.T.A.R.), and the results further showed that culturally sensitive instructional design may not be as complicated as instructors think. Rather than focusing on one cultural group, the S.T.A.R. model could be used to assist instructors in designing their courses for any group that may be less participatory. The results further led to the conclusion that course design for the less participatory student could assist quieter students while doing no harm to the more talkative students, and is therefore a wise choice for instructors.

INDEX WORDS: Asian, Chinese, discussion, ESOL, instructional design, international students, Korean, oral participation, quiet, Taiwanese

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DEDICATION

My study is dedicated to the many Asian colleagues, friends, professors, and students from all over the world who have taught me much more than I have taught them. I shall always be indebted to them for enriching my life by enlightening me, confiding in me, challenging me, and encouraging me. This study is my feeble attempt to make life easier for them should they come to the West to study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my loving husband and best friend of thirty-one years, Joe C. May. Without his help and support I would not have had the courage to pursue an academic career. Only he knows how much of a sacrifice this journey has been for me and for our family; however he assisted me throughout with kindness, patience, and encouragement.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Joseph Celento Jr. and Florence Haggerty Celento, who both instilled in me the importance of education at a very early age. My father made it clear to us that we would all go to college; my mom pursued her own college degree on a part-time basis while raising a family of seven children. I will always carry the picture of my mother folding laundry with an open biology book on her bedside table, as an indication of her own perseverance.

My children also deserve an acknowledgement; Natalie, Preston, Sierra, Jack, and Joanna have all helped me along the way with kind words, and kept me going when I was discouraged.

I also wish to acknowledge my precious nephew, William Taylor Causey. Although in this life he is not able to express his thoughts as he would like, he continues to teach his Aunt Liz patience, kindness and love. I look forward to the day when he can tell me all that he knows.

Last but not least I would like to thank my committee for their support and assistance. Each of them has helped me to sharpen my focus and think about things that I needed to add to my study. It has been a pleasure to work with and learn from them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Most research begins with a puzzling question or problem (Creswell, 2007), but even before that it often begins with noticing something. The following is the background of what I noticed, and how it became my puzzling question. For nine years beginning in 1998, I lived in Tianjin, China where I taught elementary, middle, and high school at the Tianjin International School. The majority of our students were Asians from China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore & Taiwan. Additionally I created our school's first online class after my return to America in 2006, and therefore had ten years of teaching Asian students by the year 2007. With no formal *English Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) training, but a background in special education, I began reading, researching, and hypothesizing about how to create a more interactive learning environment than my students were accustomed to.

Perhaps out of naiveté, or perhaps out of my refusal to become a lecturer to a quiet group of students, I became committed to figuring out how to get my quiet Asian students talking. Although convinced of the benefits of oral interaction, my experience in the international school with Asian students presented a challenge in this regard. Not only were the students quiet in class, but fellow teachers, (both Asian and American), cautioned me not to have unrealistic expectations for Asian students' oral participation. I watched other teachers take the traditional lecture route, which some seemed to prefer, but was not willing to adopt that method. Having come from a very traditional and non-interactive classroom experience in my own K-12

schooling, I was convinced that an interactive classroom was better for student learning, and at the very least was more interesting.

Observing students during the lunch hour gave me hope that classroom interaction with Asian students could be improved. I would watch my quiet 9th grade students leave the classroom, walk down one flight of stairs to the cafeteria below, and undergo a transformation into social butterflies. Granted, they were often speaking their native tongue, but not always. Even when speaking English, they were laughing and animated, as opposed to their modest and quiet classroom behavior. Observing this on a daily basis led me to the realization that my quiet Asian students were *contextually quiet*. I therefore began to manipulate the class context by setting structures and strategies in place to get my Asian students talking, and eventually was successful. I came to see that when sufficient domain knowledge exists, context could overcome other factors in terms of classroom behavior as indicated in Figure 1.
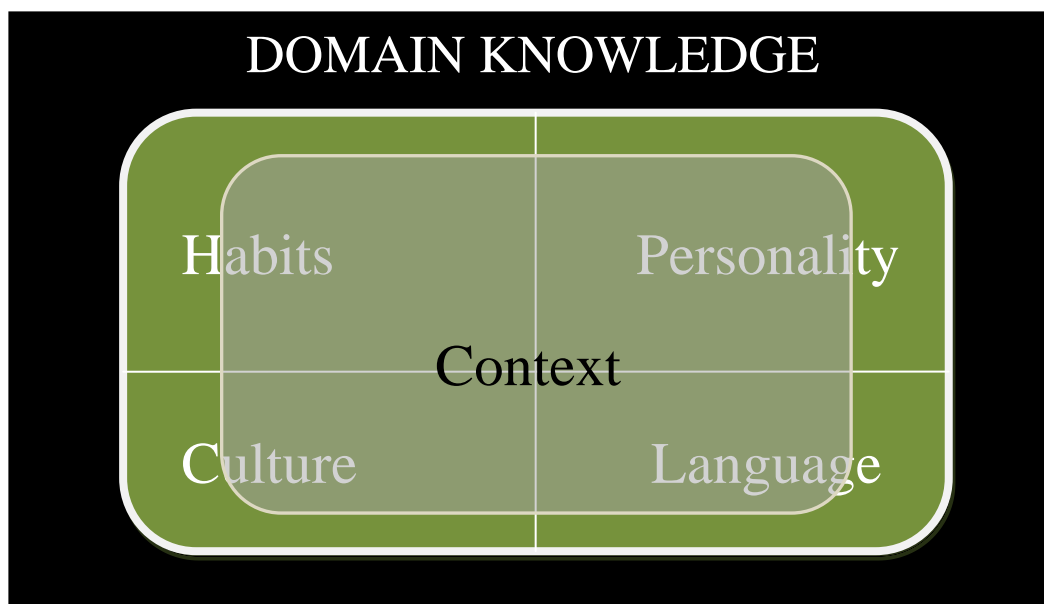
Figure 1. Context can overcome other factors.

Although not aware of the literature support for this idea at the time it occurred to me, it does exist. For example Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, (2000) speak of the bi-cultural person's ability to switch thinking styles, depending on what is required in a particular context. Additionally, Au-Yeung (2004), Pearson, Wong, Ho & Wong (2007), and Zhang & Head (2010) all found that changing contextual variables could increase classroom participation.

Since my time spent teaching Asian secondary students in China, I have witnessed a similar phenomenon of quiet Asian international students at the graduate level in both my master's and doctoral programs. I have continued filing away notes and questions from my Asian colleagues who tell me that they desire to increase their participation levels, but have not been successful in most instances. Equipped with these self-reports, my own experience, and the causes suggested by the literature (Biggs, 1996; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Tani, 2005), I became curious about what Asian international graduate students would say about their own behavior on this topic. Could they shine some light on their reticent classroom behavior? Would they be willing to make suggestions to Western professors and students in the context of a confidential interview if they found a safe conduit for their private thoughts? These wonderings were the impetus to my study of oral participation of Asian international students who are enrolled in discussion oriented graduate education.

For this study I have chosen to focus on Asian students who come from three countries that make up the largest group of East Asian international students in the United States: China, Korea and Taiwan (Open Doors, 2010). These three countries also have a common heritage of Confucian influence in their history. This characteristic distinguishes Asian cultures that have been influenced by Confucian values (China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Viet Nam) from Asian cultures that have not. For example Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos have more of a

Buddhist influence; India has more of a Hindu influence, and Malaysia and Indonesia, more of an Islamic one. The Confucian heritage countries of course have great variation in culture, and additionally it must be pointed out that Confucian values are not the sole, or even the main influence on life in these countries. As the literature and my study will show, what is often attributed to Confucian values may actually be caused by the educational, political, or familial traditions that many Asian students are accustomed to. Additionally instructors' cultural views or expectations could also have an effect on the class behavior of a particular group, foreign or not.

Therefore it was determined that the term *Confucian heritage* would be too limiting to use as a descriptor of Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese students; however *Asian* would be too broad of a descriptor. It seemed that using the abbreviation CKT for Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese students would be a way to avoid either of those difficulties. When referencing the work of others, however, I will use the terms that the authors used.

Statement of the Problem

Class discussions are an important part of American graduate study (Jones, 2008), but full participation is often difficult for some groups of students, and particularly for some international students from Asian countries. Much has been written about the *quiet Asian learner,* but these students are still reluctant to speak in class; therefore this is a problem that has been studied but not solved. In particular Asian students whose countries have had a Confucian influence have been noticeably quiet. The Confucian values of harmony and modesty (Windows on Asia, 2009) do not preclude effective participation in discussions, but these factors may be a consideration for some CKT students, especially in face-to-face contexts. Additionally what is often assigned to Confucian influence may actually be the influence of the education and/or

political systems in which the CKT students grew up.   There are also cross-cultural, language, power, gender, political, and personal issues that can cause students from any country to be less participatory at times. Despite the plethora of contributing factors, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this study, I believe CKT students wish to participate, and coupled with this is the desire of their Western instructors to have full participation from their students (M. Orey, personal communication, October, 2009). Therefore although both CKT students and their instructors are desirous of full participation in class discussions, this has been difficult to achieve.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the proposed study was to elicit information directly from CKT graduate students about their current classroom behavior, and their suggestions to instructors for increasing oral interaction in face-to-face classes. The goal would be an increased understanding of their thoughts and feelings that could be utilized by instructors in course design. Although future studies can be conducted to test the findings, getting firsthand accounts seemed to be the best way to begin. The study will address the following research questions:

1. What factors do CKT students attribute to their current classroom participation levels?

2. What suggestions would CKT students make that could increase their class participation?

Rationale

While the purpose of the study is to gain information and insight from CKT students, there are five reasons to conduct such a study. The first is that according to the literature, CKT participation levels in higher education are low (Biggs, 1996; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Tani, 2005). Secondly, many informal conversations with CKT colleagues from my master's and doctoral programs has convinced me that the low participation levels of CKT students is something they

wish to improve (personal communication, 2009). Thirdly, results from a pilot study conducted during the spring semester of 2009 confirmed this phenomenon; all four of the CKT participants that were interviewed indicated that they wished to increase their participation in class discussions but had not yet figured out how to do so (Appendix A). Fourthly, most of the research on this topic has been of a quantitative nature, and therefore studies involving in-depth conversations with Asian students are rare (Lee, 2009). This study could add to the small but important data set of first person accounts from CKT students. A fifth and final reason to conduct this study is that professors who value class interaction are interested in how to increase the participation of their students, but may not have time for an in-depth study of a particular group. The results of this study could offer professors a quick reference on CKT student participation.

<div align="center">**Significance**</div>

Three factors contribute to the significance of this study. The first is that increasing numbers of international students are enrolling in American higher education each year. Figure 2 shows an increase over the five year period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 for both new and total enrollment of international students in general, as well as in total enrollment for CKT students.
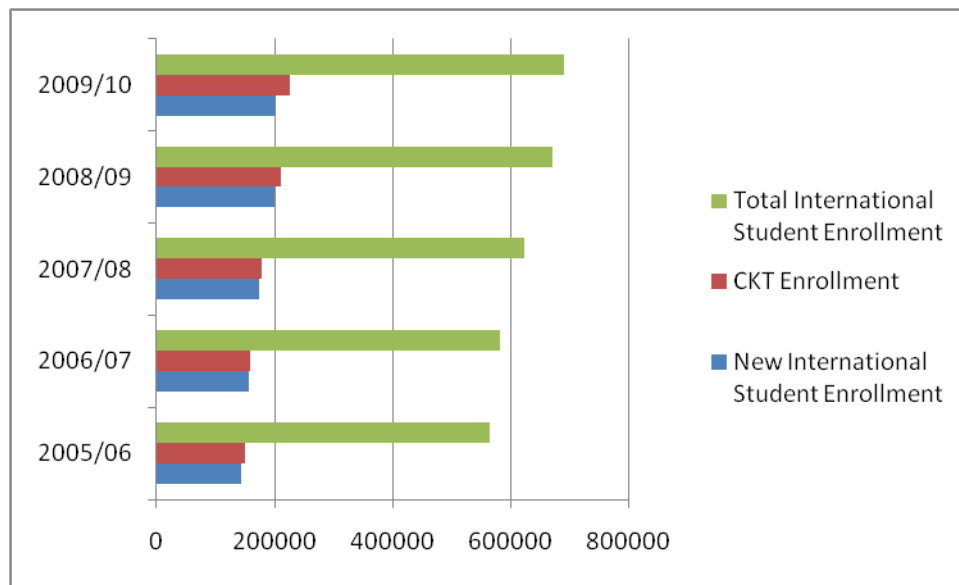
Figure 2. Increase of international students over a five year period.

According to Open Doors (2010), a sub-group of the Institute of International Education, CKT countries comprised about 33% of all international students in the U.S. in 2010. This means that almost one third of the total international student enrollment in the U.S. is comprised of students from just three countries as seen in Figure 3.
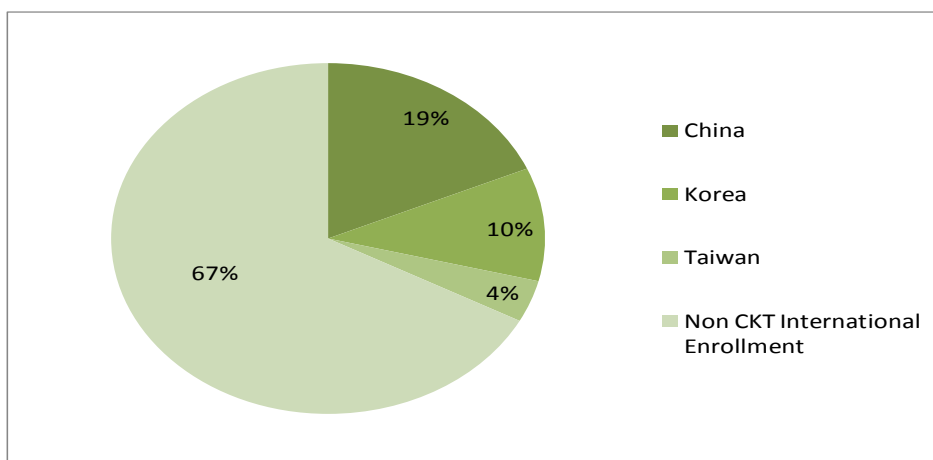
Figure 3. 2010 U.S. international students: CKT vs. non-CKT.

This is not an insignificant number even if there is much cultural and socioeconomic variation among the countries of China, Korea, and Taiwan. The University of Georgia annual

Fact Book (UGA, 2010) demonstrates close alignment with this national statistic; CKT students comprise 38 % or over one third of the international student enrollment at UGA, as seen in Figure 4.
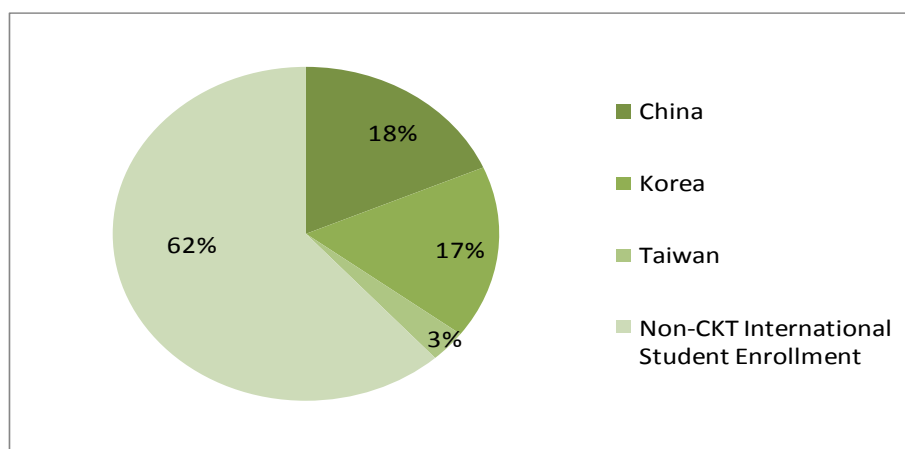
Figure 4. 2010 UGA international students: CKT vs. non-CKT.

It is also important to note that Canada has been the top destination for Chinese immigrants for the last twenty years and therefore the numbers in the figures may actually be a bit low. There are several reasons for this phenomenon; the first is that many Hong Kong Chinese immigrated to Canada just before the Chinese reclaimed it from the British in 1999 due to concerns about business, political and religious freedom (Li, 2007). The second reason is that after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, emigrating to the U.S. became extremely difficult; many Chinese who wished to emigrate to the West went to Canada (Li, 2007). Therefore many students who hold a Canadian passport are of actually of Chinese heritage, although this information is not in the fact books of universities, and therefore difficult to quantify.

A second factor, transferability, takes into account the fact that quiet classroom behavior is not limited to CKT students, or even to international students. Therefore this study could have

wider significance beyond the target group. Results and suggestions could have transferability to other cultural groups, or perhaps the insights shared can provide the impetus to considering the quiet student, no matter what their background, in course design.

The third factor contributing to the significance of this study is that intercultural competence can be fostered by increased participation of CKT students. While some may view this study as a way to help CKT students, an increase in their participation will benefit their American classmates and professors as well. Learning with and from international students in our midst is an added educational bonus that goes beyond content knowledge. Getting insights into the behavior and thinking of our international students can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation that could rival or at least equal what is gained from some *Study Abroad* contexts (McAllister & Irvine, 2000).

Terms

*Asian learner***.** The term *Asian* learner is frequently found in the literature and is helpful shorthand only in that it distinguishes this group from Western learners rather than a precise description of particular groups of Asians (Ng, 2001). It is as useful as the term *Europeans.* However, much of the literature uses this term; therefore at times *Asian learner* may be used in reference to a particular author's comments, even though I am focusing on a particular group of Asian learners.

CKT. This term refers to students from China, Korean, and Taiwan and is formatted in alphabetical order.

Confucian Heritage Countries (CHC). This term is again useful only to distinguish the Asian countries that have had a Confucian influence from the Asian countries that have not, as was mentioned earlier.

Confucian values. While many Asians may have no knowledge of or connection to Confucius, the literature often mentions Confucian values (Biggs, 1996; Ng, 2001; Tani, 2005) to explain CKT students' silence in the classroom. Therefore it is important to briefly note what those values are as some readers may not be familiar with them. Confucian teachings were written down by the followers of Confucius in the *Analects*, and include six main virtues: compassion (ren), filial piety (xiao), righteousness (yi), propriety (li), loyalty (chung), and reciprocity (shu) (Ng, 2001) as seen in Table 1 on the following page.

Discussion. This term is used broadly due to the various types of verbal interaction used in graduate face-to-face classrooms. It may include dialogue, oral interaction, or oral participation.

Table 1

Main Confucian Values

_____

Ren	Xiao	Yi	Li	Chung	Shu
Compassion	Filial Piety	Righteousness	Propriety	Loyalty	Reciprocity
kindness, treat others as you would like to be treated	devotion to parents, elders, teachers	act for good of others	avoid rash statements or actions	similar to West- give support to one's nation,	both parties should give: parents/child, govt./citizens, China/other nations
required in all social relationships	shows one to be an ethical person	keeping harmony in social relationships	courtesy & modesty in speech & behavior	family, employer, etc.	
			respect for tradition, ritual, knowing one's place		

Summary

My experience of teaching overseas initiated my research interest and although the problem of CKT students' quiet classroom behavior has been studied, few qualitative studies exist, and solutions still do not appear to be in place. Therefore a qualitative study of the *emic* perspective of CKT students, and their suggestions for instructors could shed light on the problem. The rationale for the study comes from literature, informal conversations in which CKT students expressed a desire to participate, pilot study results, and professors' desire for full participation. All of these entities point to a complex problem, but one that has feasible solutions for highly motivated CKT students. The significance of such a study comes from the

increasingly large numbers of CKT international students enrolling in American higher education, the transferability of solutions to other international students and also to quiet students in general, as well as from the intercultural competence that can be developed when CKT students become more participatory in class. The next chapter will lay out a conceptual framework that was guided by a review of the literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of the proposed study is to gather first person accounts from CKT graduate students about factors that affect their current participation in face to face class discussions, as well as their suggestions to instructors for fostering fuller participation. The goal would be an increased understanding of their thoughts and feelings that could be utilized by instructors in course design. The design of the study was informed by a review of current literature on the value of class discussions, a dynamic view of culture, and the role of instructional design in this complex issue.

Conceptual Framework

This study was designed around three concepts that build upon each other. The first concept is that the dynamic, rather than static view of culture (Liddicoat, 2002) is a more accurate way to understand those from other cultures. This view contends that culture is constantly in flux as people interact with their environment, rather than a collection of descriptions, facts, and artifacts (Asia Education Foundation, 2010). As anthropologist Edward B. Tylor makes clear, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1924, p.1). The key word in this famous quote is *acquired*. In fact culture is a set of learned ideas and behaviors, rather than an inherent system. A helpful illustration of this concept is seen in cross cultural adoption; a child becomes part of the culture in which he grows and develops.

In the case of international students, although observation-based descriptions of a particular group's classroom behavior are a place to start, one must move beyond mere descriptions to understanding the factors behind behaviors, as well as allow for changes outside of customary patterns. The literature will show that CKT students are willing and able to adapt to a more interactive classroom, and therefore instructors should plan for course design that supports their participation.

This leads to the second concept, which is that instructional design plays an important role helping discussions to realize their potential, particularly for groups of students who tend to be less participatory in class. Granted there are many different sectors that are needed to assist the CKT or any international student who is studying abroad, and instructional design is only part of the solution. However instructional design in particular is uniquely poised to aid the academic success of such students via providing culturally informed support for speaking up in class.

The third concept is that oral interaction is a valuable classroom tool that yields benefits beyond simply learning content. It has been well documented that discussion can help deepen conceptual understanding and foster critical thinking (Kuhn & Udell, 2003; Jonassen & Kim, 2009; McKeachie, 1994; Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Webb, 1992). However, according to Kim's (1988) integrative adaptive theory, oral participation of international students, both in class and out, has a huge impact on their adaptation to their host culture. Likewise, the inclusion of those from other cultures in class discussions can help native students gain intercultural competence, which is now an important basic skill (Li & Gasser, 2005; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Class discussions therefore, are an effective tool for mastery of content, cross cultural adaptation, and intercultural competence. Therefore getting CKT students to be more participatory is not just

about talking; there are greater implications. However successfully increasing participation may require design that includes cultural understanding. If a dynamic cultural view that allows for change can inform instructional design, then this can enhance the already valuable classroom tool of oral interaction. The interaction of these three important components can then result in successful adaptation to the host culture for CKT (and other foreign) students, and deeper conceptual understanding as well as intercultural competence for all students. These results can then recursively impact views of culture, instructional design, and oral interaction, as seen in Figure 5 below.
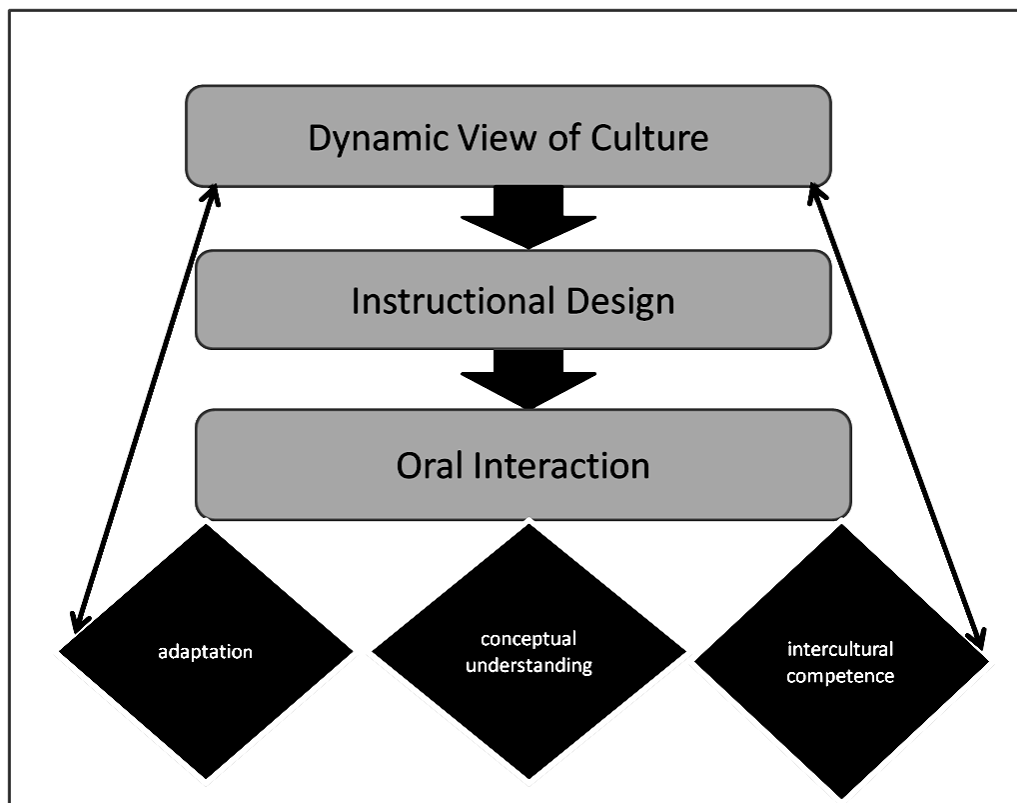
Figure 5. Conceptual framework: Dynamic view of culture, instructional design & oral interaction.

