AN EXAMINATION OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL

COMPETENCE THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A CULTURAL PLUNGE

PROJECT

A Dissertation

by

LIANGYAN WANG

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Lynne Masel Walters
Committee Members,	Valerie Hill-Jackson
	Joyce Juntune
	Marlon James
Head of Department,	Michael De Miranda

December 2019

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the intercultural competence of students from the People's Republic of China through creating a digital story based on a "cultural plunge" assignment in a graduate class for pre- and in-service teachers in the College of Education at a large public university in the Southwestern United States. The participants were required to "immerse" themselves in a culture substantially different from their own, and create a digital story to present what they had experienced and to reflect on what they had learned about others and themselves. Along with examining the content of the digital stories based on the VALUE model of intercultural competence, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to uncover the participants' perspectives on the cultural plunge project, their intercultural competence, and the digital storytelling process. The three research questions were: 1) What were the attitudes of participants about using digital storytelling for their cultural plunge project? 2) How did engaging in the cultural plunge project affect their intercultural competence? And 3) how did the participants find that using the digital storytelling technique helped them meet the goals of the cultural plunge project? The researcher and two independent coders conducted content analysis to identify the dimensions and perspectives reflected in the digital stories and interviews. The results showed that Chinese graduate students changed their attitudes toward using digital storytelling in the cultural plunge project, as, in the beginning, they had little interest in the project and were unsure about how to use the technology. In the end, they reported the project was interesting and valuable, and a good prompt for reflection. Additionally, the content analysis revealed the presence of the three VALUE dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, found to be related to the development of cultural competence. Through this assignment, the students learned about and reflected upon cultural differences in family life, personal relationships, learning, civic responsibility, and ways

of viewing the world. Such knowledge is profoundly vital to navigate the interconnected environment of the 21st century successfully. One implication is that the cultural plunge digital story helped prepare these future educators to work with culturally diverse students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the relentless support of my committee. I am especially indebted to Dr. Lynne Walters, my committee chair, and her husband, Dr. Timothy Walters, who have been greatly supportive of my dissertation writing and who provided me valuable and practical advice to pursue my academic goals. Thank you for not only being emotionally supportive but also giving me a place to live while writing my dissertation. On the academic level, Dr. Lynne Walters led me to the world of digital stories. Under her supervision, I learned how to define research questions, develop interview questions, collect data, and analyze data. Dr. Timothy Walters provided endless advice on writing my proposal and dissertation.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the rest of my dissertation committee members. I am grateful to Dr. Hill-Jackson, as an expert in intercultural competence and theoretical framework, for her crucial marks that allowed me to develop a modified rubric or data analyzing, and justify my theoretical framework of this study. I am thankful to Dr. Marlon James. Dr. James encouraged me to what I was interested in while advising on how to revise my proposal and shape my final dissertation. I also show special thanks to Dr. Joyce Juntune for her positive feedback and suggestions to develop appropriate interview questions for qualitative studies.

I cannot begin to express my thanks to Dr. Martha Green, who I call "My American Mom." Dr. Green and I met ten years ago, and since then, she has been a great advisor to my studies and personal life. She cares about important decisions made, and she was proud of each step that I accomplished. Without her encouragement, I could not finish my degree. Thank you, Martha, my American mom.

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professors Lynne Walters, Valerie Hill-Jackson and Marlon James of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture and Professor Joyce Juntune of the Department of Educational Psychology.

All other work conducted for the dissertation was completed by the student independently.

Funding Sources

This work received no funding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This paper will show how digital storytelling, based on a cultural plunge project, can help

Chinese students at an American university develop the kind of intercultural competence that they

will need to successfully navigate a multicultural society (Gorski & Clark, 2001; Kurubacak, 2007).

Digital stories are personal narratives that document a wide range of culturally and historically

embedded lived experiences by combining voice, sound, and images into a short video, developed

by non-professionals with non-professional tools, to be communicated to an audience (Lambert,

2010). While they process multimodal and digital text (Walsh, 2010), they learn to be culturally

responsive to diversity (Gay, 2002). "The digital story project provides a context for sharing

experiences and an opportunity for thinking about identity, ethnicity, and culture" (Weis,

Benmayor, O'Leary & Eynon, 2002, p. 5).

Today's schools must educate students to consider culture because they will work, live and

learn in a multicultural society (Banks, 1997, 2015; Craft, 2017; Manning, Baruth & Lee, 2017).

Students must be able to interact and compete with other people from diverse cultures, identities,

ethnicities, and language groups. (Banks et al., 2001; Parekh, 2001). Cultural diversity is both an

opportunity and a challenge for students. To be socially and academically successful in this

environment, students must develop intercultural competence, which is described as the ability to

effectively interact with individuals from groups markedly different from their own (Deardorff,

2006; Lustig & Koester, 2003; Rathje, 2007). They need to improve their knowledge, attitudes,

and skills to adapt to a multicultural society. Knowledge, attitudes, and skills are the three

assessment dimensions of intercultural competence (Phillips & McLawhon, 2013).

Intercultural competence through international interconnections, on a personal or political

1

level, is increasingly essential in the 21st century as the world becomes smaller through travel, technology, and trade. "Getting smaller," said Milton Bennett, creator of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, "doesn't mean the world is becoming identical, it means having more and more contact with people who are culturally different. Being able to deal with this cultural difference peacefully, as well as creatively and innovatively, is becoming a survival issue to thrive in a global world" (MKB, 2019).

American colleges and universities have welcomed an increasing number of international students since the Second World War. Their presence reflected a key aspect of United States foreign policy in the post-war period, which involved using education to strengthen relations with other countries around the world. The specific goals were to bolster education in foreign countries, strengthen international educational relationships, assist newly liberated countries in reconstructing their educational systems, offer technical assistance to developing and recovering countries, and share the United States culture and educational achievements with the rest of the world (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998).

Today, the United States aid to foreign nations in the area of education has a two-fold goal. On the one hand, it seeks to export the United States education to the world by sending American scholars and American students abroad. On the other hand, it aims to bring the world into the United States education by encouraging international students to study at the United States schools. Internationalizing the United States educational system to promote diversity was part of the plan from the very beginning (Banjong & Olson, 2016).

Diversity has become so important in American institutions of higher education that it has been folded into their statements of purpose. Most United States colleges and universities now have Mission and Vision Statements that involve multicultural, intercultural, and international

educational goals (Sheppard, 2004; Stromquist, 2007; Basbay, 2014). One part of the University's mission statement, for example, includes the following, "It [the University] "welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy."

The impetus for these changes in the mission of American universities is a significant shift in the United States policy on education, which is now seen as a tool for building intercultural competence, understanding other groups of people, and for fostering relations with other nations (Banjong & Olson, 2016). Intercultural competence has been defined as the ability to adapt to, learn from and "relate respectfully to people of your own culture as well as people from other cultures" (Trask & Hamon, p.128). Landis, Bennett, and Bennett (2004) said the intercultural skill set includes the ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstandings, and developed adaptive behavior. This skill set can be thought of as an "expanded repertoire of behavior—a repertoire that includes behavior appropriate to one's own culture, but that does not thereby exclude alternative behavior that might be more appropriate in another culture" (p. 149).

More contact with people who are culturally different is one of the great advantages of welcoming young people from foreign countries who enroll in American colleges and universities. Their American classmates not only learn about foreign cultures, but the interaction also enhances their self-confidence, leadership, quantitative skills, and other abilities long after they graduate. According to a Duke University study of alumni from several universities, Americans who engaged with international students, while on campus, are more likely to appreciate art and literature, place current problems in historical perspective, and read or speak a foreign language. They also are more willing to reexamine their political and religious viewpoints and their beliefs about other races or ethnicities (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013).

The benefits of international students transcend cultural diversity by impacting the American economy. Using the International Student Economic Value, NAFSA found international students studying at the United States colleges and universities supported more than 455,000 American jobs during the 2017-2018 academic year. They contributed $39 billion to the economy during the 2017-2018 academic year, more than doubling in value over the previous decade (NAFSA, 2019). Such growth was explained, in part, by increases in the numbers of international students from upper-middle-income economies and nations with scholarship programs, which enable their citizens to study abroad. In 2013, at least two-thirds of international students in the United States paid tuition with personal funds (Groden, 2015).

The bulk of international students in the United States come from countries with emerging market economies, such as China and India. Although rising incomes in those countries imply increasing demands for higher education, the insufficient supply of quality higher education in these nations, combined with the status and job market attractiveness of a foreign degree, tend to push their citizens to seek education overseas (Chevalier, 2014). The need to learn a popular language such as English, for example, which is the global language of technology and for communicating scientific knowledge, is one vital driving force pushing international students to study in English-speaking countries (Chevalier, 2014).

Other English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, are popular with international students. However, the United States has historically been the top destination owing to its quality higher education system, welcoming culture, a wider range of schools and programs, and a relatively open labor market. Today, the United States remains the country of choice for the largest number of international students, hosting about 1.1 million of the 4.6 million enrolled worldwide in the 2017-2018 academic year (NAFSA, 2019).

While this is an increase in international enrollment over the previous year, it is the slowest growth rate in a decade. Multiple factors have contributed to this slowed enrollment, including the rising cost of American higher education, stricter immigration laws, student visa delays, and denials, and student fears stoked by anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies in the United States that appear to that make life more difficult for foreigners. Changing political and social conditions and opportunities in home countries and increasing competition from other countries for students also have can also be factors that explain the decline (Zong & Batalova, 2019).

The largest group of international students is made up of Chinese nationals, who account for roughly 30% of all international students. There were about 340,000 of them in July 2018. (India comes in a distant second with about 200,000 students.). Over the last decade, the number of Chinese students studying in the United States more than tripled. During the 2007 to 2008 school year, there were 81,127 international students from China. A decade later, in 2017 to 2018, there were 363, 341 Chinese international students at US universities (Shenoy, 2019).

The students, mostly from China's rapidly expanding middle class, can afford to pay full tuition. Moreover, Chinese parents are more than willing to spend that money on education. Thanks to China's one-child policy, today's college students are part of a generation of singletons, and their newly affluent parents—and, in all likelihood, both sets of grandparents—are deeply invested in their success.

This is a godsend for states whose colleges have faced sharp budget cuts in recent years (Bartlett & Fischer, 2011). They actively recruit Chinese students to help make up budget shortfalls. For example, 41% of international students in Vermont were from China in July 2018, followed by 40% for both Wisconsin and Oregon. In Texas, 15.9% of international students in Texas are Chinese (Zhou, 2018). At the State's land-grant institution, there were 6200 international students

enrolled in the Fall, 2018, semester. The highest number (1,778) came from China. India, which had been in first place for most of the years before 2010, came in second with 1,554 students (International Student Services, 2018).

The number of Chinese students coming to the United States has stopped growing at the pace of a few years ago (Shenoy, 2019). Among the possible reasons for the decline are the slowing Chinese economy, which means that parents have less money to spend on a child's foreign education. More significantly are the new rules that make it harder get a visa to enter and remain in the United States, as are increasing tensions between the United States and China over issues of higher education, intellectual property, trade, and tariffs. Moreover, the Chinese Ministry of Education has warned students about the difficulties they may face if they pursue their goal of an American university degree. New Chinese policies not only encourage students to stay in their home country, "So there is this kind of perception of the United States not being as friendly as before when it comes to Chinese students," said one student with aspirations for an American degree. "But so far, the trend in China— of getting an education abroad — United States is still the number one destination" (Shenoy, 2019).

First, this is important because critical thinking is a key part of reflection (Vezzosi, n.d.), and reflection involves the capability of approaching information in an active, evaluative, and creative way. "The concept of critical thinking is often related to the idea of lifelong learning, as one of the vital competencies required to live in a knowledge-based society. A fundamental aspect of critical thinking is the meta-cognitive activity, which brings to reflect on the thinking itself, to evaluate one's thinking practice, and to learn from the same learning experience" (p. 3).

Second, little is understood about reflection and critical thinking in the Chinese context. In China, critical thinking, at least as understood in the West, is rarely encouraged, and often actually

discouraged (O'Sullivan & Guo, 2010). The heart of the issue seems to rest in the "individual perspective and independent thinking" present in Western culture and the Chinese embrace of a "holistic perspective" (O'Sullivan & Guo, 2010, p. 69).

Digital storytelling is an effective medium for reflection and critical thinking. Constructing a digital story requires individuals that organize information, write and use technology, but most importantly, authors must reflect on the experience. They must also choose and sequence images that support the message of the text, which requires critical awareness of the meaning that they desire to convey (Walters, Green, Wang & Walters 2011). Unlike oral stories that are subject to varying interpretations and emphasis, digital stories become permanent artifacts that capture a specific moment in time, one telling of experience and stand as objects for personal reflection and critique and sharing with an audience (Lathem, Reyes, & Qi, 2006).

The approach of having students explore another culture and present their experiences in a digital story is a creative way to not only give full play to their advantages as digital natives but also to recognize and develop their intercultural competence.

The dissertation explores why Chinese students' intercultural competence is essential for both learning in the United States and living in China. Previous research has established that being able to function in an environment populated by diverse individuals is critical for citizens in the United States. However, little research has explored how Chinese students believe they can survive in the United States' multicultural society, and why it is important for Chinese students to improve their intercultural competence. This study will fill the gap in the knowledge of Chinese students' perception of their ability to function across cultures. Researchers also are interested in whether and how digital stories may promote and reveal the intercultural competence of those students.

This current study utilizes the concepts of previous scholars as guidelines for examining the data that has been collected, the semi-structured interviews of the Chinese students in the Cultural Foundations of Education course, and an analysis of the digital cultural plunge stories they created. Concerning the semi-structured interviews, this necessitates looking at communication competence. In the framework of this study, this competence is related to the ability of Chinese education students to create a reflective digital artifact based on the cultural plunge assignment. Concerning the actual digital artifacts, factors like cultural empathy are related to an analysis of the cultural plunge stories that they have created. This is related to what the cultural plunge meant in terms of developing cultural sensitivity and how this might relate to the development of intercultural competence that is needed in life and work today.

Determining these things is necessary for two reasons. First, as Hofstede (1984) pointed out, national culture has a significant impact on a person's worldview. Dimensions like uncertainty avoidance, individualism, power distance, and normative orientation impact how a person relates to and interacts with people and society. (See, for example, Hofstede, 1984). Second, most studies of reflection, the value of reflection, and the use of methods of reflection have been carried out in the context of Western societies.

This current study considers these from the perspective of pre-service teachers from the People's Republic of China, which has norms, values, and behaviors different from the Western context and the United States. The stories that surround a person in the People's Republic of China are different from those in the West and may lead to a different contextual understanding. Indeed, O'Sullivan and Guo (2010) found that the critical thinking inherent in reflection "is not only a skill set; it also reflects the belief system and cognitive orientation of the thinker" (p. 69). Thus, Chinese students who are suddenly faced with the requirement to think critically "must come to terms with

their ambivalence towards this concept. "This constitutes both an intellectual and a cultural challenge requiring time, practice, and disposition, in which they are being challenged to operate within the framework of a totally foreign philosophical orientation" (p. 70).

1.2 National

American colleges and universities have welcomed an increasing number of international students since the Second World War. Their presence reflected a main facet of the United States foreign policy in the post-war period, which involved using education to strengthen relations with other countries around the world. The specific goals of that policy were to bolster education in foreign countries, strengthen international educational relationships, assist newly liberated countries in reconstructing their educational systems, offer technical assistance to developing and recovering countries, and share the United States' culture and educational achievements with the rest of the world (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998).

Today, the United States aid to foreign nations in education has a two-fold goal. On the one hand, this aid seeks to export United States' education to the world by sending American scholars and American students abroad. On the other hand, this aid aims to bring the world into the educational system of the United States by encouraging international students to study at American schools. Internationalizing the United States' educational system to promote diversity was part of the plan from the very beginning (Banjong & Olson, 2016).