Each section of the literature review will focus on one of these concepts and will be guided by the following questions:

    1. What is the value of class discussion?

    2. How should instructors view culture?

    3. How are CKT students described in the literature in regards to class discussion?

    4. What factors contribute to the participation levels of CKT students?

    5. What evidence demonstrates that CKT students can become more participatory?

    6. How can instructional design address this issue?

Methods and Tools

The literature review was conducted using the University of Georgia (UGA) main library, both online and onsite. While many helpful articles were retrieved using the Galileo search engine in the UGA online library system, visits to the actual library were necessary to access books and handbooks in the field of Instructional Technology. I also used the *Google Scholar* search engine, which affords the reading of certain pages of some books online, as well as provides a retrieval link to the UGA library for articles. I focused mainly on peer-reviewed journal articles, but when a resource provided helpful background or statistical data I used it as well. Examples of such resources would include the *Institute for International Education* reports, the *UGA Fact Book,* and similar data sets that provided information on international student enrollment, or country specific information.

Search Terms

The following search terms were used:

- class participation

- classroom discourse

- collaborative dialogue

- discussion

- interactive dialogue

- interactive engagement (IE)

- oral interaction

- oral participation

- oral participation in class discussions (OPCD)

- peer discourse

- peer interaction

What is the Value of Class Discussion?

Assumptions about the value of class discussions are embedded in a study that seeks ways to increase participation. For example, if class discussions are of little benefit to learners, it would not make sense to investigate how a particular group could become more participatory. In fact, along with my own preference for an interactive classroom, is plenty of theoretical and empirical support for the educational value of oral interaction in class (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; McKeachie, 1994), as the following sections will show.

Prevalence of Class Discussions

Not all American university courses include discussions, but a look at many class syllabi will demonstrate their prominence in American higher education (Jones, 2008). Especially at the graduate level discussion plays a prominent part of the class structure as well. It is expected that graduate students participate in their own learning, and in particular make meaningful contributions to class discussions (Lee, 2009). It is generally acknowledged that discussions are

standard practice in humanities and social sciences; however, even business courses include discussion, particularly those that deal with policy and case review (Gopinath, 1999). Disciplines such as physics and engineering have recently been re-thinking the traditional lecture and note taking model and including more interactive learning activities (Cahyadi, 2004; Hake, 1998) with positive results. Likewise even medical education has taken a second look at the lecture based model; the American Association of Medical Colleges *Assessment of Change in Medical Education* report (1992) included an entire section on reducing lectures and fostering more interactive learning.

With the advent of online learning this trend continues; virtually all online class management systems include a vehicle for discussion as part of the standard package (EduTools, 2010). Even writing support websites use discussion as a way to stimulate student writing (Barton, Heilker, & Rutkowski, 2010). Furthermore discussion's popularity is echoed by students, who often cite the lack of interaction as an item that is missed in online education (Bold, 2006; Huang, 2002).

Finally, it is important to note that class discussion does not belong solely to any one philosophical paradigm, and has been used by those espousing a range of learning theories and epistemologies. Therefore discussion is a popular learning activity across many learning paradigms, disciplines, content areas, program levels, and delivery systems, and it is not likely that discussion will disappear from the American educational scene. In fact, the increasingly interactive capacity of web-based class management systems signals its inclusion in future curriculum. Of course prevalence does not prove value; a look at the intended purposes of class discussions can shed light on their value.

Purpose of Class Discussions

Why is class discussion so prevalent in American higher education? Some instructors use class discussions for accountability (Jones, 2008). Checking to see who did the assigned reading ostensibly has some merit in elementary or secondary education where instructors are more directly responsible for making sure students are grasping key concepts. However graduate students and adult learners are presumed to be more self-directed, and perhaps should not be subjected to reading checks. Of course when adult learners do not complete the assigned reading they may have less to contribute to class discussions, but this is not always true. Many adult learners come with experience or exposure to the same ideas through other venues such as other classes or personal and professional experience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Accountability therefore is not a great reason to include discussions in tertiary education although some instructors may disagree. McKeachie (1994) suggests that assignment-based discussion at the university level is not so much an accountability measure, but a way to help commit important concepts to long term memory, and foster deeper understanding. He further distinguishes between teacher-centered discussions and student-centered ones (McKeachie, 1994), demonstrating that there is not a single good method or philosophy tied to the use of discussion.

Sometimes instructors use class discussion so that they can get an idea of what their learners know (Webb, 2009). Although it may feel like a reading check to students, this use of discussion is designed for both the instructor and learner's benefit. Formative assessment is done so that adjustments can be made to eventually benefit students (Bransford, 2000).

The purpose for class discussion most frequently cited in the literature however is the social construction of knowledge, and the fostering of critical thinking (Jonassen & Kim, 2009; McKeachie, 1994; Palinscar, 1984; Webb, 1992; Yang, Newby, & Bill, 2005). Discussions are

used to help students think more deeply about something via interaction with the instructor or their peers. At the simplest level discussions in graduate classes often begin with students giving summaries or answering questions from assigned readings, and at this point the cognitive task may simply be recalling information. As soon as someone asks "What do you mean?" summarizing quickly progresses to explaining, which has been shown to foster learning (Chinn, O'Donnell, & Jinks, 2000) in that it forces one to think through something more thoroughly.   In other words, explaining something is a higher level cognitive task than knowing something. For example, explaining how to drive to a particular location is often more difficult than simply knowing how to get there.

Additionally when an explanation is in the form of help-giving there is a benefit not only to the help-receiver but to the help-giver as well (Bargh & Schul, 1980; Webb, 1992). The popular expression *If you want to learn something, teach it* (author unknown) apparently has some research behind it. This is also the basis for the research of the Teachable Agents group at Vanderbilt and their construction of Betty's Brain (Biswas, Leelawong, Schwartz, & Vye, 2005). The teaching, questioning, and even quizzing of Betty's Brain led to deeper conceptual understanding (Biswas, et al., 2005).

It is important to note however that the type of help that peers give can make a difference. A study of peer interaction showed that while explaining did indeed help learners, giving just the answer without an accompanying explanation actually did more harm than good because it did not help students figure out exactly where they went wrong (Webb, 1989).

Another reason that discussion fosters critical thinking is that stating thoughts displays them for others to examine, which in turn demands that there is logical and sufficient evidence for holding a particular view. The process of arguing, providing or evaluating counterarguments,

and then answering those counterarguments in a rebuttal can help learners strengthen their conceptual understanding (Driver, Newton, & Osborne, 2000; Jonassen & Kim, 2009), push them to modify their opinions, and extend their knowledge beyond their current state (Chinn, O'Donnell, & Jinks, 2000). Jonassen & Kim (2009) contend that argumentation is foundational to problem solving, and is also the best example of the presence of higher order thinking in daily life. Additionally, they maintain that cogently stating a robust counterargument (as opposed to a straw man) is the best evidence of a thorough understanding of an issue (Jonassen & Kim, 2005).

An additional reason for including class discussions is to allow for the raising of consciousness (Daloz, 1988) that is an important part of a graduate education.   Interacting with new ideas, especially when they may be uncomfortable or controversial, may initiate a transformation of thinking (Merriam, 1999). In fact, challenging discussions can often be the disorienting event that is the beginning of a transformative learning experience (Mezirow, 1988). I know I have often had my own ideas challenged in class discussions, and afterward I would reflect and research both mine and the opposing view, often with adjustments to my own. Therefore when students remain quiet in class, not only do they lose an opportunity to make their voice heard, but their classmates lose the opportunity to be challenged, and to broaden their horizons.

All of the purposes for the use of discussion stated above are not surprising. However in the global age there are two additional reasons for using class discussions in higher education that may not always be considered: to assist in the adaptation of foreign students to their host culture, and to help foster intercultural competence for both foreign and host students. Kim, (1988) once an international student herself, has developed an integrative adaptive theory whereby oral communication in particular is directly related to the international students'

successful adaptation to their host country. This makes sense since to relate to people one first must be able to have some communication with them. She further maintains that the oral interaction needs to take place in both academic and social settings for successful adaptation (Kim, 1988). Since many international students socialize with their own group outside of class, in-class discussions become ever more important for oral interaction. This is especially true of groups that have a large presence in Western higher education, such as the Chinese and South Koreans. With Chinese and Koreans both exceeding an enrollment of three hundred students at UGA (UGA Fact Book, 2009) for example, it is quite easy to remain involved with one's own culture group outside of class (Liu, 2001).

A final purpose of class discussions that is not usually mentioned is the development of intercultural competence, which has become a buzz word of late. This term used to be found mainly in foreign language, linguistics, business, and international relations literature. Now however, other disciplines are taking note of the need for intercultural competence due to the increasing internationalization of our world (McCallister & Irvine, 2000). There are many definitions of intercultural competence but most of them include "the development of one's skills and attitudes in successfully interacting with persons of diverse backgrounds" (Deardoff, 2009, p. 15).

One of the more interesting results from my pilot study (Appendix A) was that the CKT students wanted to talk more in class, but often felt that both their presence and opinions were of no interest to their American classmates. One participant reported that after many unsuccessful attempts to jump in to the discussion, at the close of class a classmate informed her that next time they would *let* her talk. This participant felt that such an attitude was rude and condescending, but did not know what to do about it. This is disappointing because not only is the CKT student

missing out on an opportunity to share, but their American hosts, whether they realize it or not, are also missing out on an opportunity for cross cultural exchange.

It seems that the UGA Office of International Education has a robust *Study Abroad* program (UGA Office of International Education, 2010); however interaction with the international students in our midst could be just as effective in reducing stereotypes and prejudices (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). This is the basis for Allport's (1954) belief that person-to-person contact could reduce prejudice, but he did not intend for such contact to only include classroom environments. Doing non-academic things with those who are different seems to be as important as participating in class activities. However class activities are at least better than no contact, and might even be the initiating event for outside contact later.

The idea of *Studying Away* (Sobania & Braskamp, 2009) has been suggested as an alternative or companion to study abroad. This entails getting involved in a culture different from your own in a local or regional campus or community. The idea is that for a smaller monetary investment, one can make substantial gains in cross cultural competence. Although class discussions that include international students may be a micro version of *Studying Away*, the idea of class interaction with our foreign guests may be a cost effective way to develop intercultural competence. Students from other cultures often have ideas that will surprise or challenge Western classmates. For example, Western students may be unaware of the strong connection to family and duty that can add to CKT students' academic pressure. There are also country specific concerns such as the delicate relationship between Taiwan and China that can be a stressor when students from these two countries interact (Kang, 2005). Learning about a particular content area via the perspective of Chinese, Korean, or Taiwanese student can help expand the horizons of Western students, and therefore it is sad to see this opportunity wasted.

In terms of intercultural competence therefore, class discussions may be our most underutilized resource.

In summary class discussion can serve many purposes; deeper conceptual understanding, the development of critical thinking, and the raising of consciousness are commonly understood benefits. Cultural adaptation of the sojourner and the development of intercultural competence of both native and sojourner are also benefits derived in part from class discussions.

Empirical studies.

There are many empirical studies that demonstrate the benefit of some type of interactive dialogue between teachers and learners or among learners; it is worth noting that all contain certain planned structures or implementation methods (Chinn, O'Donnell & Jinks, 2000; Chiu, 2009; Kuhn & Udell, 2003; Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Webb, 2009; Yager, Johnson & Johnson, 1985). For example, Palinscar and Brown (1984) found improved comprehension after implementing a *reciprocal teaching* strategy with 7th grade poor reading comprehenders. This strategy uses the four activities of summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting elements in a selected story or article, with the student and teacher taking turns leading the dialogue. Although *reciprocal teaching* is not a group discussion, but rather a dialogue between a student and adult, it contains the elements of social dialogue nonetheless, and resulted in improved comprehension from both eliciting explanations about the assigned readings, as well as giving them. Reciprocal teaching also yielded improved confidence that comes from practice with speaking up (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). While American 7th graders may not seem to have much in common with CKT graduate students, low reading comprehension is often accompanied by a fear and hesitancy to participate in discussions. If there is a way to help reticent 7th grade

students participate more fully, there is the possibility that similar strategies could assist the less participatory CKT student.

While structure has been shown to positively influence learning in peer discourse over no structure (Yager, et al., 1985), Chinn, O'Donnell and Jinks (2000) proposed that the type of structure is also important. In particular they chose to study the argumentation structure as a way to analyze the level of discourse, thinking that the higher quality argument would have a larger contribution to make in student learning. Using science class as the setting, 105 5th graders were divided into two groups and asked to rate three different conclusions. One group used a simple binary scale of OK/not OK, and the other group needed to rank the three conclusions from best to worst. The results of the study were that the quality of the discourse did affect student understanding (Chinn, et al. 2000), with the students using the three tiered ranking method demonstrating a higher conceptual understanding upon assessment. Similar results were achieved in a study of 34 academically at-risk students in two lower income New York City public middle schools (Kuhn & Udell, 2003). The students in the treatment group were placed in pairs and asked to discuss capital punishment. After each session the pair would meet with an adult coach and a review of the dialogue with a focus on generating reasons, elaborating reasons, supporting reasons with evidence, and evaluating reasons. The sequence of learning activities progressed to similar activities for the counterarguments. The results showed not only a deeper conceptual understanding of the content area, but skill development in argumentation that could then be transferred to other content areas, with an increased ability to reason and think critically about a difficult topic (Kuhn & Udell, 2003).

It may occur to the reader that having students generate, elaborate, and defend reasons may simply be showcasing cognitive processes that are already operating internally, but

unobservable. After all internal argumentation is a part of daily decision making in real life.

However the post treatment assessments showed that the treatment group who were required to

verbalize their arguments and evidence had a deeper conceptual understanding of the content,

than the control group who did not (Kuhn & Udell, 2003).   Apparently there is some merit in

actually putting one's ideas into words.

      Motivated by a desire to determine if small group or class wide discussion was more

effective than the other, Nicols & Boyle (2003) compared these two discussion methods and

found that the small group peer interaction had some advantages over the large group discussion

even though both were interactive and yielded positive gains. Students mentioned that small

groups afforded the opportunity to think through their thoughts without feeling pressure, and also

diffused power relationships that can be inherent in teacher/student interaction (Nicols & Boyle,

2003).

      One common thread in the research about discussion is that not only is some planned

structure needed to ensure a benefit, but also some teacher intervention is needed at times. Chiu

(2009) conducted research on the type of teacher intervention that fostered group learning. In a

study of 9th grade algebra students it was found that too much teacher intervention or the wrong

type could hinder groups being on task and taking responsibility for their own learning. Webb

(2009) also found that the type of teacher intervention made a difference in student learning. The

teacher who monitored group discussions, asked probing questions, and asked for elaboration of

explanations ended up with higher achievement than the teacher who did not. This seems to

suggest that even though the actual activities are learner centered, the instructor's role is still

quite significant if class discussions are to realize their full potential.

Challenges.

Even though both theory and practice suggest that class discussions are beneficial to the learner, there are of course authentic challenges that must be addressed. One that comes to mind is the two extremes of those who dominate the conversation, and those who do not say anything. Actually the outcome for both extremes is the same: a class discussion that does not fulfill its intended purpose. Webb (2009) mentions these two types of learners in her study on the importance of the instructor as the key in attempts to provide marginalized group participants a voice. Strategies include finding tasks that a quiet person would feel comfortable doing, as well as noting their contributions, and encouraging the group to listen to their good ideas (Webb, 2009). I have used some of these strategies with graduate students with a good result, but not always. Sometimes no matter what I did I was not able to quiet a talkative student. However I was able to get quiet students talking, which was my goal. Unfortunately the literature is more focused on getting quiet students to talk, than it is on getting more assertive students to share the platform.

Another challenge in the use of discussion groups is to keep the students on topic and at a preferred level of discourse (Chinn, et al., 2000; Kuhn & Udell, 2003). However as mentioned earlier, instructor involvement in planning the structure and in monitoring effectiveness may be needed. For example often a work product is expected at the end of the discussion time that will be evaluated in some way by instructors. This seems to add enough incentive to stay on topic, especially if the work product is to be handed in at the end of a class.

A third challenge in class discussions is that emotionally charged debate can make some students uncomfortable and therefore diminish their contributions. This is certainly a factor for the CKT student who has been taught to preserve harmony and avoid public and/or direct

confrontation (Ng, 2001). Although no instructor can maintain an atmosphere where no one gets their feelings hurt, having guidelines for civil discourse may be helpful if diverse opinions are valued, (as they should be). In her book, *Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion*, Hess (2009) makes the point that avoiding controversial issues is not in sync with sound educational practice, and further states that learning how to have a civil discussion about such issues is central to living in a democratic society.

Finally class discussions can be impacted by power issues that can prevent robust and meaningful dialogue. These issues are widely written about in Western education even without adding international concerns (Ochoa & Pineda, 2008). Power issues generally focus on a dominant culture that controls the direction, philosophical bent, or even the topic of the discussion. Although the white majority has traditionally represented the dominant group in the U.S., numbers alone do not define whether or not a group is dominant. Guy (1999) for example writes that minority status may not mean smaller numbers of people, but a lower status or access to institutions of power. Such power issues can exist between students based on age, race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or personality. In order to remove barriers to open communication, strategies are needed when power is an issue; this will not just happen on its own (Thompson & Thompson, 1996).   Power issues can also exist between students and instructors based on position. For example CKT students who are accustomed to showing respect to those in authority may have difficulty challenging an instructor's ideas, especially in a public forum (Liu, 2001).   Furthermore CKT students often show a polite deference to their host country citizens which can prevent them from speaking up (Nichols, 2003). This may work to their disadvantage in an American classroom where white students may have a privileged position, whether they are aware of it or not (McIntosh, 1990).

If the challenges mentioned above exist for American students in discussion groups, these challenges could be even more difficult for CKT students (Li & Gasser, 2005). This next section will look at the CKT students in Western education and how they are described in the literature in relation to class participation.

How Should Instructors View Culture?

The dynamic cultural view (Kitayama, 2002; Liddicoat, 2002) allows for growth and change outside of usual behavior, and pushes educators to move beyond preconceived ideas about cultural groups. Within this framework, the notion of the contextually quiet CKT student challenges trait-based descriptions of culture groups, and opens the door for flexibility and growth. Since CKT students are not inherently quiet (Tani, 2005), expectations for increased participation are not at all unrealistic. Coupled with this idea is the fact that CKT students wish to participate more fully, even if it is something that they are not accustomed to doing prior to their arrival in western universities (Tani, 2005).

As a beginning point for investigating any culture one must be aware that while descriptions of a group of learners are often based on observations, those observations may not tell the whole story. Because culture is not static but dynamic (Liddicoat, 2002; Tylor, 1924), descriptions in the literature of a particular group may be out of date and or limiting. For example, there is an enormous difference between the Internet-savvy, *YouTube* watching Chinese students who arrive in the U.S. today, from the first group of three Chinese young men who came by ship to mid-eighteenth century New England (Qian & Chu, 2002) or even from those who came in the '60s before the Internet was available for personal use.

When one is studying Chinese culture in particular, even the insider/outsider paradigm is not always the most helpful since China is a vast country with a great variance of geography,

socioeconomic and educational levels, and micro-culture. Blum (2006) writing about 'native' Chinese identity in the field of anthropology suggests that in their own country are found huge variances of culture. A Shanghai businessman living in a luxury high-rise apartment may not be able to identify with the complexities of life in the grasslands of Mongolia, and speak as an *'insider'* more than a Westerner who has lived and worked in Mongolia for many years.

Although they do not have a large geographic mass as China does, South Korea and Singapore have experienced an influx of North Koreans and mainland Chinese respectively, and this emigration contributes to cultural variation there as well. Therefore the large culture/small culture concept further muddies the description waters (Atkinson, 2004; Garcia, 1991). Being Korean, Chinese, or Taiwanese will vary in the smaller culture of geographic regions, social standing, employment, education, or family connections. Research focused solely in the United States for example, with its diversity of culture, socioeconomic status, and geographic settings, makes it difficult to craft an accurate and/or useful description of 'American learners'. Furthermore context, individual personalities, and learning styles also affect learners, and therefore one can easily lose confidence in the validity of static descriptions of any culture (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006).

One research team studying Honk Kong students' cultural identity maintains that some bicultural individuals maintain two ways of thinking and access the one that is useful for a particular context (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). "Cultural knowledge is conceptualized to be like a contact lens that affects the individual's perceptions of visual stimuli all of the time" (Hong et al., 2000, p. 709). They suggest that the *contact lens* can be removed and a different set of lenses can be put on by the bicultural individual. A contact lens model of culture certainly upholds the idea of adaptability, flexibility and openness to growth and change.

One must tread carefully therefore when looking at culture, and examine one's own assumptions. A review of CKT student descriptions in the literature can further illuminate the need for care in understanding the sojourner in our midst.

How Are CKT Students Described in the Literature in Regards to Class Discussion?

It is tempting to put a negative spin on a culture's behavior as viewed from one's native culture's values. For example Clark & Gieve (2006) have noted that much of the discourse about the CKT learner is situated in a *lacks and deficits* model. Rather than noting cultural differences as neutral, they are compared to Western values and described in negative language or *problematised* (Holmes, 2006). If the same thing were done in the literature with Western values using Eastern perspectives, the individualism that is prized in the West could be labeled as self-centeredness, directness could be called rudeness, and taking the initiative could be viewed as a lack of modesty. CKT students and their learning styles are often examined with a Western perspective that is out of sync with Asian pedagogy which stresses giving respect to the teacher, maintaining harmony, and not putting too much focus on oneself (Biggs, 1996, Watkins & Biggs, 2001).

Concern about CKT students having the wrong educational habits led one group of Australian teachers to worry about how their high achieving CKT students were getting the job done, even though they applauded their achievement (Dooley, 2003). In another Australian study, different causes were attributed to the same behaviors, depending on the ethnicity of the students; quiet CKT students were *passive*, but quiet Australian students were *novices* (Nichols, 2006). Perhaps the West focuses too much on the external behaviors of CKT learners (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006) and constructs a cultural box that does not give enough weight to factors

other than culture, such as setting, instructor, attitudes, language, personality, learning styles, etc. (Coverdale-Jones, 2006; Zamel, 1997).

Although a complete lack of awareness of another culture can lead to barriers to learning (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2007) sometimes a shallow understanding can also do harm. One cannot deny noticing the reticence of CKT students to actively participate in classroom discussions or their resistance to challenging fellow students or professors (Tani, 2005). However there is often a wide gap between noticing something and understanding it. Cheng (2000) argues that Asian passivity is more a "groundless myth, rather than a universal truth" (p. 438), and urges educators to carefully look over the many factors in play before rushing to judgment. Therefore the next section will be a review of the factors that contribute to CKT students' classroom behavior.

What Factors Contribute to the Participation Levels of CKT Students?

Three main ideas surface in the literature when discussing the CKT student: Confucian values that inform Asian culture, language issues, and socio-cultural factors. A careful look at all of these main ideas will uncover many factors for educators to consider for effective teaching of the CKT student. Although the three main factors found in the literature are separated here for clarity's sake, in real life they are intermixed in a complex matrix that is impossible to separate, and therefore difficult to address.

Confucian Values

Confucianism is not a religion but has been promoted as a way of life in some Asian countries. Confucian teachings were written down by the followers of Confucius in the *Analects*, and include six main virtues: compassion (ren), filial piety (xiao), righteousness (yi), propriety (li), loyalty (chung), and reciprocity (shu), as shown in Table 1. According to Chiu (2009), Asian students are always under three important constraints from their Confucian heritage: they

must "revere authority, maintain harmony and avoid conflicts in public" (p.42). If this is the case, it would be easy to see how these constraints would be at odds with Western culture and pedagogy (O'Dwyer, 2003). These three items seem to be embedded in the Confucian value of *propriety* or *li* in Chinese, which is also referred to as *modesty*. This value in particular seems to have had the greatest influence on the CKT student's classroom habits and customs. For example, it does not allow one to stick out or in any way call attention to one's self. The Chinese have an expression for this: *The nail that sticks out gets hammered down* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is in stark contrast to the Western expression: *The squeaky wheel gets the grease.*

Each of the Confucian values is situated in a social framework; the rugged individualism that is valorized in America is noticeably absent (Ng, 2001). Confucian thinking rejects the idea that success can be found outside of the nuclear family, the extended family or society at large. What is also striking is that these values are all based on the idea of respect. While this may be appealing to Western teachers who feel that they spend too much time on classroom management, the application of Confucian values may be at odds with Western pedagogies that stress outspokenness, boldness, and individualism.

Zhou, Knoke, & Sakamoto, (2005) suggest however that Confucian values are not intended to produce passivity however, and that such a result is a distortion of Confucian teaching. Such phrases as *'qin xue hao wen'* which means "a good student should study hard and always be ready to ask questions" (Cheng, 2000) are rarely encountered in the discourse about the CKT learner. "If I show you one corner and if you can't show me the other three, I'll say nothing more," is a quote attributed to Confucius from the Analects (Crane, 2008, n.p.), which also does not indicate passivity or a reticence to engage with one's teacher in a hearty discussion. In fact, Confucius is said to have promoted questioning and dialogue in pursuit of knowledge and

truth (Crane, 2008). Therefore a lack of understanding or appreciation of Confucian values in CKT students can lead to a negative discourse on CKT learners. Considered from an Eastern perspective, Confucian values are positive and ethical, but to some Western educators these values are contrary to 'sound' pedagogy and represent the quintessential passive learner who does not challenge, discuss, or think critically.

Perhaps though Confucian values are getting a bit too much credit. What if behaviors that are assigned to Confucian culture could instead be educational habits? Moreover what are often called Confucian ideals could simply be quasi-Confucian teachings that have been eroded or distorted over time, for political, social, cultural or even familial reasons (O'Dwyer, 2003). For example, Communist countries have limits on free speech and a free press, and stress conformity of thinking to keep order. Other Asian cultures with more political freedom (South Korea for example) still value conformity to a strict set of norms via social pressure as a way to preserve harmony and cultural ideals (Lee, 2009). To sum up, while it is prudent to be aware of cultural influences, it is confining to use them as the definitive explanation of behavior. Therefore this section continues with a look at language issues, and finally at socio-cultural factors that contribute to less participatory classroom behavior.

Language Issues

Zhou, et al. (2005) suggests that in addition to culture and background, language proficiency is huge factor that can be the cause of students' reticence to speak in class. Operating in one's second language is a very difficult task and even the most fluent ESOL students may experience headaches, confusion, frustration and a lack of confidence. Some contend that the ESOL factor is in fact the main one in keeping CKT students from full participation in class, but this is not always considered (Clark & Gieve, 2006). Sometimes

assumptions are made about English proficiency based upon admission to graduate school. However UGA's requirement of a TOEFL score of at least 213 on the computer-based TOEFL (UGA, 2008) does not necessarily reflect a readiness of international students to fully participate in classroom discussions, especially with the slang, jokes, and other shortcuts that are part of native speakers' daily discourse. Being uncertain of social cues and cultural humor makes it difficult to comfortably navigate classroom discussions, and therefore strategies may need to be designed to counter this (Spencer-Oatey & Zhaoning, 2006).

Furthermore, when it comes to speaking English, competence as well as confidence is needed for full participation for the second language student, and often CKT students report a low language ability that is well below their observed proficiency (Lee, 2007). This lack of confidence leads many to keep quiet, and then sadly lose the opportunity to gain competence via practice, which in turn leads to a continued lack of confidence. This can be a frustrating cycle, as show in Figure 6.
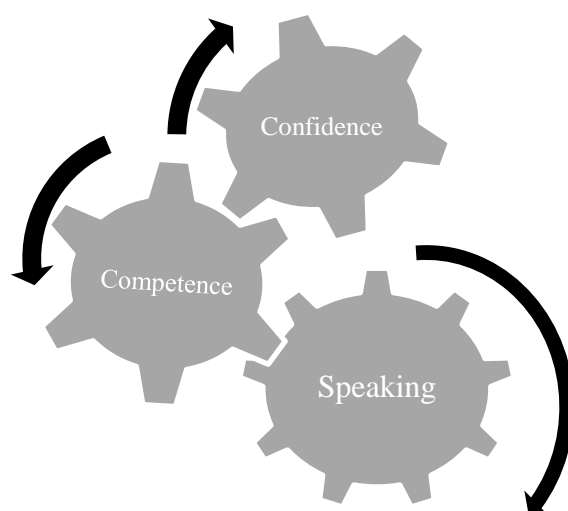
Figure 6. Cycle of competence, confidence and speaking for ESOL students.

Online learning ameliorates some of the language issue by allowing more time to craft a grammatically correct, and intellectually cogent response, especially in asynchronous discussion, however some have said that what is gained in online learning is lost in the lack of non-verbal social cues that are so important to CKT learners (Bentley, Tinney, Chia, 2004). As anyone who has learned or taught a language, it is not the mere memorization of vocabulary, or even the skilled usage that completely describes the process. On the contrary, correct usage demands some understanding of the culture in which the language is situated, and this further interacts with the ESOL student's own social, political, and epistemological roots (Cheng, 2000). Language learning is culture learning, not merely word or phrase learning, and this complex task takes time (Cheng, 2000). This is why the Asia Education Foundation (2010) has challenged language teachers to rethink traditional ways of learning a language in favor of an integrated and holistic approach that merges language learning with culture learning.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Language is a huge factor for CKT student participation but everyone does not agree that it is the most critical factor. This is what Liu (2001) discovered in his study of twenty Asian graduate students. Liu (2001) cited socio-cultural differences, rather than language ability as the most critical factor for participation. Similar to the experience of overweight people who lose weight and are surprised to find that thin people have problems too, this finding may disappoint some CKT students who contend that language is holding them back. Socio-cultural factors include proficient contextual knowledge rather than simply language knowledge, and also include political concerns, habits, family dynamics, and adaptations that were required to navigate the typical methodologies they encountered in their educational system prior to their arrival in the West. The examination driven education system in most Asian countries mandates

that students listen to lectures while taking notes as well as commit vast amounts of material to short term memory (Ku, Pan, Tsai & Cornell, 2004). Therefore teacher methodology, educational habits, and administrative policy therefore may be driving the learning habits of CKT students, rather than Confucian culture per se (Littlewood, 2000). Additionally culture often gets the credit when in fact individual personality, which can include shyness in any culture, is also part of the equation.

So many factors may be interwoven together; it does seem difficult to delineate causes with great accuracy. Therefore the next section will look at evidence that CKT students can be more participatory, and hope to reveal more information about what works. It seems that this could be useful even if exact causes cannot be pinpointed

What Evidence Demonstrates That CKT Students Can Become More Participatory?

CKT students are often surprised when they hear that instructors debate about whether or not such students can adapt to Western educational practices; it would seem that they had already exhibited a certain degree of adventure by virtue of leaving their home to study abroad. Furthermore, some of these students' ancestors demonstrated amazing adaptability in their home countries to various political movements, as well as in their emigration and repatriation to countries all over the world (Qian, 2002). However what empirical evidence exists to support this adaptability claim in relation to Western educational practices? To begin, a look at adaptation to Western practices in Eastern settings is helpful. Perhaps the adaptation or lack thereof at home can shed light on what Western instructors should attend to.

Evidence of CKT Student Success in Eastern Settings

Adaptation is not always an intentional process; sometimes people adapt without realizing it. One research team found evidence that South Korean college students' exposure to

Western educational practices led to implicit theories of intelligence that were similar to those of

Americans (Lim, Plucker, & Im, 2002). As far as intentional adaptation, there has been research

to indicate that CKT students will move outside of their comfort zones under certain

circumstances. Yang (2008) found that Taiwanese students increased their discussion levels after

teaching assistants employed Socratic questioning. Similarly in a study of 200 Hong Kong

university students enrolled in an online social science course where discussion was a major part

of the class work, use of an online course management system and a structured discussion format

showed modest gains in interactive dialogue (Au-Yeung, 2004). Students who were thought to

be passive, quiet, and non-spontaneous by their instructors ended up with 480 posts for a six

week course. This result was considered moderately successful with a participation rate of

89.4%, compared to the typical participation rate of 44%-51% for social science courses at the

same university (Au-Yeung, 2004). Since many American online courses require anywhere from

three to six posts and replies per week, 480 posts for 200 students seems rather low by U.S.

standards. The fact that this number is considered somewhat high sheds light on the differences

between Eastern and Western educational practices, and more importantly on the challenges of

getting some CKT students to actively participate even among their own. Therefore the most

important factor would not be the total number of posts but the increase in posts from the usual

number per course. One has to keep in mind that CKT students have been trained to listen more

than speak (Ku, Pan, Tsai & Cornell, 2004) and therefore changing habits can take some time.

However the promotion of class discussion and the moderate success achieved in the Hong Kong

online study does allow for the possibility of going to the next level.

      How about face-to-face scenarios? Another Hong Kong study revealed significant

learning gains when switching content delivery in a Master's of Social Work program from

traditional lectures to a problem based learning (PBL) focus that was characterized by much discussion (Pearson, Wong, Ho & Wong, 2007). The increased use of group interaction was a challenge for the students, but the results in the Competence and Aptitude in Social Work (CASW) exam showed positive gains in four out of five areas: knowledge, social awareness, communication skills, leadership skills, and self-concept. The fifth area, values, did not show a gain but this was due to values beginning at a high level in the first place. What is interesting about this study is that not only did the scores on the CASW improve after discussions were increased, but the self-reporting of students also indicated a benefit from having to be more interactive, even if it students also reported that this was difficult for them (Pearson, et al., 2007).

In terms of face-to-face settings, one instructor teaching in China for the first time found that although she designed many interactive activities, her Chinese students failed to participate. A simple redesign of the activities from traditional lecture-centered to a more interactive model was not enough, even though scaffolding was provided. She then decided to get the students involved in the design of interactive activities with a much better result (Zhang & Head, 2010).

The fact that Western methods are tried out in Eastern settings demonstrates an interest in interactive learning, as well as shows that even back home this is a skill that needs some patience, practice and design. The next section will take a brief look at studies of CKT students in the Western university system and show evidence of their successful adaptation to Western methods.

Evidence of CKT Students' Success in Western Settings

What evidence however is there to support the notion that CKT students can become more participatory in Western universities? Unfortunately there is scant research on this topic to date. There is even less research on how Korean students in particular navigate the oral

participation waters. Therefore Lee (2009) looked at the oral participation of six Korean

graduate students in U.S. universities. Analyzing data collected from both formal and informal

interviews as well as observational notes and transcripts of actual class discussions, he concurred

with the rest of the literature in citing socio-cultural values and language proficiency as the two

critical factors that must be addressed for increased oral interaction. However Lee (2009) further

noted that the student's perception of their own language proficiency was lower than his

perception of their abilities. He also noted that the Korean concept of keeping *chaemyon*, (face

saving) with its hierarchical structure in regards to age, gender, and position, further complicated

the issue of talking in class, noting that peers and instructors reactions to Korean students'

comments had a large impact on their willingness to speak (Lee, 2007). It should be noted

however, that other Asian cultures also have face saving behaviors, as do Westerners. The

difference is that Western face saving is more of an individual concern, where Asian face saving

is more group oriented according to some (Du-Babcock & Babcock, 2000).   However Lee,

(2007) seems to be saying that the complexities of keeping *chaemyon* present an even higher

hurdle for Korean international students.   Furthermore, attendance to face saving concerns also

shows that contextual factors have a great impact on behavior.

In a study of online learning of Chinese students in a Canadian university course Zhao

and McDougall (2008) interviewed six Chinese students in their native Mandarin language about

their perceptions about class participation. The structure of the online format was sufficient to

encourage about four to five posts per week for the Chinese students, which was close to the

number of posts from the Westerners, however once again it was the socio-cultural factors that

were mentioned above the actual language issues as the most critical factors (Zhao &

McDougall, 2008). Understanding social cues, jokes, cultural idioms and stories, and even the

Western methods of discourse were reported to be difficulties. The study also reported that the same difficulties that were present in face-to-face class discussions were mentioned in the online context (Zhao & McDougall, 2008). Often though, an asynchronous online discussion affords advantages for the CKT student that a synchronous face-to-face situation lacks, namely face-saving and time. The importance of the instructor and structure was also mentioned as a factor, as it has been in the previously mentioned studies (Au-Yeung, 2004; Ku, Pan, Tsai & Cornell, 2004; Pearson, et al., 2007; Lee, 2007; Zhao & McDougall, 2008).

Perhaps adaptation can be accomplished without completely disregarding one's cultural habits. In a study of CKT students' adaptation to Western practices in a United Kingdom university, it was discovered that rather than completely adapting to the Western practices, CKT students crafted a compromise or a *Middle Way* (Durkin, 2008). This meant that CKT students met Western instructors half way as they became more participatory, but did not allow themselves to become harshly critical or cynical with classmates, even if they disagreed with them. Being successful in participation therefore can be accomplished without foregoing one's cultural identity. Although the nature of this research problem is truly a complicated one, there is a portion of it that instructors can and should address, which leads to the next section.

How Can Instructional Design Address This Issue?

Most instructional design models have a step that analyzes learners' prior knowledge, skills, or experience (Dick & Carey, 1990; Gagne, 1965; Kemp, 1985; Merrill, 2001; Molenda, 2003). Perhaps what is missing in these models however is consideration of the learners' cultural backgrounds, in addition to their knowledge and skills. Instructional design has not traditionally been particularly attentive to cultural issues (Henderson, 1996) however the rise of online global learning has now made instructors more aware of the need to consider cultural

issues in course design. Online learning therefore has attempted to address cultural concerns due to its desire to attract a global clientele (Henderson, 1996). Furthermore, it seems that online learning research has continued to expand to attend to almost every aspect of discussion dynamics (Brem, 2002; Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Lan, Cooper, Ahern, Shaw, & Liu, 2006). Therefore online discussion formats, although still relatively new compared to face-to-face discussions, may be able to inform and improve face-to-face discussions as indicated by Figure 7 below.
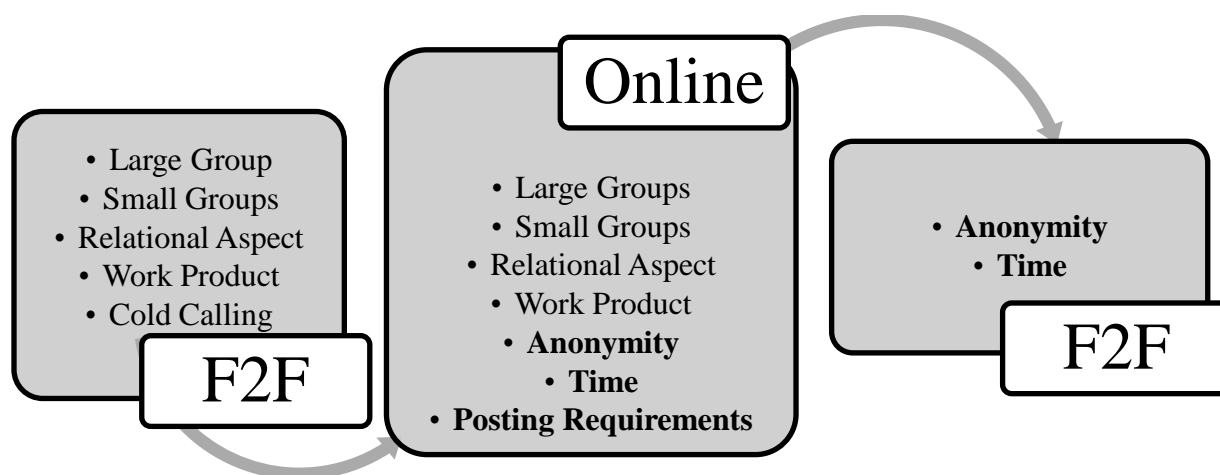
Figure 7. Face-to-face and online discussions: Learning from each other

Unique Components of Online Discussions

Online discussions are a relatively new phenomenon; their advent was as recent as 1989 when 1500 students participated in them through the Open University (Harisim, 2001). They began by copying face-to-face structures such as the use of the small group via break rooms, and the provision of instructor feedback. However, online discussions have three components that give them a slight advantage over face-to-face discussions for increasing participation: anonymity, time, and posting requirements. Therefore these three items will be considered in terms of their feasible use in face-to-face settings.

Posting requirements.

The usual protocol for online learning is to have specific questions that are clearly tied to a chapter or section of the readings, a required number of posts and replies to classmates in some time frame, and criteria for the quality of posts (Brem, 2002). A quantitative analysis can be done instantly on the number of posts and replies, so that an instructor has a constant tally of who is talking, how much they are talking, and even when they are talking (Gilbert & Dabbagh, 2005). However the depth of the talking is something that is left to the instructor to evaluate; reaching the numerical goal for posting does not always correlate with thoughtful posts. Most face-to-face settings do not specify a number of required comments or replies to classmates' comments (Vonderwell & Zachariah, 2005). To do so in real time would add so much pressure that it would probably not enhance participation, therefore this does not appear to be a structure that would translate well to a face-to-face setting.

Bean and Peterson (1998) however contend that grading participation communicates its value, as well as gets students talking. They therefore advocate that counting and evaluating responses can be an effective method in face-to-face classes. They have developed a system of both counting and weighing student comments in face-to-face settings that includes cold calling, which may not be optimal for CKT students (Liu, 2001). Furthermore such a system appears to be rather labor intensive for the instructor, and finally it seems to take the instructor out of the moment and into a more record keeping role.

One study of the structure of online discussions found that posting requirements actually had a negative effect on meaningful interaction (Gilbert, & Dabbagh, 2005). Apparently students were paying more attention to the requirements (which included citations from the reading) and were not making inferences or co-constructing knowledge (Gilbert, & Dabbagh,

2005).   Requiring a number of posts in online discussions may appear to increase participation, but this may be a red herring. Before face-to-face settings copy this structure from online learning, it should be noted that the capabilities of an online class management system to tally posts do not mean that such tallies are useful or pedagogically sound, or that the posts themselves contribute to learning. Therefore this aspect of online discussion formats is not recommended as a helpful strategy for face-to-face discussions, as indicated by its omission from the last box in Figure 7 (page 41).   However, online discussions do have two other unique components that can increase participation, namely, time and anonymity.

Anonymity.

Online discussions have advantages of anonymity, which can lead to a free expression of divergent or previously unspoken thoughts (Harism, 200; Kassop, 2003). While there are occasions where online learning discussion groups have students or instructors who know each other, many times there is some element of anonymity. While some would say that good discussion is dependent on established relationships, others contend that the anonymous status of being behind the cyber curtain can give some groups of students the freedom to speak without fear of intimidation or awkwardness that can be attached to face-to-face situations (Felker 2001; Paloff & Pratt, 1999). Sometimes students are not even aware of their classmates' gender, culture or age, unless that person shares contextual information in their posts. Often this means that those who may feel marginalized in face-to-face settings will speak on in an online discussion (Kassop, 2003).   Face-to-face settings would have difficulty in replicating this anonymity; however there are also ways to conduct a discussion in a face-to-face setting so that some anonymity can be maintained. For example small groups can designate a leader to present discussion points back to the large group without divulging whose they are. Also exercises can

be conducted to uncover every possible perspective, without students having to necessarily share which one is theirs. This is often done when arguments and counter arguments are part of the required response; it is not imperative that students disclose their preferred opinion if they choose not to (Nussbaum, Hartley, Sinatra, Reynolds, & Bendixen, 2004).

Some of these strategies do take more planning than coming to class and asking "What did you think of the chapter?" This was Bonwell & Eison, 1991) point in their study of interactive learning; the strategies that were low risk to the instructor and students, such as structured discussion, required more planning, and the strategies that were high risk to the instructor and students, such as the "Tell me what you thought" questions required less planning. However they do not take a huge amount of time and the facilitation of such strategies can be assigned to students rather than to the instructor.

Time.

Tiene (2000) found that students responded positively to the asynchronous aspect of online discussions because it gave them time to read comments and think about the points of view of their classmates, and their own ideas about the issues. Others mentioned that asynchronous online discussions provided students with time to reflect and think (Hara, Bonk and Anjeli, 2000). This is especially important for ESOL international students who can use resources such as online dictionaries, even during a synchronous discussion, without others knowing about it.

How do face-to-face discussions address the time factor? It seems that face-to-face settings have difficulty providing these same affordances. However there are ways that face-to-face discussions can be designed so that more time is afforded students who need it. Some instructors assign discussion questions the week before, just as is done in online learning

(McKeachie, 1994). In this way ESOL students can work ahead and bring drafts of their answers to class. Another strategy is to post a question and then give time to compose an individual answer that is then shared in the small group (Webb, 1992). Providing a detailed rubric as well as giving questions ahead of time, increasing wait time, and even using email as a way to get the upcoming face-to-face discussion started (Bean & Peterson, 1998). These ahead of time strategies seem feasible, but often in class wait time is not easily done. Pausing to be quiet in discourse is not a usual Western practice, and therefore can be a bit awkward.

Using Cultural Knowledge

It seems that the final element for instructional design and CKT students is that of being informed of elements of their culture that relate to class participation, and incorporating them into the design. Rather than criticizing cultural or educational values , instructors can utilize them. For example, respect is a trait that can be used in course design to the advantage of CKT students. Already there has been mention of the importance of the instructor for designing and facilitating class discussions (Webb, 2009; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Likewise instructors whose courses contain discussion want full participation (Ku, et al. 2004; Lee, 2007). Additionally, the fact that many CKT learners place so much value on the instructor (Liu, 2001) indicates that they may follow his or her lead, given the right circumstances, even if they are led out of their comfort zone.

Keeping harmony has also been mentioned as an important CKT value (Biggs, 1996, Watkins & Biggs, 2001), although it may actually be more of an educational habit. No matter what the origin of this trait, perhaps rather than asking CKT students to directly challenge instructors or peers, class discussions could be designed in such a way that asks students to see if they can come up with all the varying perspectives that this topic entails, regardless of whether

or not they agree with them. In this way the instructor is giving CKT students an opportunity to showcase their critical thinking skills about the topic, without compromising a cultural value or expecting long-held educational habits to be forsaken in a short time span. Spatariu, Hartley, Schraw, Bendixen, & Quinn, (2007) found that actually requiring arguments and counter-arguments in online discussions contributed to a more robust discussion; without such a requirement students tended to shy away from challenging each other, and the discussions were considered weak. A culturally sensitive adaptation of this strategy could be to have students list all of the arguments and counter-arguments on a given topic, rather than directly challenge fellow students.

Because CKT students are often too modest to push their ideas forward, especially in a competitive manner, they often sit silent in class discussions (Tani, 2005), but with some guidance from the instructor to Western students about giving each group member a chance to speak, they may be able to overcome this barrier as well.

To conclude this section on culturally informed design, it seems that CKT students are very good thinkers, but perhaps not very good salesman when it comes to pushing themselves or their ideas forward. However using the aforementioned structures and support is not disruptive to Western classmates. Similar to the railings outside of classroom buildings, these supports are quite benign; they do not interfere with those who do not need them. Perhaps courses therefore should be designed with the less participatory student in mind, no matter what his or her cultural heritage, rather than around the assertive Western student.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Although online learning continues to grow, face-to-face discussions are still an important part of Western university education. Full participation however, is often a challenge

for some CKT students even though they are often not quiet in other contexts. Tackling this problem entails many factors, but the instructor seems to be the key player in designing discussions with the quiet learner in mind. If instructors are aware of cultural considerations, and are committed to a dynamic view of culture, they can design face-to-face discussions that can assist the CKT student, and this can yield benefits beyond deeper conceptual understanding. Fuller participation of the CKT students in our midst can assist them in their adaptation to their host country, as well as assist native students in intercultural competence. Therefore it seems smart to find ways to foster fuller participation of CKT students who are quiet in class. Perhaps insights gained in this study can transfer to quiet students of any culture—including Americans.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

During the spring of 2009 I conducted a pilot study which, like the current study, was a

qualitative, interpretive study (see Appendix A for details). I interviewed four female CKT

students, three graduate students from Korea and China, and one undergraduate student from

Singapore. My pilot study was based on the notion of contextually quiet CKT students and my

desire to find out why they were quiet, and what they thought would help them increase their

class participation. To guide my exploration I posed the following research questions:

1. What factors do Confucian Heritage Culture students credit for their classroom behavior?

2. What suggestions would Confucian Heritage Culture students make in order to increase

    their class participation?

To answer these questions, ten interview questions were designed, as seen in Appendix

B. An email request to participate was sent to the four participants, followed up by an email

consent form. These two documents were used again in the current study, and are included here

as Appendix C and Appendix D. Online text-based interviews were then set up and conducted

using the instant messaging platform preferred by the participants. These were planned as one

hour interviews; however all of my participants went over the allotted time due to their desire to

fully express their thoughts and feelings. I certainly did not find them to be quiet or reticent,

even though they had varying levels of English proficiency, as the data shows (see Appendix A).

In fact since the participants had more to say than the one hour allotted, the interview time was

extended and the time allotment for this study was also extended to allow for up to two hours for the interview.

Pilot Study Results

The complete pilot study results can be found in Appendix A of this proposal, including quotes from participants, and a discussion of those results. However a brief summary is presented in this section, followed by changes that were informed by the pilot study in the next section.

Two main themes arose from the data, that of internal motivation and external support. The participants were very motivated to speak up, but felt defeated after many unsuccessful attempts to become more conversant. They did not want to have extra attention showered on them, or treated like children, but they did want some support. This external support was further subdivided into the following four categories: structure, time, anonymity and relationship, (S.T.A.R.) as seen in Figure 8 below and described in Table 2 on the following page.
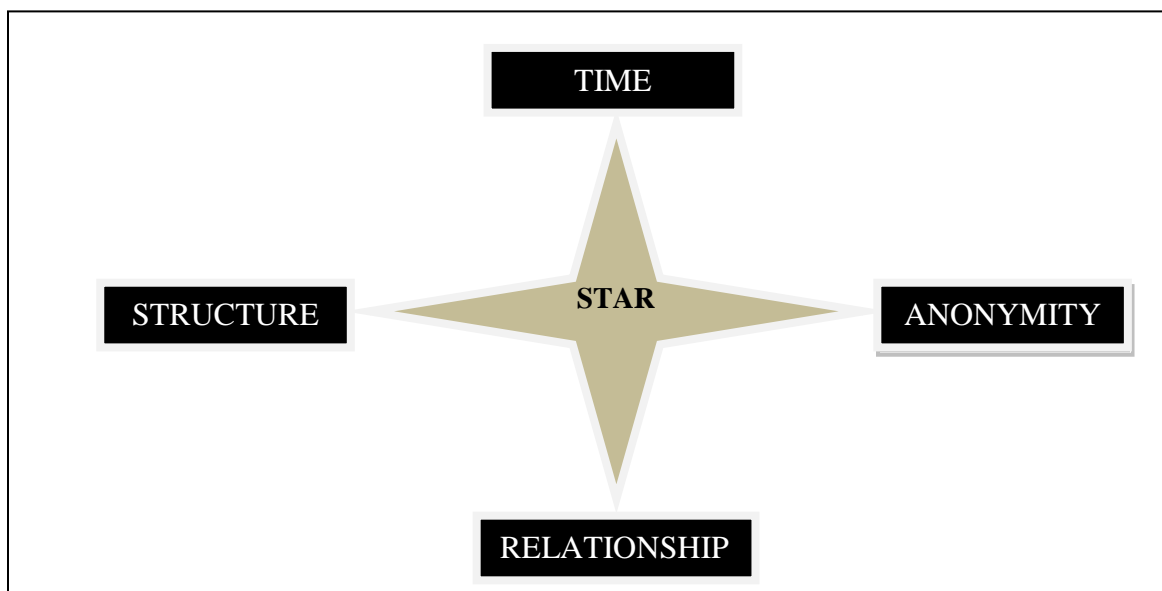
Figure 8. External support.