Diversity has become so important in American institutions of higher education that it has been folded into their statements of purpose. Most colleges and universities the United States snow have mission and vision statements that contain multicultural intercultural and international educational goals (Sheppard, 2004; Stromquist, 2007). Texas A&M University's mission statement, for example, includes the following, "It [the University] "welcomes and seeks to serve

persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy" (Texas A&M University, n.d.)

The impetus for these changes in the educational goals of the schools in the United States is a significant shift in American policy concerning the view of education as a tool for building intercultural competence, understanding other groups of people, and for fostering relations with other nations (Banjong & Olson, 2016). Intercultural competence has been defined as the ability to adapt to, learn from and "relate respectfully to people of your own culture as well as people from other cultures" (Trask & Hamon, p.128). Landis, Bennett, and Bennett (2004) said the intercultural skill set includes the ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstandings, and develop adaptive behavior. This skill set can be thought of as an "expanded repertoire of behavior—a repertoire that includes behavior appropriate to one's own culture, but that does not thereby exclude alternative behavior that might be more appropriate in another culture" (p. 149).

More contact with people who are culturally different is one of the great advantages of welcoming young people from foreign countries to enroll in American colleges and universities. Their American classmates not only learn about foreign cultures, but the experience enhances their self-confidence, leadership, quantitative skills, and other abilities in a manner that persists long after they graduate. According to a Duke University study of alumni from several universities, Americans who engaged with international students while on campus are more likely to appreciate art and literature, place current problems in historical perspective, and read or speak a foreign language. They also are more willing to reexamine their political and religious views and their beliefs about other races or ethnicities (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013).

The benefits of international students transcend cultural diversity; their presence also impacts the American economy. Using the International Student Economic Value, NAFSA found

international students studying at the United States colleges and universities supported more than 455,000 American jobs during the 2017-2018 academic year. They contributed $39 billion to the economy during the 2017-2018 academic year, more than doubling in value over the previous decade (NAFSA, 2019). Such growth was explained, in part, by increases in the numbers of international students from upper-middle-income economies and nations with scholarship programs, which enable their citizens to study abroad. In 2013, at least two-thirds of international students in the United States used personal funds to pay tuition (Groden, 2015).

The students, principally from China's rapidly growing middle class, can afford to pay full tuition. Moreover, Chinese parents are more than willing to spend that money on education. Thanks to China's previous one-child policy, today's college students are part of a generation of singletons, and their freshly affluent parents—and, in all likelihood, both sets of grandparents— are intensely invested in their success. This has become a godsend for colleges that have faced seep budget cuts in recent years (Bartlett & Fischer, 2011).

The bulk of international students in the United States hail come from countries with emerging market economies, such as China and India. The need to learn a popular language, such as English, which is the global language of technology and for communicating scientific knowledge, is one vital driving force pushing international students to study in English-speaking countries (Chevalier, 2014).

Other English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, are popular with international students. However, the United States has historically been the top destination owing to its quality higher education system, welcoming culture, a wider range of schools and programs, and a relatively open labor market. Today, the United States has remained the country of choice for the greatest number of international students, hosting about 1.1 million

of the 4.6 million enrolled worldwide in the 2017-2018 academic year (NAFSA, 2019).

While this is an increase in international enrollment over the previous year, it is the growth rate in a decade. Multiple factors have contributed to this slowed enrollment, including the rising cost of the United States higher education, stricter immigration laws, student visa delays, and denials. Another factor is the fear, stoked by anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies in the United States, that life will be more difficult for foreigners. Changing political and social conditions and opportunities in home countries and increasing competition from other countries for students also can explain the decline (Zong & Batalova, 2019).

1.3 Regional

International students in the United States are not evenly dispersed across the country. About 30% of these students attended school, just three states --in New York, California, or Texas (Zong & Batalova, 2019). Although most Chinese students are in coastal states, certain states rely on China for students much more than others. Forty-two percent of international students in Vermont were from China in July 2018, followed by 40% for both Wisconsin and Oregon. 15.9% of international students in Texas are Chinese (Zhou, 2018). At this university where this study was conducted, there were 6200 international students enrolled in the Fall, 2018, semester. The highest number (1,778) came from China. India, which had been in first place for most of the years before 2010, came in second with 1,554 students (International Student Services, 2018).

What is true of Texas A&M University is also true of the United States at large. The biggest group of international students comprises Chinese nationals, who account for roughly 30% of all international students. There were about 340,000 of them in July 2018, with India coming in as a distant second with about 200,000 students. During the last decade, the number of Chinese students studying in the United States more than tripled. In the 2007 to 2008 school year, there were 81,127

international students from China. Ten years later, in the 2017-2018 academic year, 363,341 Chinese international students attended US universities (Shenoy, 2019).

Today, the number of Chinese students coming to the United States has ceased growing at the pace of a few years ago (Shenoy, 2019). Among the possible reasons for the decline are the slowing Chinese economy, which means that parents have less money to spend on a child's foreign education. More significantly are the new rules that make it harder get a visa to enter into and remain in the United States and increasing tensions between the United States and China over issues of higher education, intellectual property, and trade. New Chinese policies only encourage students to stay in their home country. Moreover, the Chinese Ministry of Education has warned students about the difficulties they may face if they pursue their goal of an American university degree., "So there is this kind of perception of the United States not being as friendly as before when it comes to Chinese students," said one student with aspirations for an American degree. "But so far, the trend in China— of getting an education abroad — United States is still the number one destination" (Shenoy, 2019).

1.4 Problem of Statement

The dissertation study will explore why Chinese students' intercultural competence is essential for both learning in the United States and living in China. Studies have found that competence is critical for citizens in the United States, but little research has explored how Chinese students survive in the United States' multicultural society, and why Chinese students need to improve their intercultural competence. This study will fill the knowledge gap concerning Chinese students' intercultural competence. Researchers are also interested in finding out how digital storytelling may apply to a variety of educational settings; however, little has been discussed in

how digital stories may uncover the intercultural competence of students, specifically international students at American colleges and universities.

1.5 The Purpose of the Study

The researcher will collect data from the digital stories and interviews of the participants and analyze them for dimensions. The participants are students in the College of Education from the People's Republic of China who have taken a cultural and educational related course and have voluntarily participated in the study. Little is known about if and how these students engage in reflective practices, and whether they perceive that the technology of digital storytelling can help them in the process.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Scholars have used digital storytelling across a wide variety of areas to uncover students' knowledge, attitudes, and activities. However, there is little research on the impact of the platform on the creators' intercultural competence, particularly from a non-Western context. The study reported here will help to fill this knowledge gap and provide insights into whether and how the reflective process promoted by the digital storytelling experience, might help these students improve their intercultural knowledge.

1.7 Research Questions

This study sought to find answers to the following research questions.

1. What were the attitudes of participants about using digital storytelling for their cultural plunge project?

2. How did engaging in the cultural plunge project affect their intercultural competence?

3. How did the participants find that using the digital storytelling technique helped them meet the goals of the cultural plunge project?

1.8 Definition of the Terms

1.8.1 Critical Thinking

"Critical thinking consists of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems" before deciding what to believe or do (Willingham, 2007, p. 8).

1.8.2 Culture

"The languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful" (Culture, 2019).

1.8.3 Cultural Competence

"Cultural competence involves understanding and appropriately responding to the unique combination of cultural variables and the full range of dimensions of diversity that the professional and client/patient/family bring to interactions" (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.)

1.8.4 Cultural Plunge Assignment

The objective of this assignment was to "participate in a social/cultural awareness project and share your findings with the class. Each person in the class is to participate in a cultural

plunge that requires her/him to be in an environment and participate in something that you would not normally do within your own culture" (Walters, EDCI 602 syllabus).