Table 2

External Support: Pilot Study Suggestions for Increasing Participation

Structure	Time	Anonymity	Relationship
small groups/pairs	more time to craft responses	anonymous written responses ok at times	encouraging comments
limited use of large group	slow down pace of dialogue	group responses ok	encouraging instructor email
no requirement for # of turns	get questions ahead of time	no cold calling	discourse etiquette
no quizzes for reading check	wait time	controversial not confrontational	slang explanations provided
student leaders	web-based discussion starter	no special attention in class	cultural sensitivity

While most of the suggestions are self-explanatory, some merit further explanation. One may assume that the participants needed more time due to language issues, and while that is certainly part of the equation, culture or educational habits may also be in play. This is because even the participants with very high language levels did not participate in class discussions due to not finding a chance to break into the fast paced dialogue. As mentioned in Chapter One,

CKT students are taught to listen more than speak, and to be polite and respectful of others. Tying this in to the relational aspect included in Table 2, this means that classmates may need to be aware of some of these differences in habits, and other cultural sensitivities; this task would probably come under the instructor's domain, at least initially.

Anonymity, as stated earlier, is a bit more difficult to achieve in face-to-face situations. The goal here would not be true anonymity, but that of lowering the risk of embarrassment (McKeachie, 1994) via small groups, or diffusing the power structure via student led discussions. The inclusion of student discussion leaders from the pilot study participants indicates a willingness to lead, and challenges passive stereotypes of CKT students. However a platform from which to lead (such as the designation of being the discussion leader for that week) are necessary supports for leadership roles. These two categories, time and anonymity correspond to the two components mentioned earlier as advantages of online learning.

The other two categories mentioned by the participants, structure and relationship, are components of both online and face-to-face discussions. CKT students did not enjoy free open discussions where there was no leader, and no clear direction. Since it takes time to construct a good response in one's second language, knowing the direction of the discussion was important. In terms of the relational aspect, McKeachie (1994) suggests a welcoming smile, or a follow-up comment from information gleaned on first day introductions, to put students at ease. While these are helpful, the participants suggested that additional relationship components could be helpful.

In this vein, one of the CKT participants composed a brief three sentence email that she thought would be helpful for instructors to send to their students. I thought of other scripts that could be sent to students, even if no prior contact had been established, and composed a

companion to the email the participant created. Table 3 shows the participant composed email and the companion email written by me.

Table 3

_____

Encouragement from the Instructor: Three Sentence Email
_____

Participant composed:

I can tell that you're very engaged in the lecture and what is going on in class. In looking at the work you've done for me, I also believe that you have some great thoughts on this topic that you can share with the class during our discussion times. How do you feel about that?

Researcher composed:

I noted that you are from _____. I look forward to hearing your perspectives in our class discussions. Often our international students help us to think of things that we overlook. Let me know if I can assist you as we learn together this semester.

Pre and Post Pilot Study Model

In considering current models for face-to-face discussions, I have sorted the often used

structures into a balance scale with challenging structures on one side and supportive structures

on the other as seen below in Figure 9.
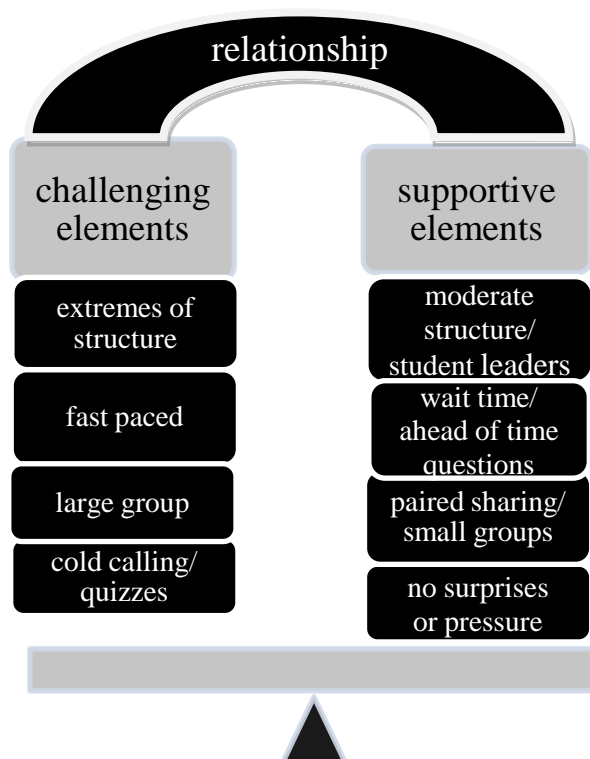
Figure 9. Current model for face-to-face discussions.

The dichotomy in Figure 9 is not meant to suggest good and bad strategies nor good and

bad motives on the part of instructors. The strategies on the left side of the figure may not

present any challenges to motivated students who are also assertive. However, the items on the

left side of the diagram were mentioned by the pilot study participants as those that inhibited

their participation. Therefore the model is intended is to highlight the variety of structures that

face-to-face discussions can employ, the differences in difficulty that certain elements present for

the less participatory student, and the philosophical differences of discussion management. On the challenging side are structures that demonstrate the two extremes of either high or low control. High control structures are often employed to motivate students to come to class prepared, but as mentioned earlier can have an adverse effect on CKT students. Low control structures can leave CKT students feeling like they have no direction and also fail to provide needed support.

On the other side are supportive structures that attend to student needs for structure, time, and anonymity. The relationship aspect is one area where face-to-face discussions have a potential advantage over online formats, and this advantage can be accrued to both the challenging or more supportive elements. For example, students will often complain about a particular instructor as *hard*, but because they like him or her, will be quick to say so, and even to recommend that instructor to their colleagues. Therefore the relational aspect of face-to-face discussions is shown at the top of the figure as one that can give balance to face-to-face settings even when some of the more challenging methods are used.

Based on the pilot study results a different model is proposed for face-to-face class discussions, one designed for the motivated but less participatory student. In this model, the challenging elements are removed and the supportive ones are kept in place. The idea is that the removal of challenging elements will encourage the less participatory student to talk, but will not inhibit the assertive or talkative student. Unfortunately the abandonment of the more high control elements may leave the unmotivated student behind. However in the absence of a perfect model that can help the less participatory students, not harm the talkative ones, and at the same time, push the unmotivated ones, it seems that the scales tip in favor of the motivated students, both assertive or quiet, especially in graduate education. Therefore, based on the pilot study

results, and existing face-to-face and online structures, the following model was created, as seen below in Figure 10. This figure shows the scale tipping in favor of the motivated student, which includes those who are assertive as well as those who are less participatory.
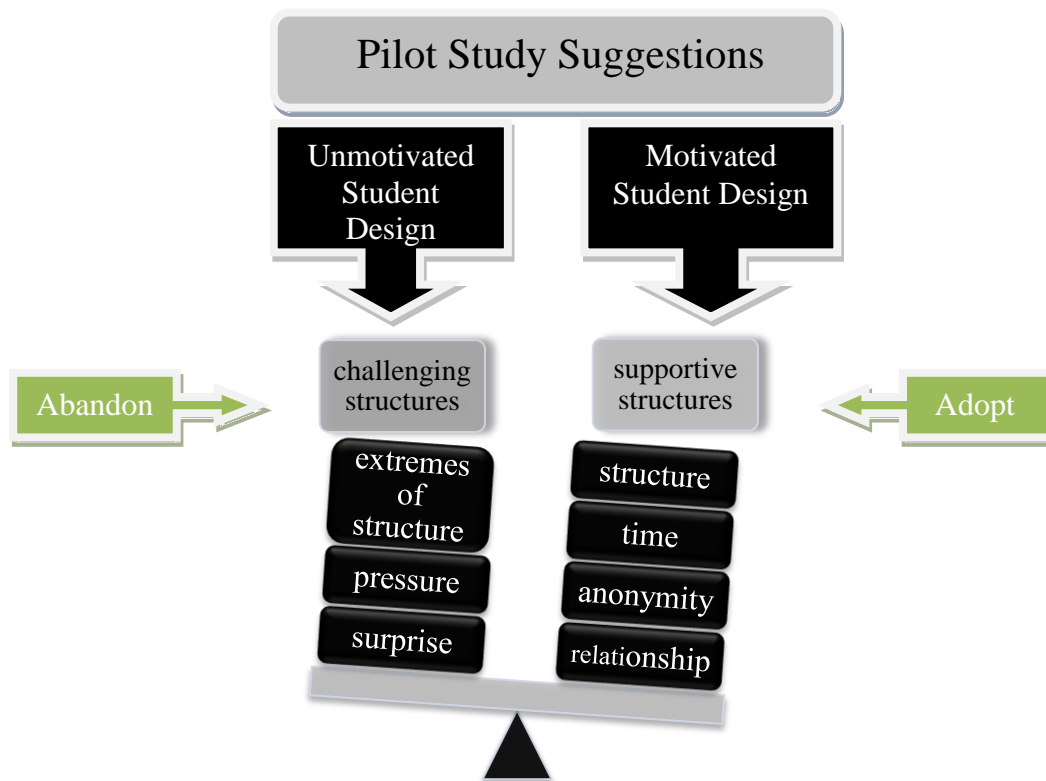
Figure 10. Motivated student model for face-to-face discussions.

Post-Pilot Study Changes in Research Design

Not only did the pilot study yield a new model for class discussion, but it also revealed the need for several changes to the research design of the proposed study; in fact six changes were made as seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Post-Pilot Study Changes

_____

Pilot Study	Dissertation Study
one hour interview	two hour interviews
4 participants	6 participants
female participants	female & male participants
ten interview questions (see Appendix B)	six interview questions (see Appendix C)
Confucian Heritage Culture Students in title	*Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese* Students in title
Western in title	*Discussion-Oriented* in title

The pilot study used one hour text-based interviews, but all the participants had so much to say that one hour was not enough. Therefore I redesigned the current study to allow for more time. Another change informed by the pilot study is an increase from four to six participants, and the inclusion of male participants. I felt that having male perspectives might help me get a

broader picture of the participation issues for CKT students, and I also wanted to see if there were gender differences in the data. My informal observations and conversations suggest that there are; however both genders seem to struggle with class participation.

I also reduced the number of interview questions from ten to six (see Appendices B and C), omitting questions that were either too specific or that were covered in similar questions. Although the current study used some of the same questions as the pilot study, the number of questions was reduced due to the pilot study results indicating that lots of interview questions were neither necessary nor helpful to the discussion. Most of the participants wanted to get right to the heart of the matter, and often included supporting details without any prodding from me. Therefore fewer questions let the participants talk about what they wanted to talk about, in the context of the more open-ended questions, which I kept for the proposed study. Giving participants more autonomy in what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it seemed important to the design of the study. Perhaps my concern that I would not be able to get all my participants talking in a formal setting caused me to come to the pilot study with more questions than needed. That concern was unfounded as the Pilot Study results (Appendix A) demonstrates.

A title change was also made from the pilot study to the proposed study. In order not to put too much focus on the Confucian culture itself, but rather on the participation of certain groups of students from countries with a Confucian background, Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) students was changed to Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese (CKT) students. Furthermore the term *Western* was changed to *discussion oriented* as an acknowledgement to the fact that Eastern countries also have discussion in their classes.

Research Design

Since the thoughts, feelings, and suggestions of my participants were the target data, a qualitative study was conducted. As Creswell (2007) states, qualitative research is appropriate when one wants detailed information that can only be gotten from individual stories, and further, when empowering a group to share those stories. Qualitative research "produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 10-11). It further utilizes the personal experience, and even the personality of the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This has led to criticisms that it is not *scientific*; however qualitative research does not make empirical claims. Understanding is the heart of qualitative research (Schwandt, 1999).

Additionally a qualitative study has an interpretive lens; I wanted to listen to the stories and opinions of my participants with a goal of gaining some understanding of their experiences in regards to oral discussions. In education, interpretive research focuses on "describing and interpreting phenomena related to human communication, learning, performance, and the use of technology" (Reeves, 1995, p.5). This study focused on the communication and learning issues of a particular group of students. An interpretive study seeks to understand participants' perspectives; therefore the use of interviews is standard in interpretive research, (as are case studies, and observations).

I chose interviews as the best method to collect data for my study for several reasons. Interviews are a particularly good fit for interpretive qualitative research since they are an essential tool for getting emic perspectives. While surveys allow for a larger sample size, I wanted to get in-depth information from each participant. Gathering first hand information from a participant however is more than simply an oral survey (Oakley, 2003). Much more than

merely asking questions and getting answers (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), the interview is often a delicate social interaction where someone wants something that only the other can provide. Therefore how it is conducted or negotiated can have an impact on the answers, and therefore the method and style becomes just as important as the questions. It is the relational aspect of an interview that I hope to use to my advantage as a researcher. My in-depth knowledge of many Asian cultures has helped me to get CKT students to comfortably share their thoughts with me in informal conversations, and I found this to be the case in the interviews.

Methods

Online semi-structured text-based interviews with time stamps were the chosen method for my study, and as mentioned earlier, these interviews were conducted in a two hour time frame (see protocol in Appendix C). Questions were sent via the chat screen one at a time to the participant until they felt they were ready to move to the next one. Participants were given a choice of spreading their two hour interview over two dates if that was more convenient for them in order to be sensitive to their time constraints, however all preferred to do the interview in one setting. Furthermore, participants could choose to stop an interview in progress and complete it at a later time if they wished. I knew that it is often tiring to create cogent thoughts in real time in one's second language, and therefore wanted to be able to give my participants time to refresh and reflect if needed.

Research Site

The research site was a virtual one and included current CKT graduate students who are studying in the U.S. who were reachable via an Internet based instant messaging system. Four of the participants were graduate students in the college of education and one was a computer

science graduate student in a large southeastern state university; one participant was a communications major in a smaller southeastern university.

Participants

I had a total of six CKT graduate student participants, three male and three female, from the countries of China, Korean and Taiwan. These countries represent the top three countries with international students at UGA (UGA Fact Book, 2009) and are part of the top four CKT countries in the U.S. (Open Doors, 2010). All were sojourners during their study in the U.S., and not permanent residents of the U.S.

Furthermore, each participant was an acquaintance, friend, or colleague on various levels and their participation in a formal interview came out of informal conversations with them previous to this study. These helpful conversations have led me to hone my study and my interview questions in particular to those that are of most importance for increased participation.

Last of all I have only included participants who I have experienced as somewhat proficient in English. The TOFEL score is not always indicative of proficiency; I wanted to select participants who, regardless of their TOFEL score, had been observed by me to have high enough language skills for me to be able to understand their reasoning even if I at times needed a bit of clarification. The reason for this is to eliminate the variable of language proficiency as a barrier to speaking in class. As mentioned earlier, these participants may still *feel* that they are not proficient.

Each participant has been given a pseudonym to preserve their privacy and to aid the reader in recalling their demographic description. Therefore CF, KF, and TF represent the Chinese female, Korean female, and Taiwanese female participants, and CM, KM, and TM represent the Chinese male, Korean male, and Taiwanese male participants.

Female Participants

The South Korean female participant, KF, is a twenty-seven year old master's student who has been in America for four years and currently works at large, prestigious university in a large city in the southeastern U.S. Her academic background for one of her master's degrees was in the humanities, and the other was in computer science. KF is very polite, and seems soft-spoken but she has very strong opinions about the topic of participation, as the data will show. I actually knew her the least of all the participants, but she wrote to me to volunteer for my study. She seemed eager to get her opinions into the record. KF was not too focused on participation but on accomplishing her academic goals. She did not seem to mind not have a lot of interaction with her American classmates, and did not seem to worry about their lack of interest. She did have quite a lot to say to me in our interview, even giving suggestions to instructors.

TF was similar to KF in that she is not very participatory but unlike KF, she wishes to be. She has had a very strong and successful academic career as a doctoral student in the field of education, and has beautiful spoken English. We met very early in my first year of graduate school, and I often asked her about her native country of Taiwan. I had taught Taiwanese students in my post at the international school, and had adult Taiwanese friends, but this was the first time that I had a professional colleague who was Taiwanese. In addition to being very bright, TF was very chatty and funny once I got to know her. In fact we would often chat online, meet for lunch, ride to conferences together, and interview each other about our respective cultures. I found her to be a valuable source of information in regards to the delicate political dance between China and Taiwan. Furthermore she was very interested in my time in China and my impressions of CKT students. I was lucky enough to become close enough friends with TF so

that we would ask for and do favors for one another, and we would make jokes and share confidences.

CF, my Chinese female participant, seems quite different from TF although both are ethnically Chinese. CF was my study partner during our time spent in our respective doctoral programs, (she is studying social studies education) and our afternoons spent at the library included many conversations about life in our respective countries. CF was my oldest participant and perhaps that is why she had such strong opinions. She was unusual in her criticism of American classmates; I usually found Chinese to be too polite to do so. However we had become very close as we pursued our doctoral studies and had shared many private struggles over the last two years. At the end of our interview she told me that she would not have been so frank with me had I not been her best friend. I truly appreciated the free and open exchange of ideas we have enjoyed in our time as graduate students and I feel that we have both challenged each other to consider each other's point of view on many issues.

Male Participants

CM, an MBA graduate with an undergraduate degree in computer science, is from China and is married with one child. He speaks in soft, gentle tones but had very strong opinions and confidence to share them with others. He is also very knowledgeable in his academic field (computer science), as well as very politically astute. He often expresses his very strong feelings about his country's Communist government and these comments often seem to be a matter of concern for his wife, who has stated that she hopes that his speech will not get them into trouble back home. He is one of the few younger generation Chinese I have met who will speak ill of the government freely with foreigners. In my experience, students from China feel either that they have to be careful about what they say, or they care so little about politics that they have no

interest in discussing it at all. This makes CM unusual, and even though I always enjoyed hearing his opinions and ideas, I felt a bit worried for him, knowing the Chinese government as I do. We had the kind of close relationship that allowed me to express that to him, but he let me know that he was so happy to freely express his ideas while here in the U.S. that I shouldn't worry.

KM, a doctoral student in the College of Education, was someone who surprised me; this quiet Korean man was a bit older than the other students and very traditional, but he also initiated contact with me to ask for favors or to invite me to some of his academic meetings, and even to his home once. We often talked about his family, but we also talked about my research topic. It seems he was intrigued by it from the first day that I mentioned it to him and he was very vocal about how I should go about forming my study. I found the quickness with which we became friends, and the way he treated me to be a bit unusual for a Korean man in that it was friendly and informal, and included the kind of openness and frankness that is found among old friends. I attributed it to our mutual respect, and to the cultural capital earned by my many years of working with Korean students.

TM was a young Taiwanese doctoral student from the College of Education, who worked on several projects with me. During that time we became close friends and our age and culture differences did not seem to be a barrier at all. We enjoyed the kind of relationship where we could confide in one another, and help each other whenever possible. Since we both like funny things we laughed a lot together, and discussed every aspect of cross cultural differences, including dating, families, habits, and puzzling issues. Where friendship is concerned I do not think of age, race, politics or gender, and I tend to forget about my own age and gender. This was brought home to me when I realized that I thought of TM as my young friend, but he

thought of me as his American mom (although I worked very hard to always treat him with the respect due a colleague). Since we were good friends TM felt free to give me input on how to design and improve my study, which I appreciated; I did the same for him which he seemed to appreciate. He did not participate in my pilot study but has given me so much input in informal conversations that I wanted to get that data entered into the record for this study.

Data Collection and Instruments

An email request to participate was sent to the six participants, followed up by an email consent form. These two documents were also used in the pilot study, and are included here as Appendix D and Appendix E. Online text-based interviews were set up and conducted using the instant messaging platform preferred by the participants. The interview questions are available in Appendix C and seen in Table 5 below which shows an alignment of the interview questions with the research questions.

Table 5

Alignment of Interview Questions with Research Questions

_____

Research Questions   Interview Questions
_____

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. What factors do CKT students attribute to their current classroom participation levels?	1. How would you describe your current participation level in class discussions? 2. Can you talk about anything that prevents you from participating more fully in class discussions? 3. Do you think CKT students are able to adapt to discussion oriented classes?
2. What suggestions would CKT students make that could increase their class participation?	4. What has helped you to adapt to discussion oriented classes? 5. If you were going to teach a class that included discussion, how would you get the CKT students to talk more? 6. What would you like to say to students or instructors that might help you participate more in class discussions?

It may seem odd to use online text-based interviews to conduct research about face-to-face behavior; however there are four reasons to support the use this method. First and foremost, it made sense to remove as many possible barriers to communication as possible. Furthermore since I have seen that behavior is often contextually situated, I felt it was important to seek an environment that would be optimal for getting participants who may be less participatory in an formal interview as opposed to our informal conversations. Online text-based interviews allow for more time to respond with reduced anxiety. I wanted to use a vehicle that would allow for the pauses that either language or thinking required, with as little awkwardness as possible.

A second reason for using online text-based interviews is that the participants all had varying skill levels of spoken English, and a text-based interview allows me to focus on the ideas rather than on the language levels of participants. Even though the language skills were sufficient, some participants have more issues with pronunciation than others, and I wanted to place everyone on a more level playing field, and eliminate any frustrating or distracting elements from the interview. A third reason was that my participants were not all local and I did not want to risk disruptions in the interview due to audio glitches. A fourth reason was that my participants were all very comfortable with text chatting since it is something that they do regularly, both now and as far back as high school, and for some, middle school.

Broad open-ended questions were used in the interview, with the freedom and flexibility that allowed participants to pose questions or offer additional information. See Appendix C for the actual interview questions.

Data Analysis

Glaser & Strauss (1967) developed the constant comparative method as part of their grounded theory approach. Although not using grounded theory per se, I have found their

constant comparative method to be a very suitable method to analyze cross cultural interview data. This is due to its open mindedness; the researcher comes to the data without pre-set categories. I don't think of my analysis as uncovering or developing a new theory, but rather uncovering *whatever is there*. I recall one of my qualitative research professors telling me that many people say they are using grounded theory methods, but few are actually developing theory (J.R. Hill, October, 2008, personal communication). The constant comparative method has the researcher comparing the data to itself, to data from other interviews, to existing literature, to pilot study results, to his or her own experiences, and to current theory and practice, and continually making adjustments as necessary (Glaser, 1965).

I began by reading the transcripts four times without pre-set categories, but noting initial impressions as they arise from the data. After getting an overview, I did an open line by line coding of the data, going over it more slowly and carefully. The next step was to look over the codes and arrange them into categories. At this point I saw that all of the responses fell into one of more categories of background, classroom dynamic, language or personality. While the categories helped delineate the responses into areas, they did not offer a conceptual grid with which to view the overall analysis. I wanted to find abstract ideas, rather than mere categories. I therefore reviewed the line by line coding once more and began to see that regardless of the category, all the codes could be represented by one of the following three themes: resolve, consideration, and context. More information about the categories and themes will be presented in Chapter Four.

I also used Wordle (Feingberg, 2009), a free online tool that turns text into a graphic design to get a visual of the participants' words. I felt that a visual representation of their words might help me to see what I may have missed textually. I entered the text for the twenty factors

that participants mentioned and received an interesting graphic of their words, shown below in Figure 11.

Figure 11. *Wordle of factors mentioned by participants.*

As I interacted with the data I also made notes about similarities and differences between it and the literature, the pilot study, and my own experience. I also noted what other participants had said and asked participants for their response to any items that seemed out of the ordinary, as explained in the next section.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability mean different things in a qualitative study than they do in a quantitative one. Qualitative researchers prefer to use the terms credibility, confirmability, trustworthiness, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Notice that these terms are not quantifiable, but rather depend upon the researcher's due diligence to honesty and rigor. Findings from a qualitative study might surprise a research community, but they should be believable. When I conducted my pilot study I compared the results with what I had read and

experienced and while some items never occurred to me (one participant worried that the Americans would think she did not come to class prepared), all the results seemed credible. It was especially important to ask participants about items mentioned by fellow participants, and then compare their answers. For example when one participant mentioned the need for instructors call on CKT students to make them feel included, I asked the other participants about that as part of the conversation and more agreed that they would be fine with that under certain conditions.

Additionally, to increase the validity of the study, a member check was done using two Ph.D. students from China and Taiwan who had participated in the study. They both had qualitative research experience, as well as experience as international graduate students. These participants were kind enough to review my analysis, and provide feedback on both the categories and on the data itself. Although they did not agree with all of the participant views, they did not find them to be unbelievable. They further critiqued my analysis, and offered their comments on the themes I had selected. The themes of resolve, and consideration for example, were not ones that had previously occurred to them, but they agreed that they were a good fit for the data.

Credibility as a validity check may indicate that it is not good to find something too out of the ordinary in qualitative research. This goes with the territory; it seems that we can be as skeptical as our critics, and perhaps we should be. Although I found some surprising results, I did not find any that were not believable. For example KF noted that she was not that interested in participating, and even though that type of student was not found in the literature, this finding did not strain credulity. In fact when viewed in the context of her other comments during the interview, her comments made sense.

Qualitative research also focuses on trustworthiness or instilling confidence in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This places the responsibility on the researcher, but I think this is also true for quantitative studies as well. For my study, I try to use utmost care in representing the views of my participants, and stay as close to the data as possible. This is why I have included so many complete quotes in the results section, rather than restating what the participants said. (I found their own words to be powerful and compelling, and therefore wanted to share them with the reader). The interpretation that I brought to their comments can be disputed, but their comments can be viewed by the reader, who can then make alternative interpretations.

An additional reliability factor is the conversational nature of my interviews, which made me part of the data. How can anyone be sure that I did not impact the study to skew the results? I could ask the same thing of quantitative research; often the type of questions or the response choices can influence the results. That is why I did not prefer to do a survey; my own experience with surveys is that they often exclude items that I consider important, as well as include items that I feel are of no consequence. The conversational nature of my interviews allowed participants to have more control over what they wanted to share with me.

Finally, my study was designed to listen to what the participants think and feel about a problem. The interpretive nature of my study therefore frees me up from trying to get a particular result. Doing so would not only be dishonest, but it would mean the loss of authentic data, which makes my entire study moot. Although I did come to the study with my own ideas, I did not mind finding items that did not agree with my own; I found the differences intriguing.

Limitations

Conducting a cross cultural qualitative study poses several limitations on a research study; two that quickly come to mind are the problem of generalizing results from such a small sample, and the cultural issues of an outsider studying a different cultural group. The first limitation about sample size is not only an issue for this study but for many qualitative studies. However the goal of qualitative research is to get a more in-depth picture of a smaller sample (Creswell, 2007). Doing a set of six interviews can hardly be seen as an adequate representation of such a large group, however as in most qualitative studies, the small sample size does not mean that the data is not relevant. With a group this large, even a quantitative study of 1,000 participants would be small. The goal therefore, is not to find out what all CKT students think, or to pretend that the data speaks for all, but to use the thoughts of the six participants to add to the body of research on this topic. Albeit this study is a very small twig to throw on the fire, but a comprehensive look at this topic requires both quantitative and qualitative studies.

The second limitation of doing cross cultural research is more of a concern. How can an outsider remove cultural barriers to get participants talking, when even the most informed outsider is often unaware of at least some cultural missteps? Understanding a particular culture sometimes means that one is aware of how much is not known or understood. I cannot be sure of removing all cultural barriers; I can however exploit my position as an outsider to politely push my participants to share their honest thoughts and suggestions. It is important to note that an insider who is part of the large cultural group may not have much in common with those in a small cultural group, even if both are from the same ethnic background. As mentioned earlier as Shanghai businessman may not feel a deep cultural connection to shepherds who live in the Mongolian grassland even though both are Chinese. Sometimes an outsider who has lived in the

small culture group can possess enough accurate knowledge to discuss and share ideas as well as hypothesize about behavior and its underlying causes (Blum, 2006). If an outsider has spent enough time in the field they may be able to use sympathetic introspection (Cooly, 1956), an idea that comes from the social sciences. The term means that the researcher has spent enough time with the participants' culture to be able to empathize and deeply understand their point of view. This type of understanding is needed if the researcher is to use not only the data of words and phrases, but also that of pauses, expressions, hesitations, joking, and even noticing what was not said (Witz, 2007).

A third limitation is that all of the participants are acquaintances, and some are close friends. Will they feel free to offer suggestions and even criticisms? Since the CKT student values the preservation of harmony, will this result in a desire to avoid conflict in the interview so that the relationship is preserved? To address this I used data collected from my pilot study, information shared via personal communication, and references from the literature as prompts during the interviews when those items clarified my questions. Having my participants comment on other data sources is a tool used in the constant comparative analysis method of qualitative research (Boeiji, 2002), and was used effectively in the pilot study. Rather than having participants respond only to my interview questions, they were able to respond to what other CKT students and participants have said. Agreeing or disagreeing with some unknown participant seemed to be a more comfortable method for CKT students who do not enjoy direct confrontation.

A fourth limitation is that an interpretive study does not guarantee specific results. Even though I am seeking suggestions for instructors, the participants may not give them to me; I am at the mercy of my participants to some degree. Once I got them talking some wanted to share

anecdotes that were not necessarily germane to my study. However they were important for helping them to speak freely and without hesitation and therefore I did not inhibit their free talk during the interview.

The last item is that using an instant messaging interview could mean that I cannot pick up on nuanced attitudes, and therefore I misread my participants' tone and comfort level. My pilot study participants were skeptical of using this platform with CKT students, but afterward told me that they thought it was effective and helpful, but every participant may not agree. I did not receive any negative comments during the current study about using text messaging, and I found all six participants to be extremely chatty.

Ethical Considerations

The study has two important ethical considerations. The most troublesome one is that I was asking for candid comments from two participants who live under a Communist regime, and I wanted to be careful not to leave them exposed in any way. For example, if I published my study, would I delete important, but politically incorrect comments from these two participants' transcripts? Even with the standard confidentiality protocols, one can never be sure that identities will be concealed. Additionally online interviews could be retrieved by a third party should someone want to take the time, trouble and expense to do so. To attend to this I spoke to my two participants from Communist countries in person and mentioned this constraint to see if they had any concerns. Only CM actually had negative comments about his county's political system, and I would probably alter his comments to protect him although he was not at all worried. He explained that as long as I did not publish my study in Chinese I had nothing to be concerned about. However I was not convinced, and will carefully review my study before submitting it for the electronic record, deleting comments if needed to protect my participant.

A second concern is that I am asking participants to share personal stories and struggles; some are even embarrassing or painful. Perhaps participants will feel overexposed after sharing some of these stories with me. How will I keep both the integrity of the data and also treat my participants with care? It seems that my conflict comes because I am an empathetic friend who they are willing to talk to, and whom they trust, but I am also a researcher trying to earn my degree. The word *exploitative* comes to mind. It would be upsetting if my interest in helping this group of students turned out to be harmful to them, but helped me to accomplish my academic goals. I can only offer my sincere effort to be thoughtful and careful with the data and to make sure that identifying details are excluded from any written report.

Researcher Assumptions/Subjectivites

I myself have been quiet in class at times, for a variety of reasons. Sometimes I wanted to talk but felt that I could not without being misunderstood. At other times I have simply been confused, under-prepared, or intimidated by fellow students or professors. Sometimes I have been struggling with a personal problem, and did not feel like talking. I know first-hand that it is difficult for instructors to accurately pinpoint causes when a student does not participate. To take this a step further, if an older, adult, native speaker such as I have experienced this phenomenon, then how much more has the CKT international student who is struggling with language and culture in addition to other items? I know I would have appreciated having someone act as if my participation would be valued. I wonder if CKT students would similarly enjoy someone taking an interest in what they have to say? I am assuming that they would, but this assumption, though informed from literature, personal experience and conversations with CKT students, may not be true for all CKT international students. However I have yet to find such a student, either in the literature or in my personal experience.

As far as subjectivities, the many friendships I have enjoyed with CKT friends and colleagues could have an impact on my study. Obviously my fondness for CKT students, and my belief that their full participation would bring a benefit to them and to their American colleagues is a bias. Additionally, when CKT people are undervalued or ignored, it bothers me. From my many personal conversations with CKT people, I know that it bothers them as well. As one Asian friend put it "Why do they [Westerners] think we don't have anything to say?" (A.K. Wang, personal communication, September, 2008). Being empathetic therefore is a subjectivity, although it is one that initiated my research interest in this topic.

Knowing my participants as colleagues and friends could also be something that interferes with the objectivity of the study. It is one thing to speak informally and vent to a friend about life's difficulties. It is quite another to do so in a formal interview and have others read your private thoughts. This drives me to take great care with the transcripts and any identifying information, as dictated by the Institutional Review Board of my university, and further compels me to sacrifice data in favor of privacy if the need arises, especially in the case of my participants from countries with limits on free speech, as mentioned earlier. I would not want to violate the trust of my participants in any way, for it was partially out of our relationship that I believe I was able to get so much rich and honest data.

Finally, I have a personal interest in helping to make Western educational settings more welcoming to foreign students. I now have a Singaporean daughter-in-law who has told me of her own struggles in class. This intelligent, young woman who is very social outside of class, and has many well-thought out and strong opinions, hardly said a word in class during her four years at a Christian college which she describes as a friendly place. This surprised me, and also made me hope that things will be better for my grandchildren

Logistics and Timeline

The logistics and timeline are shown below in Table 6.

Table 6

Logistics and Timeline

_____

Date	Task
September	Complete Prospectus draft & send to advisor
Early October	Revise prospectus
Late October	Send prospectus to committee, IRB revisions & re-submission via email
Early November	Prospectus meeting, IRB amendments submitted
Mid November	Participants sent email recruiting script & consent form after IRB approval, set up interviews, get instant messaging preferences & screen names
Late November	Begin interviews
December	Complete interviews, print transcripts, first reading of data
January	Repeated reading & coding of data, write results & discussion chapter, revise first three chapters
February	Proofread and send draft to advisor, revise, send to committee
March	Dissertation defense
April	Format check, electronic submission

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

While this chapter will show the results and its analysis via categories and themes that emerged from the data, the following chapter will discuss these themes in greater depth, as well as their implications for research and practice. The participant comments are the main feature in this section and therefore most of the text in this chapter consists of their quotations. My remarks are included to weave the data together in a coherent narrative that reveals its thematic development.

Categories and Sub-Categories

In terms of increasing participation levels for CKT students, four very broad categories emerged as items that impact class participation: background, classroom dynamics, language, and personality. These four broad categories include twenty sub-categories. For example background includes culture, education, family, and political constraints. Classroom dynamics include class structure, classmate behavior and attitudes, classroom environment, and instructors. The language category includes confidence, expression of ideas, pronunciation, understanding of slang and cultural references, and vocabulary. Personality includes attitudes, choices, feelings, motivation, preferences, and values.

Of course some of the sub-categories lend themselves to more than one category. *Values*, for example could be part of one's background or part of one's personality. For the purposes of this study, *values* were placed in the category that was referenced in the actual comment. For

example, if productivity was mentioned as something that Koreans value, it was filed under background, but if productivity was mentioned as something that a participant values, then the comment was placed in the personality category.

Likewise some of the data fit into several categories. For example a lack of confidence to speak in class could be a personality issue (shyness), a background issue (culture), or a language issue (pronunciation, expression of ideas, or vocabulary). Therefore some of the data were filed under more than one category, depending on participants' comments. Table 7 below shows the categories and sub-categories that emerged from the data.

Table 7

Categories and Sub-Categories

Category	Sub-Category
background	culture, education, family, political constraints
classroom dynamics	class structure, classmate attitudes, classmate behavior, classroom environment, instructor issues
language	confidence, expression of ideas, pronunciation, understanding of slang and cultural references, vocabulary
personality	attitudes, choices, feelings, motivation, preferences, values

Themes

Three recurring themes appeared throughout the data across all participants: consideration, context, and resolve. The first theme, *consideration* can be understood in terms of careful thought and deliberation. However it can also mean something that is kept in mind in decision making, and finally "thoughtful or sympathetic regard or respect" (dictionary.com, 2011) for others. In short consideration entails several levels of being mindful of one's actions and attitudes, and their impact on others. This theme was further divided into items that CKT students must consider, and items that they would like others to consider about them.

Context was mentioned in terms of its effect on participant behavior; although participants may have described themselves as shy or quiet, in certain contexts they did not appear to be so at all. Likewise those who described themselves as confident and able to converse seemed to lose these qualities in certain contexts. Moreover participants' frequent mention of the classroom environment and in particular the behavior and attitudes of classmates, led to the creation of this second theme.

The appearance of resolve emerged as a theme due to participants' remarks about their own success or failure to participate; some had the intention to do so, but gave up. Others, with great effort and determination, pushed through inhibiting factors. Some made it clear that they did not really have much intention to participate, only doing so when their grade depended on it. Although resolve seems to be dependent on context for some participants, that was not the case for all. Table 8 below shows the three themes and their connection to the data and the categories.

Table 8

Categories, Data, & Themes

Category	Data	Theme
background	can disregard at times, cultural guidelines changing, talkative outside the classroom, polite manners, lack of free speech, public behavior guidelines, trained to listen, not used to speaking up	context consideration
classroom dynamics	do not feel valued, do not wish to waste class time, excluded by unrelated topics, & fast pace, need explanations of cultural references, politely waiting for a chance, rudeness of classmates, difficult to connect	consideration context
language	thinking & speaking difficulties, vocabulary difficulties, lack of confidence, time, patience & interest of classmates	resolve consideration
personality	effort, intention, introverted, shy sometimes give up, will speak if necessary	resolve context

Additionally Figure 12 below shows the interaction of the four categories and the three themes. It is difficult to put responses into neat piles, as was mentioned earlier, and therefore the figure intends to show that all four categories may be in operation at once, with one affecting the other. Regardless of the categories however are the three themes of context, consideration, and resolve, noted at the bottom of the figure.
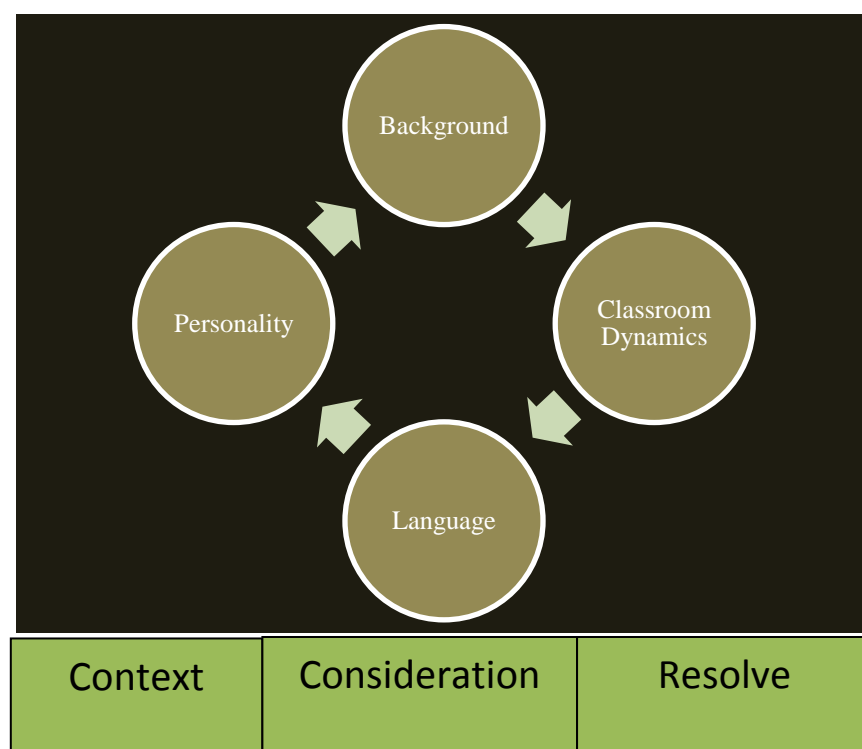
Figure 12. *Analysis: Categories and themes.*

Research Question One

The first research question was "What factors do CKT students attribute to their current classroom participation levels?" I began by asking participants to describe their current participation levels as a way to gather some baseline data, and to get the conversation started. Table 9 below shows their brief description of their current participation levels.   The rest of the detailed findings for Research Question One are presented by themes, beginning with resolve.

Table 9

Current Participation Levels

_____

Participant	Response
TF	used to listening
KF	not very talkative
CF	not much
CM	rare participation
TM	middle
KM	active participation

Resolve

Both CF and CM mentioned a desire and an intention to participate, and CF followed through with actions, but both were deterred by other factors. Although CF planned to participate, came to class prepared, and had excellent language skills, it seems that having intention and capability was insufficient for her success. The lack of response from her classmates discouraged her from speaking further.

> Most of the times in class it is free talking. What I mean is that students here are used to sharing their ideas freely. And classmates respond to others' talking so the conversations can go on. But after I speak, there isn't much response. There is no back and forth. Then I lose interest in talking. I don't know why and probably will never know why others do not have much response. I guess maybe they are not interested in what I am talking about.

Likewise, CM also came to class prepared with plans to participate. It seemed however that his intentions and best efforts were not realized most of the time.

> I personally think the discussion oriented class is better at encouraging creativity, so I tried my best to adapt to this style of class, but with language and introvert [*sic*] character as [*sic*] barrier, I felt it hard to change or maybe I was too old to change,[*sic*]. The effect of many years of education in China is hard to underestimated [*sic*].

TM's participation was also dependent on the class environment and language difficulties in connection with the assigned readings (not speaking); therefore his participation levels varied. "I tried to be more active in participation when I read all the reading assignments in class or I understand [*sic*] more about a specific topic we were discussing in class." He felt confident and capable most of the time, but said that could be deterred by classmate's behavior or comprehension of both academic and cultural topics, especially if he came to class unprepared. Likewise TF described herself as

> ...mostly a listener, especially in the big group setting. If it is a one on one interaction, I will probably say more. However, in a big group setting, there are many 'mouths and brains'...and sometimes I just don't feel like interrupting when others are in the middle of the [*sic*] sentence.

KM by contrast described himself as a very active participant compared to both native and non-native speakers even though he also described himself as an introvert. He also mentioned his language difficulties; of all six participants he was usually the most difficult to understand. He made no mention of the reception his remarks received however, or of being deterred by language difficulties (although he mentioned that he had them). He explained that he pushed himself to speak in every context whenever he had the opportunity.

I think... I believe I'm an active participant in a [*sic*]classroom compared to other

foreign students or native speakers. For example, now I'm taking a qual [*sic*] class. It

has around twenty students. The class requires lot of discussion in a whole group or

small group. In general I express my ideas and thoughts more often than other students.

I'm one of five students who actively engage in the activities. The reason is simple. I

always think that I need to improve my communication skills and knowledge in real

contexts. Classroom activity is only [*sic*] chance wherein I can be engaged in that

context, so I try to utilize that moment. I always push me [*sic*]. That is stressful to me

but I just keep going.

Unlike her male Korean counterpart, KF (who was very expressive during our interview)

said that she "was not very talkative, speaking only two or three times per semester in each of

my classes." She considered this to be a big improvement over her first four years in graduate

school (during her first master's degree) when she never spoke at all. She considered

participation a matter of personal choice:

I think it really depends on if that student wants to or no [sic]. If the student is willing

to, then, definitely. But if I [*sic*] don't feel the need, then, probably not. They might say

"why would I?" and there's nothing wrong about it.

KF continued by saying that for her and her friends there is so much concern about their English

that they preferred to remain quiet in class. Instead she focused on the productivity of the

discussion rather than on her own participation:

However, if I feel somebody saying [*sic*] something wrong or the comment that I think

that's the wrong way, by making the comment, I hopefully stop them and I make that

meeting to [*sic*]go to the right direction (I mean the direction I think it should go). I want the discussion to be productive.

KF chose instead to put her time and effort into class projects that did not involve speaking up in class. In this way she could still accomplish her goals and obtain her degree.

Summary

In terms of speaking in class all three female participants described their levels as very low; however in terms of their resolve there were three different levels. CF was the most determined, but deterred nonetheless. TF was not determined, but was willing to speak; often the classroom context would deter her. KF seemed not all that focused on her own participation, but rather on the productivity of the discussion. She seemed to take an *as needed* approach, and did not exhibit much worry about whether or not she was active in class discussions.

For the male participants, the resolve was the strongest in KM, who put all the responsibility for success on himself, and seemed impervious to the reaction by classmates to his ideas or how well he could express them. CM mentioned that his intention to speak was often offset by his language and his old habits. TM was somewhere in the middle as far as resolve; he could be deterred but he was not always. As Table 10 shows, the resolve of the six participants did not follow any particular pattern, and only one participant was able to consistently push through inhibiting factors.

Table 10

Resolve and Participation Levels

Participant	Participation Level	Resolve
KM	high	strong intention, well prepared, undeterred
TM	medium	intention, somewhat prepared, sometimes deterred by classmates or language
CM	low	intention, well prepared, mostly deterred by classmates and language
CF	low	intention, well prepared, mostly deterred by classmates
TF	low	intention, somewhat prepared, mostly deterred by classmates and language
KF	low	low intention, somewhat prepared, not deterred, but opted out most of the time

Consideration

As mentioned earlier, consideration has several meanings; however each revolves around some aspect of careful thought. Participants mentioned having to consider cultural mandates, language difficulties, politeness, and politics. They also mentioned a lack of consideration from classmates or instructors. Therefore this section will be divided into items that CKT students felt that they must consider in discussion oriented classes, and items that they would like others to consider about them.

Consideration by CKT students.

KM said this: "As you probably assume, Koreans are relatively introvert [*sic*]. Because we are educated to more consider our society and others around us rather than to express and show up [*sic*] ourselves." Because KM had mentioned that he pushed himself so hard, I asked him if being a man helped him to do so. He explained that being a man actually put him under more pressure to act with care, rather than less.

> "In general Korean man [*sic*] really emphasize their fame and extremely [*sic*] is sensitive to other's voice. That is how I will be shown to others! That makes Korean man [*sic*] **more** quiet in class. I know many Korean guys never say [*sic*] in class. If we are not confident about our idea, we are not likely to say it."

However KF also mentioned that she had been brought up to carefully consider others in regards to speaking in class.

> There is actually a term in Korean meaning *you do not ever do something that can possibly affect other people negatively*. Not sure how to translate it, but basically it means you [*sic*] always be careful [*sic*] what you're doing that [*sic*]does not ever affect other people in a bad way. So asking a question is important because if you are asking a stupid question, that costs [*sic*] wasting other people's time, or making any comments as well. Even now, I think probably ten times before if this question absolutely has to be asked right now. I think if this is something that I can find it [*sic*] on a book or on [*sic*] Internet or can I ask this after the class or during the [sic] office hour so that I'm not wasting other people's time.

> Like KF, CM mentioned the need to consider the value of his contribution to a discussion. "Another reason I didn't speak up was that I thought I need to speak [*sic*] unique or

insightful stuff.   If I thought something is probably known by some people, I wouldn't want to speak."

Not only do CKT students consider the need to ask a question, or the worth of their contribution, but they are mindful of correct manners as TM's comment shows. His parents taught TM to be polite and listen patiently to others before speaking himself.

> Sometimes it is hard to cut into the discussion because I grew up (Chinese tradition) that it's impolite to cut someone off when they are talking. So I wait and wait until student A finish [*sic*]. Then immediately student B starts talking. When they end he/she might have started another topic or conversation, so I say to myself   *Ahh...forget it* ...it feels awkward to pull the conversation back to the previous topic.

TF also mentioned the struggle to abandon her good manners and interrupt fellow classmates. "I just don't feel like interrupting when others are in the middle of the sentence, however it seems to me that is the best way to stop others and express our thoughts."

Finally CM mentioned how he has been trained to be careful about what he says about political topics.

> In business school, topic [*sic*] about China is very hot, it is unavoidable not to have many discussion [*sic*] about China. I am supposed to be able to talk more about such topic, but actually I didn't unless I was named to give some opinion. That's because many such topics are about the negative side of China. Even though I think they are true in China, I thought that it was not good to talk about it as a Chinese. For example, we had many discussions on business bribe in China, monopoly, and China's legal system.   I've learned to give my own opinion, but nearly twenty years of education in China has [*sic*]

some deep impact on me. On topics that are sensitive in China, I was still not comfortable at [*sic*] talking much about them.

Saving the most obvious item for last, a huge item that required careful thought was language. Almost all participants mentioned that they had to think very carefully about how to properly express what they wanted to say in English. KM, the most active participant explained: "I often experience [sic] my thinking process is totally stuck when I encounter a moment I can't find [*sic*] proper word or make a [*sic*] appropriate sentence. After that, all conversation get [*sic*] into trouble." In KM's opinion, "thinking and speaking in English is the most challenging task to [*sic*] Korean students."

In CM's business classes, "even for international students, many of them have English as [*sic*] official language; most international students were from India. So I was not confident in my English. I was afraid of being laughed at [*sic*] my lousy spoken English." TF concurs: "Language is the biggest barrier. I cannot think & talk in English as fast as I think and talk in Chinese. In Chinese I respond [*sic*] people very quickly... very fast...compared with other Taiwanese people."

Even KF who earlier seemed to minimize her own need to participate had this to say:

I was afraid to speak in class because honestly I wasn't fully understand [*sic*] what people's are saying because my English was worse before. And I heard many [*sic*] same things too from my friends. Since I'm not understanding 100%, I don't even know what to say properly.

Classmates or instructors may not be aware of the similar difficulties in reading English. Although TM did not have trouble with spoken English, he mentioned difficulty in reading academic articles as his main language difficulty.

It takes me a very long time reading the articles since my English ability is not as good compared to my US classmates. When I am reading I have a habit of trying to read every line very thorough and then trying to comprehend it paragraph by paragraph (time consuming). When I come across unknown vocabularies I don't usually skip it [*sic*] but instead I look it up using [*sic*] online dictionary. The reason for not skipping is [*sic*] I find it very hard to be able to understand an article if I skip unknown vocabularies. To add more the [*sic*]why it takes me a long time to read articles is because I have [sic] hard time understanding the articles, so often I have to read and re-read the sentence to understand.

Interestingly, CF was the only participant who had nothing to say about her own hesitancy in terms of careful consideration before speaking. She was confident of her ideas, her language was excellent, and she was not one to criticize her government. Her comments on consideration were directed to her American colleagues. It seems that while CKT students were being mindful of their manners, their language, others' opinion of them, other people's time, political constraints, and the value of their contribution, that consideration was not often reciprocated by American students.

Consideration of CKT students.