1.8.5 Cultural Plunge Video

The cultural plunge video is a 3-5-minute digital story about the cultural plunge. This is a personal reflection. "Focus on your feelings about the event and the culture. What did you expect? What did you find? What did you learn? How did this make you feel? Did it impact the way you view your own culture and the culture of others? How will this experience affect how you teach and interact with others, particularly your students and colleagues? What did you learn about the group you plunged into? How do you feel about that group now? (Walters, EDCI 602 syllabus).

1.8.6 Digital Immigrant

A digital immigrant is "a person born before the existence or current pervasive nature of digital technologies and had to adopt digital technology later in life. The immigrant "is not naturally familiar or instinctively comfortable and, therefore, must adapt to using digital technology, interfaces, and software…. Digital immigrants are considered to be less technically able than digital natives, and it is argued that they can never develop the same level of technology skills and knowledge as digital natives" (IGI Global Dictionary, 2019; Prensky, 2001).

1.8.7 Digital Native

A digital native is someone who was born after the widespread adoption of digital technology. The term digital native does not refer to a particular generation, although some scholars assign the term to children born after 1980 (Prensky, 2001). "Instead, it is a catch-all category for children who have grown up using technology like the Internet, computers, and

mobile devices. This exposure to technology in the early years is believed to give digital natives a greater familiarity with and understanding of technology than people who were born before it was widespread" (Technopedia, n.d.).

1.8.8 Digital Story

Digital stories are personal narratives that document a wide variety of culturally and historically embedded lived experiences through the combination of voice, sound, and images into a short video that non-professionals develop with non-professional tools, to be communicated to others" (Lambert, 2010). The author writes and speaks the narrative, researches, and selects the video and audio elements and assembles the final product on a digital device (Lambert, 2010).

1.8.9 Digital Technology

"The term represents technology that relies on the use of microprocessors (i.e. computers) and applications that are dependent on computers, such as the Internet, as well as other devices, such as video cameras, phones, social media, online games, and personal digital assistants (PDAs)" (IGI Global, 2019)

1.8.10 Diversity

Diversity refers to an environment that incorporates individuals with who are different in terms of relevant factors, such as age, background, ethnicity, physical abilities, political and religious beliefs, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, language, and other personal attributes (Banks & Banks, 2015).

1.8.11 Globalization

Globalization refers to the ability people, companies, and governments to understand and function in an increasingly multicultural, international, yet interconnected environment (Globalization 101, 2019).

1.8.12 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence includes the cognitive, behavioral, and effective skills that lead to effective and appropriate behavior and communication in interactions that involve people from other cultures (Deardorf, 2011).

1.8.13 Interculturalizing

Interculturalizing is the process of making an environment or formatting a subject to make them culturally neutral (Hunter & Pearson, 2015).

1.8.14 Multicultural/Diversity

Multicultural incorporates ideas, beliefs, or people from many different countries and cultural backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 2015).

1.8.15 Reflection

Reflection is active, persistent, and conscious consideration of one's beliefs, experiences, feelings, and responses, interpreting and analyzing the information to learn from it and apply the new knowledge to the current situation (Dewey, 1933).

1.8.16 Self-awareness

Self-awareness is having a clear perception of one's personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, character, beliefs, motivation, desires, and emotions (Roberts, 1998).

1.8.17 Self-reflection

Self-reflection in education is "a disciplined inquiry into the motives, methods, materials, and consequences of educational practice. It enables practitioners to thoughtfully examine conditions and attitudes which impede or enhance student achievement" (Norton, 1997)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion of reflection, how it helps in learning from experience, and how reflection can help individuals to draw upon their experience to improve their ability to navigate in a multicultural environment. This is followed by an examination of how storytelling, which can precipitate the reflection process, has evolved from various written media, including essays, journals, narratives, and portfolios to compose and reflect on their thoughts to include digital technology to provide a new data type with vast interpretive potential. The chapter includes information about digital natives who are comfortable using this technology, the multicultural environment in which they find themselves, and the intercultural competence required of them to live and learn in this new world. The chapter concludes with a look at a particular digital storytelling project, based on a cultural plunge.

2.1 Reflection

The dictionary definition of reflection is a "thought, idea, or opinion formed, or a remark made as a result of meditation" or "the consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose" (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Educational reformer John Dewey said that reflective thought was the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey 1933, p. 118). Reflection, he said, was critical because, through reflection, a person examines attitudes and actions, seeks for patterns of behavior, and looks for an understanding of reasons behind successes and failures. In the context of culture, reflection permits someone to correct misguided stereotypes

and mistaken actions and learn from them. Dewey stressed that reflection involves communication within a social context (Dewey, 1933).

In the context of education, Noffke and Brennan (1988) noted that "the act of reflection is - or perhaps can be and ought to be - the opportunity for the intersection of self and self, of theory and practice, of theory and theory, of history and future" (p. 21). However, as Benhabib, 1986, noted, "reflection ….is an ability to communicate and to engage in dialogue. In that we can name what drives and motivates us, we are closer to freeing ourselves of its power over us. …" (pp. 333-334).

Traditionally, individuals have utilized various written media, including essays, journals, narratives, and portfolios, to reflect on their thoughts. Narratives are ubiquitous in a person's life; they fill a person's cultural and social environment and shape his/her interactions with other people and events (Denning, 2009). Narrative descriptions in various forms create perceptions about past actions and perceptions, and "storied" accounts provide a sense for the behavior of others (Denning, 2009). Narratives are also used to inform decisions by constructing "what if" scenarios (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Stories during conversations with others, as well as within written and visual media, continually confront a person throughout life. Children hear, read, and discuss stories in school (Polkinghorne, 1988). Later, such stories surround a person, and individuals can explain, understand, and account for experiences through stories, which are constructed through reflections on experience (Blocher, 2008). "The process of re-evaluating experience includes relating new information to that which is already known, seeking relationships between new and old ideas, determining the authenticity for ourselves of the ideas and feelings that have resulted and making the resulting knowledge one's own" (Boase, 2008, p. 4).

Davis (2006) stated that people learn by reflecting upon experience, determining what it means, and distilling it into symbols to be expressed and remembered. Storytelling, which may be characterized as a narrative mode of intelligence (Bruner, 1986), is a way of thinking about an experience that values the worldview of an individual. Storytelling is linked to theoretical models of reflective learning in education (McDrury & Alterio, 2003) because storytelling allows individuals to recapture an experience, think about that experience, and evaluate that experience

Recently, digital storytelling, which is a complex narrative tool, has evolved to meet these needs. The characteristics of digital technology, which include immediacy, interactivity, spontaneity, and the capacity to promote self-evaluation, provide all manner of interpretive potential. Creating a digital story requires that individuals organize information, write, and utilize technology. (Barrett, 2005). They must select and sequence images that meaningfully support the message of the text, which requires a critical awareness of the meaning that is to be conveyed. By emphasizing some aspects of a story and not emphasizing others, authors reveal what they perceive to be essential elements. Different from oral stories that may change over time with the telling and the retelling, digital stories serve as permanent artifacts that encapsulate a specific moment in time and a unique recount of an experience. They become objects for personal reflection and critique (Lathem, Reyes, & Qi, 2006).

Thorough transforming a cultural experience into a digital artifact, individuals shape their understanding and individual subjectivity and learn to use digital technology effectively. The creation of digital stories increases awareness of culture and promotes reflection on individual values and beliefs, a critical first step in preparing for the challenges in a culturally diverse, multilingual, and interconnected world (Focho, 2010). The process helps the creators of digital narratives to become culturally sensitive global citizens who are conscious of planet-wide issues.

As Hall explained in his book, *The Silent Language* (1959), an effective way to learn about yourself is by taking the cultures of others seriously. This forces someone to attend to those details of life that differentiate him/her from someone else.

Also, the making of digital narratives provides participants with opportunities to understand and explore their topic through multiple media, which offer unique ways of approaching an issue (Ranker, 2008). The exposure to new ideas, metaphors, images, and technologies also can change how someone thinks about the world and his/her place in the world. This also provides the creator of a digital story with opportunities for "ideological becoming," which is the ongoing process of shaping his/her understanding and his/her identity through multiple senses (Bakhtin, 1981/2000; Murnen, 2007).