As mentioned earlier, the word consideration can mean careful thought, but it can also mean "keeping something in mind" as well as "thoughtful or sympathetic regard or respect" (dictionary.com, 2011). It is these last two meanings of consideration that will be used as a lens to view this set of participant comments about factors that inhibit them. While the previous section featured participant comments about items they routinely consider before speaking, this

section will feature items that according to participants, their classmates and instructors routinely

fail to consider about them. Such items include cultural sensitivity, and language issues.

Cultural sensitivity.

Some participants felt that their American classmates did not value them. CM said this:

"No one cares [sic] you, you are ignored, that's my feeling in most classes." TF concurred:

Maybe we need more respect however this may be very difficult as this world is very

western cultural oriented. It is natural that they don't know about our culture and they

have no interest in our culture. Only those Americans who have international experience

care about us and is [*sic*] interested in learning what we think and I don't know how to

make them to pay more respect... this is a very difficult thing to change one's way of

thinking.

CF used even stronger language when speaking of American classmates:

All my American friends have overseas experience and I noticed they are open and aware

of other cultures. I think that is only part of the reason. They have a broader vision.

They know there are other places besides America. And they are curious. That's the

difference. They are very patient when you are talking. I wish the classmates here have

that mindset too.

Perhaps American classmates do not realize that CKT students may be politely waiting

for a chance to speak, and are not happy just to listen. As CM said, "I'll talk when there is a

space in the discussion. Like most of the times [*sic*], my peers are always talking; there isn't

much chance for me to talk in class."

TF explained it this way:

Compared to American education, students in Taiwan... when I was a K-12 learner... we had more time to listen than to talk. It's not "I like to listen" [*sic*], maybe I am just used to be [*sic*] a listener... raised to listen.

CKT students who value modesty find that this can work to their disadvantage in a situation that demands assertiveness. Classmates may be unaware of how this value, or the minority status of CKT students can create power issues in the classroom. As CM explained, "People who talk more have more power, and people who stand up for themselves have more power. Minorities have less power; modest people have less power."
TF also mentioned power, but was a bit more accommodating. She pointed out that it is not only Americans who are focused on Western culture; Taiwanese are as well. She felt frustrated that Taiwanese look up to the West but look down on some other Asian countries.
"I mean people in Taiwan may have that problems [*sic*] too. They care more about people from western culture then people from [*sic*] Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand...because we are immersed in multi cultural society some people will probably look down upon people who are from a country that has less power because it is the way they are treated..."

Other participants mentioned the American custom of *showing up* which may sound a bit like showing off. A more accurate translation might be the public display of one's knowledge or abilities, which can conflict with the cultural value of modesty. KM explained it quite well:

It is obviously true that American students are more familiar with and are more good [*sic*] at discussion-oriented methods. I believe they are educated to show up themselves. However, it doesn't mean that Asian students are inferior to them in communicating. Frequency doesn't men quality.

Or as TF succinctly put it: "I am not paying tuition to listen to those students who are trying to make up something to show their participation in discussion."

CF brought up the problem of finding the right balance between adapting to the American style of discussion with its fast pace and frequent interrupting, and maintaining her Chinese etiquette. She seemed to think that no matter which tactic she used, it would lead to an unsatisfying result.

> Maybe I should behave like Americans when I am in America. Why not interrupt and push my way in if everyone thinks it's appropriate? But they are not used to Asians doing that and may say 'boy that Asian lady was pushy' So the result? We remain silent.

CM felt it would be helpful if American students considered the huge differences in the two education systems, and had an appreciation of how one cannot change overnight.

> There is big gap between China's education system and the U.S.'s. In my memory, nearly all classes in China are lecturing [*sic*] based. Good students are those who listen quietly to [*sic*] teacher and try to absorb everything [*sic*] teacher pours out, just like a sponge. Students should respect teachers and should never challenge [*sic*] teachers' opinion. Even if you don't agree with [*sic*] teacher, you cannot speak up in the class. I think this is from Confucius; everyone should respect authoritarian [*sic*].

CM added that not only is the educational system and habits that are different, but for Chinese students, the government exploits the authoritarian culture. He did not sense that American students were aware that he did not feel completely free to express himself, even during his stay in a free country.

> The government also hopes people to do like that [*sic*] It is beneficial for one party rule yes, government promotes Confucianism for their long-term one party ruling, they don't

want people to challenge their role of ruling and control. They don't want to people to

have free speech and unconstrained opinion, so they design the education system for their

advantage; good students should accept what teachers said [*sic*], no challenge..

As CM mentioned earlier, "the effect of many years of education in China is hard to

underestimated [*sic*].

Language.

Language has been mentioned earlier in terms of participants' difficulties and skill levels.

However some participants mentioned a lack of patience or understanding from the native

speaker. For example, CM explained it this way:

> Though I'm using English as a 2nd language, I don't think I have problems in expressing
>
> myself in front of my peers. My spoken English is not native like. I know that. You
>
> don't need [*sic*] native accent to communicate. I admit communicating with a non-native
>
> speaker requires more effort on the part of the native speaker. Maybe that's why they do
>
> not want to talk more with a foreigner.

Sometimes even instructors can be impatient with non-native speakers. KF mentioned this as a

language item for instructors to be mindful of.

> I know it sounds little [*sic*] weird, but what I feel was [*sic*] sometimes their English is not
>
> good and it's hard to understand what they are saying, then the professor kinda [*sic*] cut
>
> off him [*sic*], and move on or let other people cut in.

CM added this:

> It would be better if they (western instructors or students) could consciously consider the
>
> situation of foreign students and try to help foreign students speak more. Never laugh at

foreign students for their lousy English or accent, or lack of some commonsense [*sic*]

knowledge.

The commonsense knowledge that CM mentioned refers to the myriad popular culture references which occur in discussions. These often leave CKT students feeling excluded. CM explained:

Sometimes, I didn't know some topics that are commonsense [*sic*] to Americans. For

example, some discussion [*sic*] was about a star, politician, or some character in [*sic*]

movie or TV show. I had never even heard of them. In my first semester, I didn't know

who Oprah is [*sic*].

KF mentioned that even if one is current with national popular culture, there is also local popular culture to deal with.

I also had [*sic*] hard time understanding local-specific terms (not slang but maybe only

Georgia specific things like bulldogs or things like that). So maybe they can kinda be

aware of those terms that might not be understandable to people from out of U.S.

For TF, the use of popular culture references paired with the lack of timely explanations translated into a lack of interest by American students. "They don't care if we (international students) understand them well...it's not their accents...but it's more like I don't know the things, the analogies, the movies, the songs, or the people they used when they expressed their thoughts." Even TM who had good speaking skills mentioned that he did not know all the slang and popular culture references. For example he did not know what *cop out* meant until his second year of graduate study when he heard his advisor and another student using it.

This lack of explanation not only led to exclusion from the discussion, and a feeling that classmates did not care about her, but it also had an impact on TF's preparation. She explained that at the beginning of the semester she would do all the assigned reading, but if the discussion

was regularly focused on cultural references rather than the reading, she felt she had wasted a lot of good preparation time. Not only did she lose time that could have been used for other classes, but "I still cannot participate in discussion when even I come prepared." This she found to be frustrating.

Context

As far as factors that affect participation, all but one participant mentioned external items that affected their behavior. Those items include classmates, instructors, and structure of discussions. For example TF mentioned that the effect classmate's demeanor can have on her. "It also depends on the classmates, only instructors' effort is not enough. I mean...the interaction is very subtle. If I am in a class where no other classmates values [*sic*] my opinions or no interests [*sic*] in what I said...then I will feel quite scared and hesitant to make my points across." TF seemed to be especially effected by what she termed *aggressive talkers*: "With aggressive talkers, then I will be very silent." TM made a similar comment: "With some students who are very opinionated and don't take advice very well, I don't speak up when they are talking." CF had made earlier comments about the lack of response to her comments and how that caused her to "lose interest." For KF talkative classmates affect her, but she was not complaining about it.

> For me, I think the people I'm with in that discussion group also affect me as well. If they are extremely talkative, and talking about what I want to say, I would simply agree or be quiet since I don't feel the need of talking.

This is consistent with her desire to reduce redundancy in class discussions by only adding what is necessary. KF repeatedly mentioned being productive; she did not indicate a concern about participation as long as she could accomplish her goals for the class.

In terms of structure, group size was mentioned by several participants as a factor that affects participation. CM said "small group discussion makes one feel less nervous. I can speak more comfortably in a small circle with people I am familiar with." TF concurred: "I think I am mostly a listener especially in the big group setting. If it is a one on one interaction, I will probably say more."

Instructor demeanor was also mentioned by TF as something that affects participation. "If an instructor shows their care and their interest in you FROM BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS (not by following the procedure/rule)...international students can receive that message and therefore feel comfortable to express their thoughts."

CM also mentioned the need for instructors to "show respect and value all students." Much more was said about class structure and instructors in answer to research question two where participants offered specific suggestions about these items.

Summary

All six participants spoke at length about the factors that can inhibit their participation. Their answers revolved around three themes of resolve, consideration, and context. Most of the participants did not really have a strong resolve to participate; in fact only one did, and he (KM) was also the most active participant.

The theme of consideration was first discussed in terms of the many things that CKT students must give careful thought to, such as cultural concerns, language, manners, and politics. Consideration was also discussed in terms of items that CKT students thought that American classmates and instructors should keep in mind. These included cultural sensitivity and language.

Finally the third theme, context, was discussed in terms of items in the classroom environment that participants mentioned as having an effect on their behavior. The full list of

factors mentioned by the participants can be seen below in Table 11 and following it in Table 12 is the list of factors that were mentioned by at least three participants.   It appears that the category that was most cited by the participants was language, followed by classroom dynamics. Therefore it seems best for instructors to consider what can be done in the classroom context to assist CKT students with their language difficulties. The next chapter will discuss this and all the results in greater detail.

Table 11

Factors that Prevent Fuller Participation

Factor	Participant	Categories
aggressive American students	CM, TM, TF, CF	class dynam., background
classroom environment	CM, CF, KF,TF,	classroom dynamics
cultural concerns	KM, TM, KF, TF	background
worthy contribution	CM, KM, TM, KF	background, personality
desire to not waste time	KF, TF	background, personality
educational habits	CM, TM, TF	background
fear of embarrassment	CM, KM, TM	lang., pers., background
ignorance of cultural references	CM, TM, TF, CF	background
introverted/shy personality	CM, KM, KF	personality, background
lack of confidence	CM, TF	language, personality
lack of interest from classmates	CM, TM, CF, TF	classroom dynamics
lack of preparation	TM, KF	language, personality
lack of time	CM, KM, TM, TF	language
language difficulty	CM, KM, TM, KF TF	language
large groups	TF	background, personality
politeness	TM, CF,TF	background
political constraints	CM	background
competitive foreign students	CM	lang., pers., background
unrelated topics	CM, KF, TF	classroom dynamics
used to listening	TF	background, personality

Table 12

Most Frequent Responses: Factors that Prevent Fuller Participation

Participant	Factor	Category
CM, KM, TM, CF, KF, TF	language difficulty	language
CM, KM, TM, TF	lack of time	language
CM, CF, KF,TF,	classroom environment	classroom dynamics
CM, TM, CF, TF	ignorance of cultural references	classroom dynamics
CM, TM, CF, TF	lack of interest from classmates	classroom dynamics
CM, TM, CF, TF	aggressive American students	classroom dynamics background
CM, KM, TM, KF	worthy contribution	background personality
KM, TM, KF, TF	cultural concerns	background
CM, TM, TF	unrelated topics	classroom dynamics
TM, CF,TF	politeness	background
CM, TM, TF	educational habits	background

Research Question Two

The first research question focused on factors; the second research question focused on suggestions for improvement. The second research question was: What suggestions would CKT students make that could increase their class participation? The results for this section center on the themes of consideration and context.

Suggestions

The participants all made several suggestions for helping to maximize an environment that would maximize participation for CKT students. Some suggestions were big ideas for instructors to keep in mind; these will be presented in the consideration section. Some of the suggestions were specific strategies and structures that can be implemented in the course design; these will be presented in the context section. Some suggestions were what one would expect, and some were not at all.

Context

Since many participants mentioned items that affect their participation and suggested things that could make a difference, the theme of context continued through Research Question Two. Whether or not manipulating classroom variables really does make a difference remains to be seen; however this is what participants said would help.

Structure.

The first item was no surprise; participants suggested using smaller groups and employing some structure in the discussion. KM did not have a lot of difficulty with class discussions, but he did offer some good suggestions.

 "First of all, I think structured discussion would be helpful rather than [*sic*] improvised one. For example, instructor [*sic*] can notice coming [*sic*] discussion and let them prepared [*sic*] following

the discussion format and sequence. The more they prepare for the topic, the more they participated [*sic*] in the discussion."

CF suggested that instructors "try to assign each person a time frame to talk and make sure everybody has their turns [*sic*]." Her experience in class discussions was that the only time she could break in was when the instructor created a space for each person to speak. TF added similar suggestions:

> Start with a smaller group discussion...then reconvene as a class...and every groups [*sic*] talks about what they have shared among team members. Or maybe write something down first...and share your thoughts...that one I think may help...since it can help the instructor to know who has done the reading...who has not... who is saying [*sic*] unrelated to the topic...and it could be more effective discussions.

TF had previously commented on the frustration of preparing for class and then having the discussion center on topics that were not related to the reading; this was her remedy for that situation.

For instructors who prefer the open, free discussion time, TM had a good idea for how to facilitate CKT students' participation in less structured discussions.

> Ask the all students to send in their questions before class and then we can discuss it as a class. This way we will cover at least one question a CKT student would have and they won't get caught off guard.

KM also had a suggestion about the structure: "Push them to be engaged in [sic]. For instance, assign tasks to them like leading [sic] discussion. TM mentioned how one assigned task structure helped him. "I find [*sic*] reading circle activity to be helpful and more structured

even though I do feel like some task are harder than others however it rotations [*sic*] every week so I accept it."

Time.

Participants had already commented on time pressure in preparation before class, as well as the time pressure they felt in class when trying to express themselves correctly in their second language. Therefore structure helps address the time factor in terms of both preparation and real time thinking and speaking. As KM pointed out, it is often the real time factor that trips up CKT students. He described himself as someone who likes to argue and in his own language he can do it quite well. However in his second language, there was not enough time to get it right. "In English setting, the main fear is to argue with other and elaborate discussion spontaneously without pre-thoughts [*sic*]. That is one problem in discussion setting. I believe when you look at discussion on the eLC you can see good discussions [*sic*] made by Asian students. That's because they are held in [*sic*] asynchronous setting."

Attention.

The next big idea that came from participants did surprise me a bit because so many of my other CKT colleagues (and my pilot study participants) had emphatically said that this was something that they did not like at all. However in the current study, all but one participant suggested that instructors should call on them to speak in class. Only TM, who had good language skills, and who had lived in America the longest disagreed. He disliked this method in his Taiwan educational experience and was happy to find that calling on students was not often done here. However CM explained that it could help even if it is not a Western strategy. "I know it is a Chinese style, but in the beginning it needs that [sic] to make them warm up and when you have no choice, you will speak." CM wanted to say even more and added this:

Actually I wished [sic] professor had called my name to ask me speak [sic]
but unfortunately in American class, teachers [sic] seem not be [sic] willing to do that the
more one speak [sic], the less shy one become [sic]. In the beginning I would be nervous,
but later I believe it would be better. By doing that, I feel I am not ignored, otherwise I
would always feel that I am a foreigner. No one cares you [sic] you are ignored. That's
my feeling in most classes.

KF had a similar thought about the connection between calling on someone and making them
feel valued.

People feel valued when others listen to them; that is why teachers should call on them.
I think everybody will feel valued when their thought wants to be heard [*sic*].
For me I know sometime [*sic*] I have things to say and wish [*sic*] the professor asked me.
So the simple bottom line I suggest is make them to [sic] say something not wait until
they volunteerly [*sic*] say, cuz [*sic*] for some people that might never happen.

TF was not against the idea of being called on; she said that it might be fine "as long as he/she is
not picking on me." She wanted to speak, but she did not want too much attention focused on
her. She mentioned that as an instructor she might try to soften the effect by using eye contact
rather than calling out someone's actual name. The last of the three female participants, CM,
would not mind being called on; she had already shared that her difficulties in class discussions
were not language, preparation, or the wish to speak. Her problems were getting in and getting a
"back and forth" conversation going.

Oprah who?

 The timely explanation of cultural references was suggested as something that
classmates could help with, but that an instructor should plan for in course design. Rather than

having to ask each time "who are they?" or "what is that?" CKT students suggested having on

the spot explanations offered without them having to ask. Others had mentioned these references

as an inhibiting factor, and something to be aware of, but only TF suggested that something

could be done about it. "Probably give some timely explanation when we have no idea about the

topic/conversation. Someone could explain. That would be very helpful." CM had mentioned

that he took time to watch American television and movies, and that this did help, but rather than

trying to learn so many things on the chance that those topics would come up in class, a

proactive, real time popular culture guide would be better.

Relationship.

Several suggestions were made about relational aspects of classroom management. TM

thought it would be a good idea to elicit CKT students' preferences about discussions.

> I would 1st [*sic*] get them in a group and talk to them 1st and see what do they feel more
>
> comfortable to do during discussion. I would so [*sic*] tell them that I encourage them to
>
> speak up during class. I would also encourage instructors to give praise [*sic*] after all
>
> students have spoken.

TF also explained:

> Before/after class, I surely will let them know that I care about their learning...let me
>
> know if they have any questions (I often do this to my American students).. I mean a lot
>
> of times this kind of relationship is built outside of the class...just to ask the students
>
> individually do you know what is that/this is.

Consideration

In addition to specific suggestions, participants had some broad ideas that they felt would

be good to keep in mind. CM and TM mentioned the discomfort of certain political topics such

as the lack of free expression in China, or the Taiwan/China relationship. TM said "just be culturally aware about certain topics that may be a [*sic*] taboo that comes [*sic*] up during discussion. Be more knowledge about as many countries as they [*sic*] can."

CM had this to say as a general guideline for instructors: "If I have some advice or suggestion for them, I would ask them to have more tolerance and encouragement... treat us respectfully. No one wants to be ignored." KF had similar thoughts:

> I believe all students (including Asian) have many things that they want to say Cuz [*sic*] I cannot think of a person who just sit [*sic*] there empty headed. I think it's just get the thoughts out [*sic*]. It's just "getting the thought out" part is different for everyone. People feel valued when others listen to them. Their English might be not as good as native [*sic*], but their thoughts may be really great.

CF's final comment also emphasized value: "Most importantly design a learning environment that says everybody can contribute in class so that each person's knowledge, however different from [*sic*] American perspective, is valued."

KM's closing comment focused on utilizing the high motivation of CKT students. "As you sense, most of [sic] Asian students know they want to be survival [sic] and successful. We need to take advantage of their will and desire." TF's final comment placed value on empathy from instructors: "I mean it will be unfair to American students if the professor put [*sic*] so much attention on international students, but it is always nice that [*sic*] if the professor is aware of our difficulty."

Summary

Participants' suggestions for addressing the classroom context as well as items to consider were very well connected to the factors that they mentioned. They did not prefer to have a lot of extra attention but they also did not want to be ignored. They came up with reasonable and feasible suggestions for providing helpful support, even though none of them requested these items in any of their actual classes. The next section will discuss these findings as they relate to the literature, the study's conceptual framework, the revised discussion model that was developed in the pilot study (and that will be revised once more), my own impressions of the factors and suggestions, and the implications for current practice and future support.

CHAPTER 5

DISSCUSSION

Summary of the Study

This qualitative study was designed to elicit information directly from six CKT graduate students about their current classroom behavior; the research questions were:

1. What factors do CKT students attribute to their current classroom participation levels?

2. What suggestions would CKT students make that could increase their class participation?

The conceptual framework developed for the study emphasizes the importance of a dynamic view of culture which allows for changes in a group or individual that fall outside of usual and expected guidelines. Rather than accepting static descriptions of a cultural group this view contends that culture is in flux, and that individuals may choose to act in a way that is different from what they are accustomed to (Liddicoat, 2002). If instructors adopt this view of culture and it in turn informs their course design, especially in regards to oral interaction, this may reap rewards of increased participation for the CKT student. Increasing oral participation in turn helps deepen conceptual understanding, facilitates adaptation to the host country for international students, and can develop intercultural competence for host and international students.

The data seemed to support a culturally dynamic view due to most participants' mention of their willingness to become more active in class discussions even though this was something new for them. They also mentioned items for instructors keep in mind if they hope to get CKT students to speak more in class. Therefore the discussion of the results will be guided by the

framework, and will also be compared to the literature, the pilot study, and my experience and impressions. Moreover, the discussion of each research question will be conducted along the themes that arose from the data and were used in the analysis in Chapter Four: resolve, consideration, and context. The final part of this chapter will include a new model for class discussions, as well as implications for current practice and future research.

<p align="center">**Research Question One: Factors**</p>

The first research question was: What factors do CKT students attribute to their current classroom participation levels?   Participants had much more to say for this question than they did for the second one as indicated by the volume of data for each question. Their talkativeness without prompting from me during our interview seemed to indicate that they had thought about this topic for a long time and were finally able to talk to an interested party about it. It seemed that those who did not participate much at all, CM, CF, TF, and KF, along with TM who had a medium level of participation, had the most to say.   KM, who self-reported as a very active participant spoke for the shortest length of time, (but succinctly shared very cogent thoughts). Perhaps this was due to KM's lack of frustration; he did not seem to have any negative emotions on this topic, unlike the other participants such as CF, CM, TF, and TM who stated that they felt overlooked. I noted his calm, relaxed tone in the interview; in fact he seemed optimistic and friendly when he spoke of his American classmates. However no matter what degree or type of negative emotions was expressed, all participants shared items that prevented them from participating. These factors will now be discussed as they relate to one of the three themes: resolve, consideration, and context.

Resolve

The literature generally presumes a desire of CKT students to become more participatory, and focuses on figuring out what the barriers are and how to address them (Coverdale-Jones, 2006; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Kim, 2006; Zhou, et al., 2005). That presumption is apparent in my study as well; however I found some variation in that desire among my participants that I did not expect, and that I did not find in the literature.

For example CKT students are often described as concerned about language and background issues; however there is no mention of KF's *take it or leave it* attitude. She was the only one who did not express a desire to participate, and felt that she had found a way to succeed without it. She was not lacking in resolve, but rather had channeled her energy into productivity; she did not speak in class unless something was preventing her from accomplishing her goals. In fact she stated that there was nothing wrong with opting out. When instructors use discussion in their course design however, it is disappointing if a student decides to opt out. Presumably their inclusion of discussion in the course design indicates their belief in it as a productive learning tool. Or it could be that they simply use discussion in a multicultural classroom to foster exposure and appreciation of diverse views. The *take it or leave it* attitude of KF therefore negates the benefit of discussion for deeper conceptual understanding, (Jonassen & Kim, 2009; McKeachie, 1994; Palinscar, 1984; Webb, 1992; Yang, Newby, & Bill, 2005) as well as the benefit that both she and her classmates could receive from an exchange of ideas and viewpoints (Deardoff, 2009; McCallister & Irvine, 2000). Furthermore if communication is the best tool for adaptation for international students, as Kim (1988) has proposed in her integrative communication theory, this benefit is lost as well.

Another interpretation could be that adaptation is of no interest to KF. Her responses indicate no wish to talk with others in her classes unless she needed to get them back on track. KF did mention later in the interview that speaking in class was a "big deal" for her due to her background and especially her language. This made me wonder if her opting out method was simply a pretense for her lack of confidence in speaking English. However she had found a coping strategy that satisfied her. KF later mentioned some suggestions for instructors that would help CKT students to talk more in class, but this could have simply been because I elicited that information in an interview question. It could be that since KF had made a decision to participate only if absolutely necessary, instructional design might not have much of an effect at all on her participation levels. It would be interesting to know how many CKT students are like KF in their attitudes and strategies, and if culturally informed course design would have an effect on them.

A second type of student not found in the literature was one with an unstoppable will to succeed such as was exhibited by KM. He seemed to have found a way to actively participate without any outside help. Concurring with some of the literature (Clark & Gieve, 2006) he cited language as his biggest barrier; his reported lack of reticence was therefore even more noticeable due to his low language skills compared with the other participants. It made sense that TM would speak a bit more than the others due to his higher language skills. What did not make sense was that KM was often the hardest to understand of all the participants, yet he was the most active speaker. I wondered if this was due to KM's status as one of the oldest participants (38), a spouse and parent. He also has more experience in the workplace than most of the participants. However CF was the oldest participant at 45, and is a spouse and a parent as well. In addition she has had years of university teaching experience, and excellent English, but she

did not speak much in class at all. Even though she had a desire to participate she was often

deterred due to the response of her classmates. Because she is Chinese and female and KM is a

Korean male, I wondered if culture and/or gender made the difference, but no such patterns were

indicated in the data. Even if there was a pattern, the small sample of six participants would not

make for convincing evidence.

TM, who had lived in America the longest at thirteen years, felt that he had "gotten used

to" American culture, but was also not as active as KM. The literature tends to link participation

to either high language skills (Zhou, et al. 2005) or adaptation (Kim, 1988); however KM did not

seem to have high levels of either. This led to me to believe that participation may not be as

connected to one's language, or to one's adaptation, as it is to one's ability to push through

barriers. In fact the bulk of KM's responses during the interview provided information about

how he was successful, rather than what prevented him from participating.

The pilot study uncovered similar results about the lack of correlation between language

and participation; those with the highest English levels did not speak any more in class than

those with the lowest levels. However since there were no active participants in the pilot study, I

was not able to find a second variable that could account for successful outcomes. I was

fortunate therefore to find an outlier like KM who helped me to uncover an otherwise hidden

variable. This was significant in that many believe that participation is in large part connected to

language skills (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Lee, 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Zhaoning, 2006), however I

have not found that to be the case.

It may be that resolve is the only item that some CKT students need; for others it might

be helpful to have some support to make up for deterring elements. Therefore I would divide

CKT students into groups as seen in Figure 11 below: those who have a desire to participate and

those who do not. The participatory group could be split into two groups as well: those who will

pursue participation no matter what, and those who will pursue it to a point and then give up. Of

those who give up, a final division would be made of those who, with additional support, could

be enticed to keep going, and those who could not. Based on what my participants said about

wanting to be included, the data in this study indicated that the majority of CKT students wish to

participate, and would do so under certain conditions. The literature supports this idea as well

(Felker, 2001; Pearson, et al., 2007).
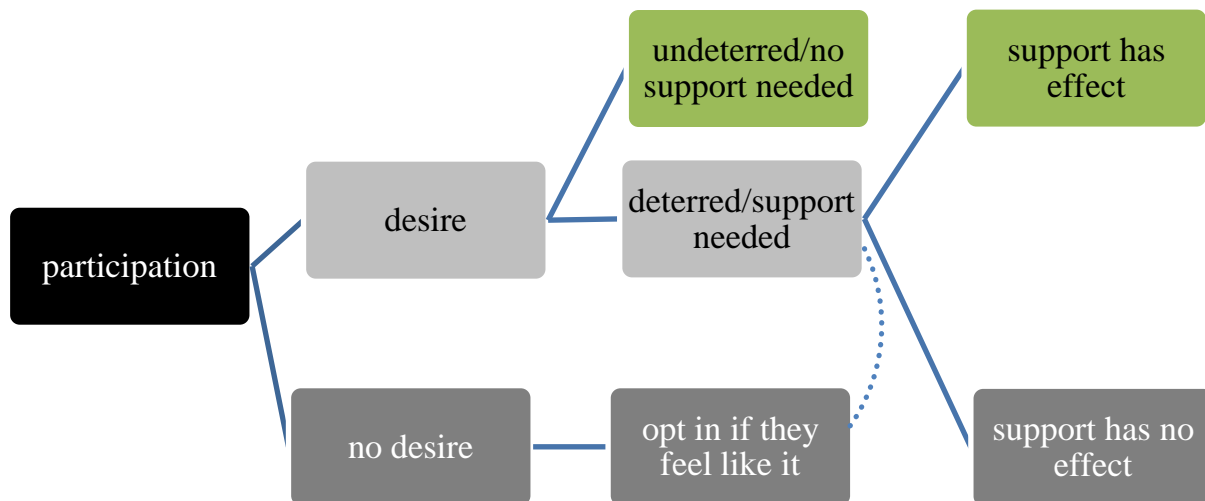
Figure 13. Participation hierarchy.

Some students such as KM, need no further inducements, and some like KF seemed to

have no desire to participate, but so far I have found them both to be exceptions. Conceptually

this type of anomaly is consistent with the dynamic view of culture which allows for variation

and personal choice that goes against the more typical cultural patterns (Kitayama, 2002;

Liddicoat, 2002). KF was not focused on doing what the teacher expected, but on her own

autonomy; KM, was not being overly cautious, but was taking risks and *showing himself up* to

use his term. KM mentioned that there is currently a shift toward being more selfish (his term) due to the fierce competition in Korea in both educational and career opportunities. His comments could indicate that perhaps KM and KF are prototypes of the trend in Korea toward more individualism, rather than anomalies.

Consideration

In terms of factors that prevent full participation, the theme of consideration appeared across participant responses and was divided into factors that CKT student must consider, and factors that CKT student would like others to consider (Ku, et al. 2004). Therefore the discussion will continue along that divide.

Consideration by CKT students.

In addition to the daily distractions common to all students, CKT students mentioned items that they routinely must consider before speaking in class. These items have been deeply ingrained in their minds from family, culture, and education practices back home (Ku.

CM mentioned that his statements needed to be unique and insightful, KF mentioned that her statements needed to be completely necessary, and KM mentioned that his statements needed to add to his reputation. They were to consider the value of their statements as well as the value that others would assign to or gain from their statements.   A picture of a mental processing plant came to my mind. If a thought made it past the first evaluative assessment (necessary, insightful, or reputation enhancing), it was then sent to the language processing department where it would be crafted into standard English; however often this step took more time than any other. Upon leaving the language processing department, it would be queued and ready for unveiling in class. The problem was that by this time, the discussion had either moved to the next topic, or was over. Lee (2007) reports this type of occurrence in his study of six Korean graduate students

who came prepared but could not get the answers delivered in time. The fast pace of class discussions just does not mix well with the evaluative criteria of some CKT students. Speaking of the need of Korean men to be especially careful in what they express, KM summed it up this way: "I think [*sic*] language barrier and [*sic*] challenging situation in studying in [*sic*] English context accelerate that [*sic*] characteristics to some extent." This would be a great example of the English expression, *a perfect storm*.

Suppose however, that a cogent, grammatically correct, necessary, insightful, and reputation enhancing statement is ready to share, and the discussion has not moved on? It would seem now just to be a matter of speaking up; however there are still some additional hurdles. The polite manners of TM, TF, and CM, as evidenced in the interview, do not permit them to interrupt their classmates so they politely wait for a space to open up. When one does not, they reported evaluating whether or not it is okay for them to interrupt, if they are comfortable doing so, and if so, if now is the right moment to do so. The assembly line just got a little longer. CF reported that she had often thought that perhaps she should just act like the Americans and interrupt; however then she thought better of it due to the concern of being labeled *the pushy Asian lady*. I had heard other Americans state their *When in Rome* philosophy, (which means that one should adopt the customs of the local people); however I don't think that those who propose this philosophy have a clear understanding of the difficulties it entails. Given the choice of being labeled *quiet*, or *impolite*, many CKT students may stick with *quiet*. Although the dynamic cultural view allows for individuals to act outside of their customs and traditions, it does not guarantee acceptance of these actions. Some CKT students find a way to adapt and yet keep their cultural identity, but this is not easy to do (Durkin, 2008). Moreover, while going through all the evaluative criteria of culture, educational habits, and family rules, and manners,

CKT students have not been able to catch all of the ongoing discussion (especially in their second language), so it becomes difficult to know if their contribution is still necessary, insightful, and beneficial to their reputation.

The literature mentions time in regard to language issues (Zhou, et al., 2005). However I have not seen time mentioned in the literature regarding the many other items that CKT students have to consider before speaking. Therefore this finding was significant in that it demonstrates that time is even a bigger factor than previously thought. Not only is time needed to find the right word, pronunciation, or phrase, but once those items are secured, CKT students may be unsure of how to break into the discussion and still keep their own cultural and personal identity. Finding a way to shorten the assembly line, or at least help to make it more efficient could be assisted by culturally sensitive instructional design. Specific suggestions will be included in the discussion of the second research question.

Consideration of CKT students.

The last section dealt with factors that CKT student must consider before speaking. This section will discuss factors mentioned by CKT students as things they would appreciate having others consider. It seems that most participants experienced a general lack of interest in them and their opinions, and they wondered if American classmates realized that. By not speaking to them or creating space for them to speak, CKT students indicated that they felt that their presence was of no consequence to their American colleagues. The literature does not mention a lack of caring or interest by classmates, but it does mention a lack of awareness about their background and struggles as international students from their instructors (Ku, et al. 2004). Perhaps CKT students do not have an expectation of interest from their classmates, but for some reason most of my participants did. They mentioned that the only classmates who were patient

and friendly to them were those who had international experience describing them as open, curious, and possessing a global mindset. One pilot study participant summed it up well "I used to feel bad about being ignored by my classmates, but now I have gotten used to it, and don't mind. Nowadays I speak even less than when I first arrived. If no one cares about me, I don't need to push myself." (C. L. personal communication, February 8, 2011).

Several participants reported feeling ignored, and indeed I had seen this happen in my classes as well, but I had to note that Americans are often lacking in interest in their fellow Americans as well. While it is unfortunate for CKT students to be ignored, it may not be connected to their status as foreigners. I think that the lack of interest is perhaps exacerbated by the knowledge of CKT students that Americans studying in their home country would receive a warm reception by contrast. I recall being the object of curiosity, interest, and respect at various times in China, but I was rarely overlooked. This lack of reciprocity therefore could be part of the issue.

A second reason that the lack of acknowledgement could be particularly damaging to CKT students is that according to the integrative communication theory of Kim (1988), foreign students need to interact with others to help them adapt to the host country. Participants mentioned how difficult it is to make an American friend; sometimes the classroom is the only place that CKT students speak with American students, and when this opportunity is closed off to them it can have an effect on their adaptation to their host country. It was KM who noted that class time was his only chance to interact with native speakers and therefore he needed to avail himself of this opportunity.

A final reason that being non-participatory is disappointing could be related to unmet expectations. For example although he had never been exposed to class discussions back home,

CM shared that he believed in their effectiveness for creative thinking and looked forward to being a part of them. However for him there was not much difference in sitting in a lecture hall in China and sitting in his business classes in America, as far as his participation levels. I realized from listening to CM that having discussions that one cannot easily access is actually worse than having lectures because no one is speaking in a lecture class; students are equally silent. This is akin to being invited to a sumptuous banquet only to watch other people eat. Therefore it was easy for me to see why some of the participants became disappointed, frustrated and even angry. However their polite manners would not let them permit these negative emotions, as CF had shared. Furthermore it is difficult to find a forum to share these frustrations, outside of one's circle of close friends. Some instructors may consider it childish, or a sign of weakness to complain that the other students won't give them a chance to speak. I sensed that my participants felt that there was no safe place to communicate such thoughts, and were therefore surprised by and appreciative of my research interest.

TF noted that her American classmates were only interested in America but she said that sadly Taiwanese back home are also obsessed with America, and look down on some of the poorer Asian countries. I believe she was trying to fairly assess the issues of power and privilege, and not jump to conclusions. In fact TF thought that perhaps all countries are probably looked down upon by someone and then look down on someone else in return.

CF however was a bit more forthright. She equated talking with power, and referenced the lack of power for minorities, and as she called them, *modest people*, referring to CKT students. For CF it was not about merely saying something in class, but about having a regular seat at the table. When I asked her if she thought that Americans were aware of being privileged in classroom settings she said that they definitely were. I was not sure, but as McIntosh (1990)

makes clear one can act privileged, or one can simply reap unearned benefits of embedded privilege while being completely unaware. I believe CF brought up a good point for American classmates to consider. Whether they realize it or not, they may be acting as privileged characters, rather than as equal partners in class discussions.

Cultural References.

There was one language/socio-cultural issue that left all participants feeling excluded: the constant use of popular cultural references. These references are a short cut that allows insiders to illustrate their point very quickly, however with or without intention they can be exclusive. Although American students' use of these references is not likely intentionally exclusive, their use without an attempt to explain things to the outsider may indicate a lack of awareness. Others have mentioned the need to explain these references, (Spencer-Oatey & Zhaoning, 2006), but my participants did not feel that this was done in their classes. The lack of explanations is once again in contrast to the offers of help that are usually forthcoming in the CKT's students' home country. I have however seen this happen to Americans as well; it is not uncommon for young people, Southerners, technology geeks, academic departments, or ethnic groups to use their own terms and references in the presence of others and omit explanations. Lack of awareness or interest therefore may not be limited to cultural matters. However it is this lack of interest, lack of help, and lack of cultural exchange that is disappointing to CKT students, most of whom are desirous of connecting with their American classmates (Ku, et al, 2004). This was yet another area that I noted could be addressed by culturally sensitive instructional design, as will be noted in the discussion of research question two.

Context

Specific items from the classroom context were mentioned as having an effect on all the participants' behavior except for KM, whose participation did not seem contextual at all. For the other participants there was mention of aggressive or talkative classmates, and a lack of structure. All of these items have a common notion of the need to create a space for CKT students to slip into the conversation. This is an area that online discussions have been able to address but that remains difficult for face-to-face situations (Tiene, 2000).

Participants looked to the instructor to create space only because their classmates would not. The literature mentions the tendency of CKT students to rely on the instructor as the expert (Liu, 2001) but in this case it seemed that they were looking at the instructor as more of a traffic cop. Some participants who wanted to speak thought that the instructor should regulate turns or assign slots. Rather than the instructor functioning as traffic cop however, it would be better for the instructor to develop a plan that proactively creates space for the less participatory student. Even in classrooms that are not cross cultural Webb (2009) found this to be the case. CKT participants had some suggestions on how to do this, and these will be discussed in the next section which deals with suggestions.

Research Question Two: Suggestions

The first research question asked about factors; the second sought suggestions from CKT students that could increase their participation. The question was: What suggestions would CKT students make that could increase their class participation? Once again the responses were of two types: some were general concepts that they wanted instructors to consider. Some were specific suggestions to implement in the class setting. First the ideas to be considered will be discussed, and then the specific suggestions for the classroom context will follow.

Consideration

The data from the participants included very few critical comments about instructors compared to their comments about classmates. The literature suggests that this is due to their Confucian values of respect (Chiu, 2009). Their candor however about many other things led me to believe that if they had wanted to share more critical thoughts about instructors during our interview, they would have. Their suggestions of things for instructors to consider focused on cultural awareness and respect. Their responses indicated that were not sure if instructors knew much about them, cared much about them, or understood that most of them wanted to speak. There is some mention of this uncertainty in the literature as well (Ku, et al., 2004). I wondered why this was so important to them since they were used to large classes and lectures back home. It could be that the participants had expectations of an academic environment that was more engaging and supportive, but found instead that they were mere spectators. Preparation for attending graduate school in the West does not usually include advice about how to push one's way into a class discussion, but maybe it should.

Context

The suggestions that were made by participants and summarized in the previous chapter all seemed reasonable to implement in the course design. Most of the suggestions were similar to the pilot study results and what was found in the literature: use smaller groups, give questions ahead of time, design discussions with some structure, utilize assigned readings, avoid embarrassing students, and try to build some rapport with them (Bean & Peterson, 1998; McKeachie,1992; Webb, 1994). Some participants even suggested that instructors ask CKT students what works best for them, and how they prefer to be included in class discussions. This strategy was mentioned in both the current and the pilot study, and was also mentioned in the

literature where an instructor had no success with her interactive strategies until she regrouped and asked her students for input on how to structure the dialogue (Zhang & Head, 2010). The three sentence email in Table 3 (page 51) was a pilot study participant's idea for encouraging participation, but it did not solicit input about what works best for the student; it merely let students know that their participation was desired. I liked the relational aspect of the email, but was not sure if instructors would be inclined to give such individual attention to CKT students due to concerns about time and/or favoritism. Instructors may not solicit input about individual preferences due to similar concerns; however these constraints do not make this idea a bad one; however it may be an unfeasible one.

The biggest surprise in the data was the suggestion by participants to have instructors call on them. The feeling was that they would rather be put on the spot and possibly embarrassed, than be ignored. This goes against the usual suggestions that instructors pay strict attention to face saving practices (Lee, 2006, Tani, 2005); however the dynamic cultural view allows for the unexpected. As long as the discussion was based on the assigned reading, rather than on unrelated topics, the participants usually had something ready to share, and therefore said that they would not mind being called on. Only one participant, TM, mentioned this method as something that he had to endure back home in Taiwan and was glad that American professors did not do. KF was the strongest in her opinion, stating that it was fine for instructors to *force* students to speak. Not all participants were as strong as KF in their statements, but it was clear that they did not appreciate being invisible. I know of an instructor at my university who does in fact *force* students to speak, (or tries to), and one of the participants actually told me that she did not mind it after she got used to the idea (CF). For her even though this was difficult it created a space that belonged to her, and she preferred this over interrupting or being ignored. I would not

feel comfortable doing this because I believe increased participation does not need to rely on force. I prefer to use incentive, cultural awareness, discourse etiquette and instructional design. One of my professors simply added an item about creating a diverse and safe classroom to his syllabus, and encouraged everyone to speak, as well as let others speak.

The pilot study had led to the development of *anonymity* as a component in the motivated student discussion model; the current participants by contrast stressed attention as an important component. I had missed this idea earlier because although the pilot study participants had said they wanted to participate, they did not want instructors to call on them, and seemed concerned about have a spotlight on them. Although the pilot study participants were all female, the data does not show that this was gender related; the female participants in the current study both suggesting and agreeing to being called on.

Therefore the current study led me to revise the S.T.A.R. model that was developed from the pilot study data (Figure 10). That model focused on structure, time, anonymity and relationship; the new model would include structure, time, attention and relationship (S.T.A.R.). The attention component covers the full range of being noticed by instructors to being included even to the point of being called on in class in a way that does not bring embarrassment or being *picked on*, as TF mentioned. The revised S.T.A.R. model would have the same target audience as the pilot study model: motivated students. The idea is that motivated students were less participatory could be helped by the components of the S.T.A.R. model, but motivated students who did not need any extra support, or who were even aggressive talkers would not be harmed by components in the model.

Conceptually, the framework for the study affirmed a dynamic view of culture having an impact on instructional design, which in turn could impact oral participation. The participant

responses to Research Question Two, certainly provided plenty of suggestions that could help

instructors to achieve a culturally informed design. It seems however that some type of quick

reference guide for instructors would be helpful. Therefore Figure 14 includes the revised

S.T.A.R. model for class discussions with the four components of structure, time, attention, and

relationship. Furthermore, the three level pyramid represents different levels of engagement for

instructors who wish to adjust their instructional design. The lower level is a one-sentence

directive: *Design discussions with the quiet student in mind*. This is all the information that

some instructors may need or want. The next level of guidelines for instructors advises them to

attend to the four items of structure, time, attention, and relationship (S.T.A.R.) as they design

class discussions. The final level of instructor guidelines would direct them to use the participant

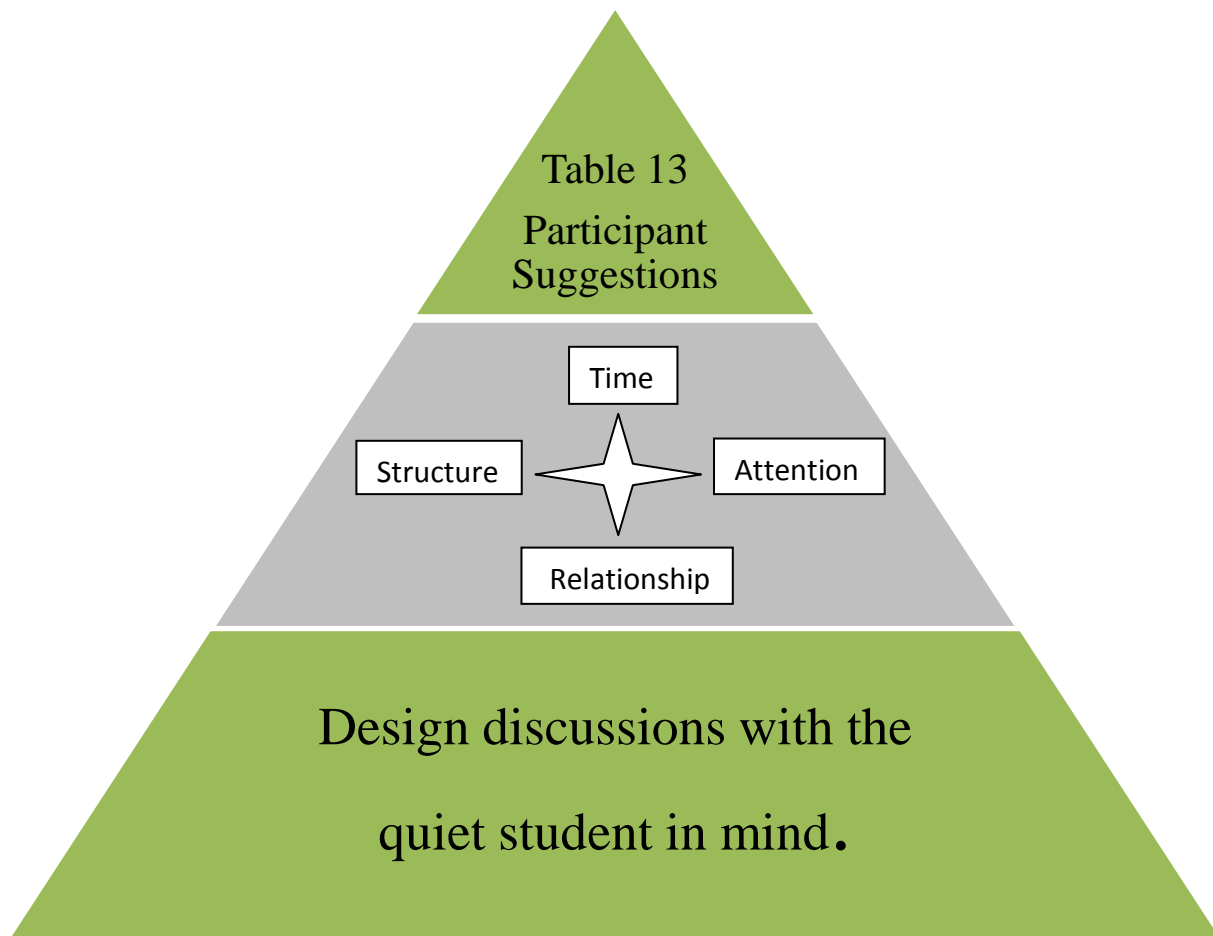suggestions which are all included in Table 13.

Figure 14. *Three-tiered guidelines for instructors.*

Table 13

Participant Suggestions for Increasing Participation: S.T.A.R.

Structure	Time	Attention	Relationship
small groups/pairs	more time to craft responses	anonymous written responses ok at times	encouraging comments in class
limited use of large group	slow down pace	group responses ok	encouragement outside of class
no requirement for # of turns	questions ahead of time	cold calling ok with some caution or warning	discourse etiquette
turns or space	wait time		awareness of power issues
student leaders	web-based discussion starter	controversial not confrontational	
small groups first, then present to large	awareness of CKT constraints	no special attention in class, but no ignoring	cultural reference explanations
			provided in timely way
	discussion related to reading	elicit CKT student input for design	cultural sensitivity
			learn to pronounce our names, taboos

Implications & Recommendations for Further Research

Several implications can be gleaned from this study. Perhaps the most important one is that one does not have to be a cultural expert in order to assist CKT or other international students. Culturally informed instructional design can be achieved on different levels as indicated by Figure 14, but none of the guidelines require vast stores of cultural knowledge. Rather they only require a desire to increase participation levels for CKT or any students who may be less-participatory. Future research could investigate whether or not instructors currently think of quiet students in the design of discussions, as well as their inclination to do so in the future.

A second implication is that support could be an element that bridges the gap between intent and resolve. Although most participants came to class with the intent to participate, they were deterred by contextual factors. The fact that participants were so forthcoming with suggestions for instructors indicated that they felt that support could make a difference. It could be however that they were merely providing me with good ideas because I solicited them. Therefore whether or not the implementation of these suggestions would actually make a difference would be an item for future research.

Participants mentioned feelings of exclusion when they could not fully participate in class discussions. Therefore a third implication of the study is that increasing oral participation for CKT students may help them to feel valued by professors and classmates. This made me curious about classmate and instructor views of CKT or other international students; are they as disinterested in them as is perceived? Do they have any awareness of how their lack of attention impacts these students? Is their lack of attention an attempt to avoid showing favoritism to CKT students, or could it be that they are unsure how to proceed and therefore avoid any direct overtures? Now that I have heard so much from CKT students I would like to hear American students' and instructors' reaction to this study's findings. Therefore this could be yet another area for future research.

Finally the participants' mention of lack of interest in them and their opinions made me curious about the impact of Study Abroad programs; do students who participate in them act any differently in class toward international students? It could be that the popularity of Study Abroad programs is an indication of students' wish to travel, rather than their interest in people

from other countries. Therefore the motivation and impact of Study Abroad programs would be an additional item for future research.

Conclusion

I came to the current study convinced of three things: that CKT students wanted to participate more fully in class discussions, that they could do so under certain conditions, and that they would talk to me about their struggles. Although it might have been just as suitable to begin my research by trying out support strategies and determining their effect, I knew that many CKT students have felt ignored at times and therefore I wanted to begin by listening. It seemed that getting their ideas on the record for others to read and share would be a way to affirm that their opinions are of interest and value to me, and hopefully to others. Therefore a general qualitative interpretive study was designed; there was not a hypothesis to be tested but rather the thoughts of my participants would be valuable in themselves. I hoped to use the factors that they mentioned, and the suggestions they made to inform instructional design, but I would not be testing these in this study. I think doing so would have made my study more robust, but I merely see the current study as the first step in a research agenda.

It turned out that CKT students were indeed eager to talk to me about the topic of participation. I was surprised to learn however that not all CKT participants wanted to participate in class discussions, although most did. I had been so focused on finding ways to help CKT students participate, (and the literature had a similar focus), that I did not consider that some would simply elect not to participate without much concern about it. However all of the participants but one indicated a desire to participate more fully, and suggested items that would facilitate that desire.

The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data indicated that CKT students needed to have the *resolve* to push through barriers, however difficult or unexpected, if they wanted to participate fully in class discussions. The theme of consideration emerged due to CKT students sharing the many expectations and constraints that they must consider before speaking. They seemed to think that instructors' and classmates' awareness of these constraints would eventually help CKT students to be understood, and perhaps even valued. The last theme of context arose out of the many factors and suggestions that were made about the classroom environment that could be addressed in the design of discussions.