2.2 The Story of Digital Storytelling

Storytelling, which is one of the oldest forms of human communication, has played a significant role in human history, transmitting information across populations and generations (Delgado, 1989; Langellier & Peterson, 2011). From oral transmission to print to electronic media, the means of telling a story have evolved along with changing the culture, civilization, and technology (Blocher, 2008; Chung, 2007; Rance-Roney, 2008). In today's computer age, digital media provides an opportunity to tell stories through combing multimodal literacies, including images, audios, texts, and even video clips (Robin, 2008).

Storytelling is the original form of teaching (Pedersen, 1995). Storytelling is a simple but potent means of helping individuals to make sense of their complex and unordered world of experience by creating storylines (Bruner, 1991; van Gils, 2005). Digital storytelling is a transformational approach shifting traditional storytelling into the technology-infused 21st-century (Robin, 2008). Digital stories are personal narratives that document a wide variety of culturally

23

and historically embedded lived experiences through the combination of voice, sound, and images into a short video that non-professionals develop with non-professional tools, to be communicated to others (Lambert, 2010; Reed & Hill, 2010). Unlike oral stories that may have changeable interpretations and emphasis, digital stories become permanent artifacts that capture a specific moment in time or a single narration of an experience and serve as objects for personal reflection and critique and sharing (Lathem, Reyes, & Qi, 2006).

Despite the connection between storytelling and teaching, digital storytelling was not born to serve education. Digital storytelling was initially used to serve people who were interested in artistic experimentation, and in creating and sharing their narratives (Robin, 2008). The public could easily identify with the personal messages, mainly because these "video postcards" were stories of average people and relatable experience. The "postcards" were introduced first in traveling theatre performances, and later even on television. Dana Atchley, the digital storytelling pioneer, who first used the platform in the corporate arena, traveled the country with a significant digital performance, "Next Exit," which he considered to be a synthesis of his range of research and practices (The StoryCenter, 2019; see also, Woo, 2000).

In digital telling's first decades (the 1970s and 1980s), video personal messages were created by mobilizing much technical equipment and staff. Later, with the widespread use of digital technology, videos became easier to create and to view (The Anthropolis Association, n,d.). The first workshop about "personal narrative short film" making was held in 1993 at the American Film Institute in San Francisco. The Centre for Digital Storytelling (now The Story Center) was established at the same place, one year later. Since its establishment, the Center and its director, Joe Lambert, have become the most influential players in digital story instruction and promotion.

Inevitably the technology found its way into the classroom (Dreon, Kerper & Landis, 2011; Gregori-Signes, 2008; Heo, 2009; Hur & Suh, 2012; Ohler, 2006; Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2005; Sadik, 2008; Tsou, Wang, & Tzeng, 2006). Today, digital technology is being used in all forms of education, and educators and students view it as an exciting way to increase students' understanding of content, utilize their technological skills, enhance their motivation to learn, and develop their creativity (Burgess, 2006; Malita & Martin, 2010; Tackvic, 2012). Appropriately utilized, digital media encourages students to communicate, collaborate, and research as well as to integrate media into the storytelling process. Digital storytelling combines multimodal literacies in its use in modern classrooms.

According to Tiba, Condy, Chigona, and Tunjera (2013), teachers should employ digital storytelling in the classroom because it: 1) offers the potential to support learner-centered activities, 2) promotes the acquisition of multiple skill sets in learners, 3) permits voice in self-expression, 4) motivates and engages learners, 5) fosters deep reflection, and 6) encourages collaboration. Therefore, digital storytelling can improve the academic performance of students and can advance their acquisition of critical digital literacy, an essential 21st-century skill.

In the classroom, the instructor can use digital storytelling as a tool for teaching, and a student can use it as a technique for learning. Some educators may create their own stories and show them to their students to present new material. An engaging, multimedia-rich digital story can function as a hook to catch the attention of students and boost their interest in investigating new ideas. Teacher-created digital stories can be utilized to enhance a current lesson within a larger unit, as a means to facilitate discussion about the issues that a digital story raises, or as a method to make abstract or conceptual content more authentic and understandable (Robin, 2019).

Digital storytelling can serve as a potent tool for students who create their own stories. Rather than write "just another research paper," students may be assigned to make a digital story related to the topic being covered in class, for example, a current event, an historical figure or author, a social issue, or a complex scientific or mathematical problem (Green, Walters, Walters, & Wang, 2015; Walters, Green, Goldsby & Parker, 2018). This type of activity can generate interest, attention, and motivation for the "digital generation" of students who inhabit today's classrooms.

Digital stories also can be utilized to document diverse cultural and historical experiences that are embedded in an author's life. The process can capitalize on the creative talents of students as they began to reflect upon and tell stories of their own while analyzing and synthesizing a wide array of media and content. Also, students who take part in the construction of digital stories may develop increased communication skills by learning to shape their ideas, asking questions, voicing opinions, and constructing narratives. This process also can aid students as they learn to develop stories for an audience, share their ideas, and present knowledge in a personal and meaningful way, creating a permanent artifact of their feelings at a moment in time. Digital storytelling also appeals to students with a diverse range of learning styles and can foster collaboration when students work in groups. (Robin, 2019).

Although storytelling is not new to students, having been used across grades and subject areas, digital technology creates both opportunities and challenges for them (Condy et al., 2012). Students are digital natives, having been exposed to devices from birth. They are willing to integrate technology in their storytelling skills, while they are often simultaneously intimidated by working in ways that can "devoice" them from the focus of story (Hung, Hwang, & Huang, 2012),

expose them to unexpected audiences (Gibbins, 2013), or fear of receiving negative public feedback (Shields, 2015).

At the most fundamental level, the creation of a digital story does not require great technological mastery. User-friendly websites, free computer software, handheld mobile devices, and IOS or Android APPs allow students to make digital stories easily. Those students who want to become more sophisticated can receive additional training in creating video stories by attending workshops (Wales, 2012), engaging in online and face-to-face tutoring (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009), and seeking peer mutual assistance (Van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006).

2.3 Digital Natives

This young generation of Americans was born in a digital age and has grown up immersed in a digital world. According to a recent Pew Research Center (2018) report, almost all (95%) teens in the United States now own smartphones, which provide easy access to all the information on the Internet and immediate connections to their peers. More than three-quarters of teens (88%) have a desktop or laptop computer at home. About half (45%) teens aged 13-17 say that they continuously access the Internet on cell phones, tablets, and other mobile devices, which is twice as many who confessed to constant use in a 2014-2015 survey (Anderson & Jang, 2018).

Their use of the YouTube channels evidences the interest of young people interest in video. YouTube plays a key role in providing content for children. Fully 81% of all parents with children aged 11 or younger said that they permitted their child to watch videos on YouTube. Moreover, 34% of parents said that their child watches content on YouTube regularly (Pew, 2018). YouTube's use grows and evolves with the children. In the teen years, they are both creating and viewing content on this platform. A 2011 Stage of Life survey of teens revealed that

- "49% of teens have uploaded a video to YouTube.

27

- 33% of teens who answered "yes" to upload a video have submitted just one video, and 48.7% of teens have uploaded 2 to 5 videos.

- 5% of students have uploaded more than 26 videos to YouTube.

- 77% of teenagers subscribe to a YouTube channel.

- 63.5% of teenagers watch YouTube daily - with 34% watching multiple times per day."

Technology is easily accessible for the 21st-century generation, and these Netizens use the tools with which they are comfortable. The Pew Internet and American Life Project (2011) shows that American teenagers are increasingly drawn to the Internet to share materials that they have created, look for news, video chat, and remix materials they have found. Helping students to best use these tools to enhance their experiences in school can lead to effective literacy teaching and learning, which should be more broadly defined as understanding and using "the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development" (The Centre for Literacy, 2014).

Such connective technology is not just in the homes; it is in the schools as well. A recent 2010 National Center for Educational Statistics report, *Teachers' Use of Educational Technology in U.S. Public Schools: 2009,* has shown that the utilizing of technology in the modern classroom has become a prevalent method of classroom instruction. At the time of the survey, an "estimated 100% of public schools had one or more instructional computers with Internet access, and the ratio of students to instructional computers with Internet access was 3.1 to 1. Of the computers in public schools, 91% were used for instructional purposes. Of these instructional computers, 98% had Internet access" (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010).

Thus, today's students are very familiar with digital technology, having been born into it. They are what has been described as digital natives. Prensky (2001) coined the term "digital natives" for the pre-K-12 generation in his article *On the Horizon*. Margayan, Littlejohn, and Voit (2011)

added that Digital Natives were a cohort of people born after 1980, the period of widespread adoption of digital technology, and who are familiar with the technological culture. And even they are being eclipsed in their technological savvy by younger children, the second generation of digital citizens, who have mastered "the intuitive touch interfaces of their tablets whilst sitting comfortably in their baby bouncers" (Dingli & Seychell, 2015).

Digital natives, as Prensky has said, are no longer the people that our old educational system was designed to teach in the pre-device era. These people are digital immigrants, who came to technology later in life. Digital immigrants grew up learning one topic at a time following a linear and logical progression with everything in order. Digital Natives process information differently. They leap from idea to idea as they consider things, exploring their world as "burst thinkers." Digital Immigrants attempt to work around or second-guess technology, whereas the Digital Natives know no other way. Today's students look at the world in a completely new way as they interact with new technologies (Cunningham, 2007). Digital natives learn via participation rather than via absorbing knowledge manually (Rolon-Dow, 2011), work in groups Hung & Yuen, 2010), take advantage of networking and entertainment (Hung & Yuen, 2010; Porter, 2013), and use a critical approach with respect to technology for information processing (Shields, 2015).

2.4 Multicultural Classroom

Multiculturalism is mostly referred to in politics (Modood, 2007; Perekh, 2001; Taylor, 1994). In recent studies, researchers brought multiculturalism to education, emphasizing the preparation of students to deal with issues of intercultural responsibility and competence (La Belle & Ward, 1994; May 1999; Race, 2015). The issues are meaningful for digital natives. They live in a world connected by travel and technology, consumption, and communication, not to mention shared needs and values. Because of their exposure to the world at large, digital natives can also

be labeled "global citizens" (Hanek, Lee & Brannen, 2014). For them, diversity has become the norm rather than the exception (Banks & McGee Banks, 2001).

In the United States, diversity has been hastened by profound demographic changes. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2019), in a report entitled *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups,* noted that between the fall of 2000 and the fall of 2015, the percentage of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools who were White had decreased from 61% to 49%. Similarly, the percentage of African American students had also decreased during this period, from 17% to 15%. In contrast, the percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in public schools increased from 16% to 26%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders increased from 4% to 5% during this period. This growth has meant that ethnic and racial minorities make up the majority of students in American public and public charter schools. Moreover, the report also indicated that the percentage and number of white students in public schools were predicted to decrease continually in the next several years (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019).

Many scholars see this as having a positive impact on students and communities. According to Colomb and Simutis (1996), a diverse classroom embraces cultural respect, transcultural interactions, cultural responsiveness, and collaborative working. Given the opportunity to learn to work and communicate with their peers who are from various cultures, multicultural individuals can develop intercultural skills and are better prepared for the multicultural society (p. 203). Classrooms that are diverse help to groom students for job markets with a lower concern for community or national boundaries. Being in a diverse classroom encourages students to communicate and collaborate comfortably and creatively. When students learn to interact with those of other cultures, ethnicities, and races, this knowledge prepares them for the workforce of the future better.

An integrated classroom environment promotes the development of creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. People with divergent perspectives each bring something different and exciting to the table, and this challenges students to think in new and creative ways. When students leave the comfort of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they learn to interact with their environment. This will prove to be beneficial to young people in the future when they are dealing with people all around the world (Zapata, 2018).

Considering the characteristics of digital natives and multicultural individuals, educators require solutions combining the old and new pedagogies to meet students' learning and communication demands. Respecting the interests of students in playing in the digital environment and their desire to work with their culturally different peers, educators should create conditions that best serve their students' digital and cultural needs (Matveev & Milter, 2004; Ohler, 2006).

Previous research has demonstrated that students, given proper guidance, can build knowledge, instead of just receiving that knowledge, and those students who use the technology encompassing digital documentaries are often able to convert data into information. They can turn that information into real knowledge (Burnouf, 2004), thus creating a more authentic learning experience (Kearney & Schuck 2008). Producing digital video increases student enthusiasm and motivation, provides students with a new outlet for their creativity and gives them a sense of ownership. In many cases, the creation of student-produced films additionally provides opportunities for students to interact more deeply with the subject matter (Kearney & Schuck 2008).

How these students discuss and share cultural events is pluralistic. Digital devices and Internet access enable multicultural individuals to broaden their vision on how to communicate with people from different cultures digitally, and diverse classrooms support digital natives to

explore another culture effectively. It is common for them to participate online via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among other ways, to express their perspectives on a specific cultural event or to defend their cultural beliefs. Although online cultural interaction brings to them a world of various views and fresh ideas, it is critical to understand that students are immersed in their cultural surroundings, leading people to misjudge others and create stereotypes (Allport, 1954). Exploring how they achieve cultural awareness and cultural reflection through digital tools provides the opportunity to incorporate components of technology and diversity into their learning experiences. Using technology outside the classroom helps students use it in the classroom.

2.5 Multimodal Literacy

The ability to use computer-based technology requires multimodal literacy (*New London Group,* 1994). Literacy is no longer solely reading and writing. Literacies are multi-leveled and diverse; they comprise technology literacy, visual literacy, media literacy, and information literacy.

Multimodal literacy is a complex mixture of images, music, sound, graphics, photography, and films, which are commonly transmitted in digital communication (Duncum, 2004; Walsh, 2010). Educators have been encouraged to use multimodal literacy in K-12 classrooms and higher education as well (Mills, 2010; Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010; Garrido et al., 2018). Researchers have found that using multimodal literacy in education not only meets the interests of students (Jewitt, 2008) but also improves their learning motivation (Doering, Beach & O'Brien, 2007).

The process of creating a digital story brings media into a complex and interesting interaction with one another. In other words, uses of multiple media create a synergistic relationship between various media, or what Ranker (2008) referred to as "media interactivity." In creating a digital documentary, students explore both primary and secondary sources in a multimodal fashion. This fosters the research and inquiry skills they will require throughout their

entire academic and professional lives. Digital storytelling also transcends professional disciplinary and methodological boundaries while helping students develop critical consciousness and self-reflection (Given, 2006). Digital storytelling is a mixed form of images, audios, video clips, and texts.

Digital storytelling provides a platform to employ multimodal literacy in the modern classroom. This current study examines the hows and whys of digital storytelling, both in terms of using technology for creation and how digital technology helps in the reflective process of Chinese pre-service teachers. First, the study considers what these pre-service teachers felt about the technology, and then the study uses examples of the digital stories to see what they had learned from the reflective process embedded in them. Data for the participants were gathered from the dimensional analysis of interviews and from the actual digital artifacts that the participants created.

2.6 Cultural Plunge

There is very little literature on the topic of using the plunge as a concrete strategy to sensitize future teachers to cultural and social concerns in their schools and communities. Jesus Nieto (2006) was the first to report on its use in his teacher education classroom. He was responding to the increasingly articulated assumption that one of the key roles of teacher education programs is to promote the cross-cultural understanding of future educators and enhance their cultural diversity awareness sand multicultural acceptance (Banks, 2015; S. Nieto, 2000).

Jesus Nieto noted that the most commonly expressed goals of the 21st-century classroom are to reach out to all students, attempt to promote increased communication and understanding between different ethnic groups and become involved in social change efforts. "All of these

behaviors, he said, "can significantly improve teachers' effectiveness with culturally diverse students and those students' communities."