It was significant to note that the S.T.A.R. model for discussion that developed from the participant suggestions is actually well suited for quiet students in general, rather than just CKT or even just international students. In other words, less participatory students of any culture could benefit from the implementation of suggestions for course design made my CKT participants. An added bonus of this model is that the more assertive students would not be hindered by this type of design. However rather than a commensal relationship where one party is helped and the other is unaffected, increased participation for CKT students would result in a mutualism that has both groups reaping rewards of adaptation, cross cultural understanding, and deeper conceptual understanding.

As a final note, it is ironic that my own depth of experience with CKT students should lead me to a study with the conclusion that very little cultural knowledge may be needed to assist these students. This conclusion does not mean that I do not value cultural knowledge; for those who would like more in-depth information the entire study, and much other information is available. However for the majority of instructors who need a quick reference guide to help them achieve culturally sensitive course design, my one sentence suggestion to design discussions for

the less participatory student may suffice. This result brought to mind the enormous time, energy and money spent on infection control research done by the medical community. In the end, the result was that hand washing was the single more significant infection control measure. It amuses me when research tells us something that we learned from our mothers at age two.

Perhaps my study is similar in its simplicity; however I do not mean to diminish the importance of cultural knowledge any more than the hand washing protocols are meant to negate more complex infection control measures research. However the simple idea of designing discussions with the quiet student in mind can have a substantial impact; for some instructors it may be a beginning and for others it may be the sum of their cultural consideration. For CKT students who wish to participate, it can open the door, and maybe even roll out the welcome mat.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY

Research Questions

1. What factors do Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) students credit for their classroom behavior?

2. What suggestions would CHC students make in order to increase CHC students' class participation?

Research Design & Methods

Since the thoughts, feelings and suggestions of my participant were the target data, a qualitative study was designed. As Creswell (2007) states, qualitative research is appropriate when one wants detailed information that can only be gotten from individual stories, and further, when empowering a group to share those stories. Furthermore the study was informed by my nine years spent in the field as an overseas teacher, and my many informal conversations with CHC students and colleagues.

The interviews conducted during the study were all used to locate themes and patterns within the context of the CHC international student. Online text interviews were the chosen method and ten questions were used in a one hour time frame to elicit participant views. There were several reasons for choosing the online text format: one was that the participants all lived in different countries, a second reason was that the participants all had varying skill levels of spoken English, a third was that I did not want to risk disruptions due to audio glitches, a fourth

reason was that my participants were all very comfortable with text chatting, and a fifth and most important reason was that I wanted to use a vehicle that would allow for the pauses that either language or thinking required, with as little awkwardness as possible.

Participants signed an online consent form and then informed me of their preferred instant messaging platform as well as their available dates and time. Although given a choice of spreading their one hour interview over two dates all preferred to complete their interview on a single date and most went beyond the scheduled hour due to having lots of opinions that they wanted to express.

Although I knew all my participants and had enjoyed many informal conversations with them prior to the interviews, I was a bit concerned about whether or not they would talk as freely with me in a formal research setting. These fears were unfounded however, and each quickly went through my ten interview questions with very little trouble. All four participants were quite verbose and freely offered opinions in this safe confidential context, even going as far as advising me of better ways to ask questions.

Participants

The participant names have been changed to help the reader easily identify them. Therefore Sing, Zhong, Kim, and Cham represent the participants from Singapore, China (in China), Korea, and China (living in America). All four of my participants were CHC females, who were currently or had previously studied in an American university. Three were current students and one (Zhong) had finished her master's degree two years earlier. In addition each lived and/or worked in an English speaking environment, and had many years of English tutoring and practice. All four had very high intellectual and social skills, even if they had varied degrees of language fluency (all would be considered fluent however).

Apart from these common factors the four women differed quite a bit in their backgrounds. The only undergraduate, Sing, was raised in Singapore where English is one of the official languages. Her family of six would be considered middle class in Singapore, and both parents had attended university. At ten years old her family moved to a large industrial city in northern China where she attended and later graduated from an American international school as the salutatorian. Her speaking and writing abilities were both above average and she was a straight A student for all of eight years at the school. I was personally acquainted with Sing as a frequent substitute teacher, and our families were neighbors and close friends. This was the only participant with whom I was involved in any type of supervisory position (however infrequent) and that was a concern for soliciting honest feedback. The data gathered from her interview however was quite similar to the data gathered from the other three participants, but of course it is difficult to know what more she might have said had she not known me as a teacher in her school.

The other three participants were colleagues, but all were quite a bit younger than me, which is also a factor in the respect-oriented Confucian culture. The frankness I noticed in the many informal conversations led me to believe that I would be able to elicit the same in a formal interview. Of course as stated earlier it is difficult to know how much more a participant would say if there was absolute assurance of freedom from any constraints. I can only say that the strong opinions and frank responses that I did receive did not seem to indicate reticence on their part. In fact they seemed to be eager to get all their feelings and opinions out in the hopes that they could make a helpful contribution to both academia and to their fellow CHC colleagues.

Zhong was a mainland Chinese teacher who had never lived in the U.S. but had earned a master's degree while working at an American school. She was a colleague both as a high

school teacher, and as a fellow student in the master's program. The program's course work was delivered both online and face-to-face (in the summers) and there were many collaborative assignments, therefore I was able to observe her in varied settings. She was married to a physician and owned a car at a time when most Chinese still drove their bicycles to work (as I did). Therefore she was on a higher socioeconomic level than most of the population of our industrial city, which at that time had a 5 % college educated population.

Cham, the other Chinese participant was from mainland China, but she was living and studying in the U.S. She had come from a somewhat smaller town and a lower socioeconomic status than Zhong. Her first experience with foreigners at any length was her enrollment in the university and she was often homesick for China. Cham's language was quite good, but her manner of speaking still had a trace of an accent; however she was not at all difficult to understand. Her novice status with Americans brought many questions as she struggled to find her way during her first year in American higher education. I met and interviewed her during her second year of study, after we had become friends and colleagues in the same department.

The last participant, Kim, was of Korean descent and had the lowest level of language ability even though like many Koreans she had many years of English class and tutoring. Although possessing a high intellect and large vocabulary, I found her diction similar to my Korean high school students and had noticed that English pronunciation is particularly difficult for Koreans. Like many Koreans she spent a good bit of time with other Koreans here in the states, both at the university and at her Korean church and this could have been the source of her lower language skills, rather than pronunciation difficulties related to her native tongue (S. Park, personal communication, October, 2009). Kim was from a higher socioeconomic status than the

two mainland Chinese participants, but had similar struggles with adjusting to American academic culture.

Data Analysis and Findings

An inductive approach such as is found in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) is a suitable way to analyze a culturally situated study because it allows for thematic possibilities to arise while interacting with data, rather than using pre-set categories. This seems especially important when doing cross cultural research since often what is seen is initially understood through one's own cultural lens, and therefore biased. I began by looking for significant statements, followed by the meaning of those statements, and finally the themes of those meanings (Creswell, 2007). This method of analysis may seem simple and direct; however the jump from a significant statement to its meaning is quite a leap. If meanings that I assign to significant statements do not have fidelity, I am in murky waters indeed for the rest of the analysis. Indeed it was this concern that led Anfara and his colleagues to try and establish some guidelines for qualitative research, (but not in a way that forces it into a quantitative mold) (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Therefore very careful attention needs to be taken at this stage. The origins of the meanings from the significant statements will of course begin with the participants' statements, and then proceed to be interpreted from what I know of their culture and personality, and what the literature says.

Even with lots of personal experience with each of the cultures of my participants I am always aware of my status as an outsider. One type of validity check I have often used is to let CHC students read my summary and give me their feedback. What I am looking for is the notion that they find the statements and their matching interpretations to be a possible and even a reasonable match, even if they may see other equally reasonable interpretations that I missed.

My first question asked about their impression of East/West differences, and to some this may seem a bit unnecessary. After all volumes have been written on this topic and no one disputes that differences exist. The reason for its inclusion however was to set the stage for my participants' views on how a CHC student needs to adapt in order to successfully navigate a Western education, and to get a feel for their attitudes toward both the West and their own culture. Cham described the differences this way: *Western culture is more open-minded… it gives you more freedom…you can say almost anything without much concern, Eastern people are more careful and there are more rules that you need to follow.* Kim made similar remarks noting that *Western culture is more flexible than Eastern culture. They (Americans) respect more each person's personality, backgrounds, gender, situations, etc.*

Kim also mentioned peer pressure*: I had pressure I had to act same as my friends...having lunch together and having coffee and talking about celebrities. I prefer studying alone to [being] with my friends, but they did not understand.* I noted that Cham and Kim gave positive descriptions of Western culture as compared to Eastern, with Kim even going a bit further to being critical of her Korean culture. Sing took a different path; she described the two cultures in more neutral terms: *in western culture, people tend to highlight their private selves...their sense of personal importance based on their individual capabilities and traits, whereas in Eastern cultures, people tend to be more mindful of their public selves...making sure that they behavior and words support group harmony Also, Western culture tends to make allowance for more open expression of feelings and individuals tend to seem more willing to share experiences, feelings etc. whereas Eastern culture does not have as much room for this and upon first meeting an individual from such a culture they tend to be more formal and reserved.* Of course from observing Sing as a student for eight years, and knowing about her

struggles with some of the brash and catty American girls in her class, and the many informal

conversations she and I had over the years about it, I picked up a bit of her disdain for *the*

highlighting their private selves. I thought that was a very clever way to say that sometimes

some Americans like to brag and show off, and I wanted to nominate her for the diplomatic core.

Understandably, her extensive exposure to Western classmates made her more realistic, and

therefore more critical.

The novice status of the other two participants, as well as their coming from stricter

communities (one communist and one very socially hierarchical) could account for their more

positive comments. Zhong had a similar way of describing the two cultures saying that *Eastern*

people are more people-oriented and I think Westerners are task-oriented. Eastern people are

more collective and Westerners are more independent. These descriptions on face value seem to

be value neutral, but could be an indication of the politeness that mainland Chinese exhibit when

dealing with foreigners. I did ask if there was anything else she would like to say about this but

she declined saying if she thinks of other things later she will tell me. I suspected that the

politeness of my Chinese colleague coupled with my seniority in terms of age would not permit

her to go any further and I realized that perhaps a younger researcher could get more

information. This limitation should be noted, as well as how it further confirmed my own belief

in the contextual nature of discussions with CHC students.

When asked if they thought that CHC students could adapt to Western educational

methods all four participants responded with a definite and optimistic yes. Sing summed up their

replies: *every individual has the potential to change the way they do things, it's just a matter of*

how much time it takes and Cham added *it depends on the way how the Asian students study*

before they come to the Western country...However when asked to describe their own

participation levels or if they had a plan or strategy to increase those levels, the optimism faded a bit for some. Cham expressed confidence in her own abilities to study on her own before she came to the states, and to prepare herself for Western methods of instruction, however in her words: *The only thing I am still uncomfortable with is the class discussions.* Kim also admitted that class discussions were a difficult area for her and that in addition to time to adapt, CHC students *need internal motivation, though...or external motivations from peers or professors...In my case..I am more internal motivated person...so when I could not find what I really wanted to do here, I could not say anything in classrooms..I don't know....professor need to encourage Asian students in classrooms...*

Kim expressed a time of feeling lost and uncertain in her academic life and therefore she became extremely quiet in class, as I often observed. In a small doctoral seminar with only six students she often would not say more than two or three words in the three hours of class each week. During this time however she would phone me or meet me in person and we would talk very freely and at great length. It was then that I realized that Kim and many other CHC students were not quiet by nature but contextually so. Sing first stated that *Asians who immigrated into a Western country or are international students who have more of a difficult time since they have been enculturated* [*sic*]*in a different educational environment* and added that her background in *an American international school for middle school and high school helped in terms of preparation for college here in the States.* Yet when asked about her current participation levels or if she had any goals and strategies for increased participation she admitted to having none: *not at the moment, that has been a primary area of struggle for me in terms of a Western educational methods and as of yet I'm still not sure as to how to best go about it.* She also mentioned that *right now my current participation level in class discussions is limited to asking questions in one*

class only and this was with a professor that she had previously had and therefore felt more comfortable.

Now that the interviews had uncovered some disparity between the optimistic views that CHC students can definitely adapt to the Western classroom and yet the lack of actual success, the participants were more forthcoming with frustrations. It could be that hearing their answers to my questions made them aware of this disparity and they felt the need to fully explain. As Sing said *a lot of it is just a strong feeling of discomfort...maybe even a little fear at expressing my thoughts and opinions on a subject in front of everyone else.* She continued to say that *it's something I've never really done or had to do for most of my educational career and it's rather overwhelming to be placed into such a classroom setting.* This was surprising to me since I knew that the international school where Sing attended had plenty of class discussions and I wondered how she managed to avoid them all and yet still become the valedictorian. Without any prompting Sing shared a bit more: *the enthusiasm which Western students also provide their opinions with* [*sic*] *is also intimidating ...they can come across as very forceful and a lot of the times discussions in class seem more like "debates" making it harder to feel comfortable.* It seemed that Sing was not only acculturated to being quiet in class, but that she was intimidated and uncomfortable with the habits of her Western colleagues, which made me wonder if this was culture and personality mixed. I know that my own discussion habits vary according to the behavior of the rest of the class, and therefore I felt I understood Sing's hesitation. I thought that she would be surprised to find me quiet in class, but to me it was simply a matter of comfort and every class had a different comfort level.

Chen's description of class discussion sounded like a runaway train: *I know many wonderful ideas come from discussion. But for most of the [time] just feel it elusive, you never*

know where it's going, and how you can get something useful from it. She also mentioned

difficulties that all second language students have: *…at the beginning, it's difficult mainly*

because it's difficult to do two types of processing at the same time. I have to understand what

they are talking about and at the same time I have to thinking [sic] about my ideas. There is not

enough time. Cham also added that *at times I feel that we are not important to the American*

students; they are not aware of us. She also asked *why do they (*Americans*) think we have*

nothing to say? This degree of candor from an international student (to a foreigner) is not usual

and was therefore both surprising and appreciated.

Kim provided more insight into her Korean background: *In Korean culture it's really*

hard to discuss something. We have to consider age, position, academic backgrounds when we

have a discussion. I felt I have to have a general idea which is considered normal. When I asked

Kim to clarify this last statement she explained that she needed to make sure that her opinions

would be within prescribed boundaries, or else she risked disapproval or even humiliation.

Cohesiveness is particularly valued in Korean culture, as the parents of my Korean students often

reminded me (sometimes in an apologetic way). Kim also mentioned the need for an intelligent

answer, and how she compared her prepared answer to her classmates and worried that her

answers would make her sound *stupid.* She contended that language competency as well as

domain knowledge was needed. Cham however told me a story of a Taiwanese colleague who

had high language competency and high domain knowledge, but to her surprise did not speak at

all in their class, even though Cham urged her to do so.

Zhong however found her experience in a Western graduate program to be a positive one:

we did many discussions or project while doing the graduate school work. I can listen to others

and express my own thoughts freely. Improved much. I got more involved in class than at the

very beginning. The more I get used to the way of teaching, the often [*sic*] *I can take part in. Probably the language is a factor to prevent me from participating.* I could not help wondering if her already established colleague and friend relationships helped this along. In the face-to-face classes we often asked her for her opinion, as did the professors who were very personable and interested in her and her country. I do not believe that those external prompts were of no account since I saw Zhong in other settings (large faculty meetings) where she hardly spoke at all. I was also surprised to hear her cite language as a factor since her spoken language was quite good.

Cham provided some further insights into her feelings when she did not live up to her expectation to contribute. Here is her account of a qualitative research class, worth reprinting in full:

> *I remember even in my first small group discussion, I could not say a sentence I was so intimidated that time it was a discussion based on 8400 reading. I did the reading very early, by the time we were discussing, I totally forgot what I read. The instructor gave a list of questions that we should talk about but I guess I didn't attend to those aspects mentioned in the questions when I was doing the reading also because the other three group members were all American students, they were talking quickly about their responses to those questions and moving very fast [to] the next question, I even did not have time to think, at the end, one of the girls smiled to me and said "oh, next time we need to let you say something" I felt ashamed. I thought probably they would believe I didn't do the reading at all.*

This feeling of shame was also in place when Cham mentioned her American advisor *talked for her* at a meeting of several of his advisees. *I was blaming myself at that time.* She

mentioned however that as time passes and she steps out in small ways she is getting more used to the scary waters of class discussions.

The last part of the interview asked for suggestions for professors or classmates that could help increase the participation of Asian students. There were quite a few suggestions, and most of them seem relatively easy to implement. Three strategies were mentioned by all of the participants: some warmth or encouragement from the professor, small groups (and their management) and getting discussion questions ahead of time. Sing suggested a brief exchange with professors outside of class that encouraged Asian students to share in class. When I asked for an example she quickly provided me with a script that made me think she had given this some thought:

well...something along the lines of...'I can tell that you're very engaged in the lecture and what is going on in class. In looking at the work you've done for me, I also believe that you have some great thoughts on this topic that you can share with the class during our discussion times. How do you feel about that?'

I was impressed that two simple sentences and a question could possibly provide sufficient encouragement to a reticent CHC student. At least Sing believed that it could. Did her swiftness in producing this mean that she had wished for someone to say this to her? It reminded me of scripts I had rehearsed in my head when confronted with a difficult situation.

Additionally Cham suggested varying the groups—sometimes letting the Asian students sit together, and even talk for a while in their native tongue. She mentioned that *when we were grouped with American students they would be talking a lot, and I felt they don't really care about our ideas.* However she noted that sometimes they should sit with the Americans so they can learn Western ways. She suggested mixed groups could be a compromise (she seemed to be

thinking out loud during this part of the interview) but with a majority of Asian students to level the playing field, at least once in a while.

In reference to getting the questions ahead of time, Kim reminded me that *Asian students feel more comfortable with really well-structured classes…when we can expect what the next step is we can prepare before the class.* Zhong agreed and added: *instructors can design some questions that Asian students are good at or familiar with. I am not saying that instructors need to cater for Asian students. I mean instructors can take a good use of students' different background to design the lesson.*

Discussion and Conclusions

In regards to the research questions, CHC students described their classroom behavior as quiet and their feelings about it as optimistic, worried, fearful, ashamed, and frustrated. They often mentioned that they needed time in both the short term and the long term and that they had language, culture, and individual issues that kept them silent in class. This concurs with the literature but what was noted during the interviews is that those with excellent language skills were not any more talkative in class than those with lower language skills, and this was not mentioned in the literature. I thought that this would be a disappointing bit of news to those who feel that higher levels of English would give them more agency in class discussions.

The main themes that emerged were internal motivation (which CHC students have) and external support (which they need). These themes seemed to be a direct answer to the third research question which asked what suggestions CHC students would have for professors. Deciding to try to participate did not seem to be enough; the participants expressed a need for some external support, and their suggestions for how to accomplish this did not seem

unreasonable. I noticed that they did not say that they could not succeed or that they did not want to, but only that some minor adjustments could help them to be more successful. Furthermore the support seemed to be divided into four categories: structure, time, anonymity, and relationship (S.T.A.R.). A summary of the participants' suggestions in these four categories are included below in Table 1:

Table 1

External Support: Pilot Study Suggestions for Increasing Participation-S.T.A.R.

Structure	Time	Anonymity	Relational Aspects
small groups/pairs	more time to craft responses	anonymous written responses ok at times	encouraging comments
limited use of large group	slow down pace of dialogue	group responses ok	encouraging instructor email
no requirement for # of turns	get questions ahead of time	no cold calling	discourse etiquette
no quizzes for reading check	wait time	controversial not confrontational	slang explanations provided
student leaders	web-based discussion starter	no special attention in class	cultural sensitivity

In CHC cultures much is made of the instructor's role; it could be that they and their instructional design are the key to increased participation. Often instructors are not aware of CHC students needing support, even though they are aware of their quietness in class. From my experience it is not that the instructors are uncaring, but rather they are unsure as to how to draw out the quiet students of their own culture, let alone of a different one. What is striking about the solutions is that they are quite simple: varied small groupings, getting questions ahead of time, and encouragement outside of class. This last one may seem a bit burdensome but instructors are already writing small notes on assignments so adding a sentence or two encouraging them to share their good ideas does not seem like too much of an addition to their workload.

What does seem like an unrealistic expectation is getting classmates to care about the ideas of CHC students. Although *Study Abroad* programs are growing in popularity most international students do not have many friendships with American students. Equally unrealistic is getting CHC students to push their way in and have their say; therefore the instructor seems to be the most feasible route to facilitating a good outcome for CHC students. The participants made it clear that they do not expect to be catered to, nor do they want too much attention focused on them in class. However many of their suggested implementations would not do so, nor would they disrupt instructional goals. These invisible supports could be designed in a way that helps CHC students, but are not noticeable to anyone. Getting questions ahead of time, or the assignment of a reader leader are two examples of such support. These structures require some planning from the instructor, but are not strategies that put the spotlight on anyone.

It is unlikely for example that non-CHC students would think that getting questions ahead of time was done to help or favor any particular group, or even if this occurs to them-it is a benign support in that it does no one any harm. Native speakers may choose to ignore this

support, opting instead to look at the questions at the very last minute, which of course is their choice. My experience with CHC students convinces me that they will take advantage of this and every support strategy that helps them be more prepared for class work. This seems to be a very simple way to adjust the instructional design of a course. It is similar to designing chairs that can support a 300 pound person; they will also support a 100 pound person but neither fact needs to be announced. They are simply designed with both people in mind and accomplish the goal of seating people in an unnoticeable way.

Of course it could be that even with support from instructors that CHC students would be quiet. However when I tried some of these structures in my own high school classroom the class participation of my CHC students did increase so I am optimistic that they could work with adult learners. The implementation of the suggestions from this study could be the subject of the next study. If the CHC students' suggestions are not successful then researchers and CHC students may need to go back to the drawing board. If they are successful then this can have a large impact on reticent students of any culture, and their instructors.

APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What differences do you think exist between Eastern and Western culture?

2. Do you think Asian students are able to adapt to Western educational methods?

3. What has helped you to adapt to Western educational methods?

4. Do you have any goals or strategies for participation in class discussions? (Can you elaborate?)

5. How would you describe your current participation level in class discussions? (Can you elaborate?)

6. If you are not satisfied with your current level of participation, can you explain what prevents you from participating more fully in class discussions?

7. What would you like to say to Western instructors that might help you to participate more in class?

8. What would you like to say to Western students that might help you participate more in class discussions?

9. Can you think of anything else that would help you to be more active in class discussions?

10. If you were going to teach a class that included discussion, how would you get CHC students to talk more?

APPENDIX C

DISSERTATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe your current participation level in class discussions?

2. Can you talk about anything that prevents you from participating more fully in

   class discussions?

3. Do you think CKT students are able to adapt to discussion oriented classes?

4. What has helped you to adapt to discussion oriented classes?

5. If you were going to teach a class that included discussion, how would you get the

   CKT students to talk more?

6. What would you like to say to students or instructors that might help you participate

   more in class discussions?

APPENDIX D

RECRUITING SCRIPT

Call for participation in my study:

"Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Students in Discussion Oriented Graduate Education: Emic Perspectives on Increasing Class Participation"

After nine years of living in China and working with Asian students from many countries, I have found them to be one way inside the American classroom (very quiet) and another way outside (fun, interesting, good thinkers, and very talkative). Therefore I am interested in the causes of Asian students' classroom behavior, and your opinions about what could be done to increase participation of Asian learners in classroom discussions.

I hope to conduct a **two hour interview** with you on a text chat of your choice at a time that is convenient for you. These interviews are for a research project and if you would like to participate please respond to this email and I will send you a consent form.

Thank you! Elizabeth (Liz) May

APPENDIX E

EMAIL CONSENT FORM

Hello _____

I am conducting research under the direction of Professor Michael Orey in the Department of Educational Psychology & Instructional Design at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled "Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Students in Discussion Oriented Graduate Education: Emic Perspectives on Increasing Class Participation". The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of Asian learners and their opinions about their classroom participation.

Your participation will involve a text chat in the instant messaging platform of your choice, and should only require about one hour of your time. The chat can be divided into several different times for your convenience.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no need for any identifying information, with the exception of nationality, gender, age, area of study, and language level to be known to anyone except the researcher. The names of the participants will be kept on a jump drive belonging to the researcher, and will not reside on any computer, public or private. Only the researcher will have access to this data, and it will be destroyed one month from the date of the interviews.

The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format.

Remember, Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, once the materials are received by the researcher, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed.

The findings from this project may provide information on causes of classroom behavior for all types of Asian students in Western universities. Educationally, the benefits of the research would be accrued to Asian students as well as their Western counterparts, and professors. When any Asian students participate more fully in class discussions, they will have their voices heard and their Western peers will learn more about them and their culture, and therefore grow in intercultural competence. Additionally, their Western professors will have a better understanding of this very large segment of international students in Western education. Furthermore this study could yield broader benefits by increasing understanding of reticent students of any culture.

The potential benefits for human kind would be a better understanding of the Other; relying on stereotypes or shying away from interactions with foreigners is neither beneficial nor justifiable in today's global society. Therefore your participation in this study may yield benefits beyond having your voice heard and being understood. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at (706) 410-4478 or send an e-mail to lizmay@uga.edu. You may also use my *Skype* name, maydaysasia.

Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to

The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens,

Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

Your affirmative reply to this email indicates that you have read the information in this

attached document and are agreeable to the terms of the study.

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. May