To achieve these goals, Nieto developed an assignment he called a cultural plunge. This was to be a short interaction in which 1) the majority of people are from the focal group; 2) the student is on the turf of the focal group (not in a school or restaurant); 3) a type experience that the students have never had before; 4) the plunge takes place while the student is taking the course (credit cannot be given for past experiences); 5) the student does not take notes, and 6) the plunge lasts at least one hour. The vehicle involved brief, first-hand exposure to circumstances often experienced by members of cultural minority groups, most significantly feelings of being the "other." The hope was that such experiences, however incomplete, might provide more effective means of promoting cultural insight than purely academic forms of exposure offered through lectures, textbooks, and fact-based assignments and assessments (Houser, 2008).

Plunges, Nieto said, represent a type of education that is motivating, practical, experiential, meaningful, interesting, challenging, confidence building, growth inducing and rewarding for most students., Ukpokodu (2002) highlights the importance of including several experiential activities in multicultural education courses to address students' defensiveness, resistance, anxiety, and stress, and transform their ethnocentric and negative dispositions. In higher education, the awareness stage of reflection and the following cognitive stimulation stage can be encouraged when instructors present their university students with tasks such as creating a digital story from their Cultural Plunge assignment (Walters, Green, Walters & Wang, 2015).

Berlin added that students like this type of assignment because it gives them control over their learning and expression of their opinions, experiences, and feelings (Berlin, 2004), which often are not encouraged in more fact-based assignments. They represent a significant means

towards students' greater understanding and acceptance of others, deconstruct their preconceived and often negative stereotypes about diverse groups, as well as of enhancing self-awareness (Carjuzaa, 2007). These innovations in teacher training are made all the more important because many pre-service teachers, who tend to be White, middle-class European-Americans, have had little, if any, contact with young people from different racial or cultural backgrounds (Milner, 2003) before they enter their classrooms.

The three authors (Nieto, 2006: Houser, 2008; Carjuzaa, 2007), who focused specifically on using this assignment in teacher education, agreed that not all plunges or plungers are equal. Some students take the easy way out in their choice of venues, and the outcome, in terms of new knowledge, skills, and understanding are superficial at best. Others challenge and open themselves to entirely novel experiences and realizations. Students may have many different types of insights about their values and biases as a result of cultural plunges. Whether discovering basic differences in worldview, custom, or belief or becoming more aware of similarities that exist across ethnicities, they learn firsthand that their ideas they brought with them into the plunge are very often erroneous. They can discover some of their own fundamental assumptions, and often are very surprised that they were so unaware of their own values and biases (Nieto, 2006), evidence of the capacity of the cultural plunge to foster social criticism and personal reflection (Houser, 2008).

In all the available previous research, students' responses to the plunges were described in detail in short "reaction papers" that covered experiences, insights, and implications for teaching. Those responses tended to follow a progression of fear and anxiety, excitement and engagement, and finally, appreciation and awareness. Most participants were glad they plunged after completion of the assignment and tended to rate it as among the most important learning experience they ever had (Nieto, 2006).

This is not to say that the assignment was without its limitations. One problem is that experiences like these are sometimes addressed in isolation. In such cases, there is a risk of drawing oversimplified conclusions based on limited data. The question is, how much can any individual learn about another culture after such a short interaction? Other limitations included ethical problems related to self-serving activity, the objectification of others, and the misappropriation of resources. Then there is the moral quandary involved in the possible deception of others, such as when the plunger pretends to be someone else to win the cooperation of the hosts. Moreover, there is the likelihood that the student comes to believe that now he/she "knows" the host culture and can successfully function in a diverse environment.

Rather, said Nieto, the cultural plunge experience should be located within the broader context of an ongoing quest for multicultural understanding. The plunge should not be considered the end of the development of cross-cultural understanding: "it should be seen as merely a beginning, a single step in a lifelong process" (p. 1).

Nieto, Houser, and Carjuzaa used the research paper as an assessment of the cultural plunge. Bishop (2009) asserts that engaging in digital and multimodal design would be a better vehicle for reporting and reflection. Digital storytelling provides "a compositional space for … teachers to prepare for the authoritative discourses that they will likely encounter in schools by fostering an increased awareness of the cultural multiplicity they bring to the design and production of texts" (p. 32). A digital story, in other words, provides a context for sharing experiences and an opportunity for thinking about identity, ethnicity, and culture" (Weis, Benmayor, O'Leary, Eynon, 2002).

2.7 Chinese Students at U.S. Universities

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Chinese nationals make up the largest group of international students at American universities. Approximately 80% of them are graduate students who received their undergraduate education in China (Huang & Klinger, 2006). The two educational systems are so different that many of these students find it difficult to adjust to the American classroom. Based on the Confucian model, Chinese education is formal, text-based, teacher-centered, and emphasizes conformity and the collective, rather than the American emphasis on diversity and the individual (Zhang, 2016). The emphasis in Chinese education is on retaining and accumulating knowledge for its own sake, rather than, as American students are encouraged to do, utilizing it for the sake of deeper learning and critical thinking. Education is teacher-centered; the instructor is the authority, not to be interrupted or questioned. American education is student-centered. The American system lets students criticize ideas and challenges as well as create concepts. And these differences are reflected in the classroom environment, as well as in assignments and assessments (Yuan, 2011).

Compounding the pedagogical dislocations is language competence. A study by Huang and Klinger (2006) found that, for Chinese students, the English language was one of the top factors negatively affecting their academic study. Despite TOEFL scores high enough to get them into well-respected universities, the Chinese students did not feel confident in their written or oral English language proficiency. They all reported having difficulties in using English for academic purposes, in particular, speaking and writing skills, which they considered to be weak. These students found it difficult to participate in oral presentations, as well as class discussions. In addition, the Chinese students were not familiar with the Western communication norms and the sociolinguistic rules in the American classroom. Rather than violate one of the norms or rules, the

37

students tended to keep silent in the classroom, not making comments or asking questions of the instructor for fear of losing face due to English language deficiency (Chu & Walters, 2013)

In addition to language barriers, international students' experience in U.S. higher education is highly associated with their experience in the U.S. culture (Zhang, 2016). Socially, the Chinese students struggled to adapt to a new culture and to forge meaningful relationships with Americans (Yan and Berliner, 2013). Initially, the students were not familiar with and did not understand American culture. After arriving in the US, their pre-held assumptions starkly contrasted with their experiences. They noticed differences in how people think and behave, that Americans are more spontaneous, direct, and express uniqueness, whereas Chinese are more measured, indirect, and value commonness (Li, Heath, Jackson, Allen, Fischer & Chan, 2016).

While these cultural differences made it more of a struggle for the students to maneuver through what to them were unfamiliar activities of day-to-day living, such as shopping, banking, commuting, and cooking, they were most concerned about difficulties in activities related to social interactions. They reported having limited interactions with Americans, unable to maintain even casual conversations. Chinese students described not having enough topics to talk about with Americans, and that conversations were often superficial. Interactions were often limited to greetings and superficially discussing homework (Li, Heath, et al., 2016). This may have been because, even though they were in the same classes and on the same campus, their experience of college was entirely different. As Liu (2018) noted, empathy between the students and their American peers is limited. "Empathy is the capability of recognizing emotions that are being experienced by others. The recognition is based on similar or shared experiences. However, it was difficult for the participants to find similar or shared experiences with Americans, especially regarding the struggles they experienced as international students in the U.S, (p. 180). Deep

connections with Americans were hard to create and keep, and, especially at the beginning of their time in the U.S., the Chinese students tended to stick together (Dempsey, 2012).

Despite significant barriers, Chinese students are eventually able to transition and adapt to new surroundings (Oramas, Gringarten, & Mitchell, 2018). Whether they had a rough or smooth transition, the students in the Zhang (2016) study said the experience changed them, their perspectives, and their opinions. Reflecting on their learning and living experiences in the United States, the Chinese students confirmed that they are not the same as their past selves. The most frequently reported changes to include becoming more attentive to cultural diversities, more tolerant with differences and becoming a more responsible adult. These students reported that the transition from one culture to another increased their tolerance with differences, enhanced their awareness of cultural diversities, and fostered a broader cultural awareness and a better preparation for multicultural understandings (Liu, 2016).

2.8 Intercultural Competence

The concept of intercultural competence remains vague, and scholars have not achieved agreement on the definition of the term (Bennett, 1993; Stewart and Bennett, 1991; Wiseman, 2001). Intercultural competence was first recognized as a construct in politics (Bennett, 1986; Buttjes, 1990; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Westwood & Borgen, 1988), and gradually accepted in education (Huber & Reynolds, 2014; Sercu, 2004; Stier, 2009; Tesoriero, 2006).
Also called cross-cultural competence and multicultural competence, intercultural competence is used in this study to describe the ability to function successfully in another culture.

Several scholars have studied factors related to intercultural competence. For example, Hammer (1987) conducted a quasi-experiment to prove the appropriateness of a three-factor model

of intercultural competence comprising: 1) the ability to create interpersonal relationships, 2) the ability to communicate effectively, and 3) the ability to manage intercultural stress. Kealey (1989) explored the association between interpersonal skills and the capacity to accurately perceive and understand people from another culture. Martin and Hammer (1989) explored what behaviors were related to intercultural competence and found that knowledge and skills, such as empathy, flexibility, and respect, were related to impressions of communication competency. Wiseman, Hammer, and Nishida (1989) examined the relationship between intercultural communication competence and knowledge of the host culture and cross-cultural attitudes. The research found that the knowledge and attitudes of subjects played a predictor role in intercultural competence. They found that higher degrees of knowledge of another culture predicted greater cultural understanding, while a high degree of ethnocentrism was related to less degree of cultural understanding.

Other scholars have examined the concepts as well. Sudweeks et al. (1990) considered related themes and patterns of discourse that focus on the interpretations of partners of their interaction in intercultural relationships. The study developed four categories: 1) communication competence, 2) similarity, 3) involvement, and 4) turning points. Cui and van Den Berg (1991) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test the construct validity of intercultural effectiveness as a theoretical construct. Their study examined intercultural effectiveness, a theoretical construct that has affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects and tested a factorial structure model in which intercultural effectiveness was a second-order factor indicated by three first-order factors: 1) communication competence, 2) cultural empathy and 3) communication behavior. The study found that cultural empathy and communication behavior were good indicators of intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence through international interconnections, on a personal or political

level, is increasingly essential in the 21st century, as the world becomes smaller through travel, technology, and trade. "Getting smaller," said Milton Bennett, creator of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, "doesn't mean the world is becoming identical, it means having more and more contact with people who are culturally different. Being able to deal with this cultural difference peacefully, never mind creatively and innovatively, is becoming a survival issue to thrive in a global world" (MKB, 2019).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of reflection, how it helps individuals learn from experience to improve their ability to navigate in a multicultural environment. This is followed by an examination of how storytelling, which can precipitate the reflection process, has evolved from written to digital form to become a creative, powerful, effective platform for instruction and communication in the classroom. The chapter includes information about digital natives who are comfortable using this technology, the multicultural environment in which they find themselves and the intercultural competence required of them to live and learn in this new world, and how digital storytelling combines all these elements in a platform that advances students' 21st-century skills. The chapter concludes with a look at a particular digital storytelling project generated by Chinese graduate students, based on a cultural plunge.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The two objectives of this research are to investigate the attitudes of Chinese post-graduate education students towards using digital storytelling, and to learn how they perceived the digital story they created, which was based on the cultural plunge assignment, affected the development of their intercultural competence. Four research questions were articulated to achieve these ends. Having established the research background, this chapter highlights the procedures utilized to achieve the purposes of the study. The research uses a qualitative research method based on dimensional analysis. The chapter discusses the research design, population, samples, and data collection procedures. This chapter ends with a summary of the main topics that were covered.

3.2 Research Methodology

A research methodology is how research problems are solved (Kumar, 2008). The research methodology provides a broader research framework comprising research design, research methods, sampling design, data collection, data analysis, and the validity and reliability of the instrument used to collect the data (Saunders et al., 2011). Research methods entail specific techniques and procedures; tools, like research questions, that are utilized to guide and analyze the research data; and methods employed to boost the credibility of a study's findings (Wahyuni, 2012). The adoption of an appropriate research methodology assists a scholar in developing a clear research framework that can achieve the goals and objectives of the work at hand.

The qualitative research methodology is used to examine the why's and how's of human behavior (Kumar, 2008). Qualitative research is based upon a social constructivist worldview wherein "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell,

2007, p. 20). Shank (2006) stated that reality is socially constructed and is based on the stories and lived experiences, just like digital stories. One method of qualitative research is a phenomenological approach, like interviews and analysis of texts, which is useful in achieving an understanding of the meaning that individuals make of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009). This approach permits an in-depth exploration of phenomena rooted in the perspectives and the experiences of the participants (Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002. This approach seeks to answer questions related to how and why, in contrast to a quantitative approach that seeks to answer how much, or how many (CEBD, 2019). Thus, as Creswell (2012) noted, qualitative research seeks to learn "how" people develop attitudes and "why" they do so.

The qualitative approach that was used in this research was determined to be the most appropriate methodology to use for this study because the researcher was interested in the perceptions and experiences of the student participants (Moustakas, 1994). In carrying out the study, the researcher developed in-depth semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and an analysis of transcriptions of "cultural plunge" videos to gain an understanding of the impact of digital storytelling on the Chinese students' intercultural competence.

3.3 Research Design

After determining the research problem and the framework of the study, a research design must be created to guide the process of gathering and analyzing data to answer the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a research design details how a study will be conducted by explaining a study's purpose, the type of investigation, and the interferences of the researcher. Also, a research design should describe the research setting, the unit of analysis, and the time horizon.

3.4 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative design and utilized the grounded theory approach, drawing insights from Creswell (2013). The approach begins with developing questions and seeks to answer them using data in which repeated concepts, elements, or ideas become apparent and are given a code and then analyzed. As Creswell (2012) noted, "the procedures for developing this theory include primarily collecting interview data, developing and relating categories of information, and composing a figure or visual model that portrays the general explanation" (p. 21) In this way, the explanation is "grounded" in the data from participants. From this explanation, the researcher can construct "predictive statements about the experiences of individuals" (p. 21).

According to Creswell, a qualitative method is a better option than a quantitative method for a study that seeks a detailed understanding of a problem, which can be achieved best by talking to people directly. Such was the case of this current study. A qualitative approach helps to investigate the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific issues (Gill, Stewart & Chadwick, 2008). According to Rao, Kumar, Gaur, and Verma (2017), a qualitative method helps gather detailed insights about a specific issue from the participants.

This study employed two data sets to achieve the ends of the research. The first data set was gathered via semi-structured face-to-face interviews with graduate students from China in the "Cultural Foundations of Education" course, which is required for students seeking a Masters' Degree in Education at a large public university in the Southwestern United States. The aim was to explore their views about using digital stories in the course, and how they believed the process of taking a cultural plunge and making a video affected their intercultural competence (Saunders, Lewis, & Thrornhill, 2007).

A semi-structured interview was used because this type of dialog offers several advantages. For example, the interview remains focused on the topic of interest while permitting the researcher

to probe for more in-depth insights on a subject (Estwick, 2016). Additional benefits include flexibility, ability to express the questions in the format that a researcher prefers, and using follow-up questions to explain a situation further when an initial response is incomplete or unclear (Bhat, 2019). In contrast, structured interviews are often rigid and limited in scope (Bhat, 2019).

The second method was to analyze the verbal content of videotaped cultural plunge stories. These were analyzed using only the text of the videos. Certainly, the other elements of the video –images, the spoken word, music—would provide useful information, but this type of analysis was beyond the scope of the current research. In this study, the text was transcribed by hand, and then three coders, the researcher and two Chinese graduate students from the College of Education, analyzed the text using a coding sheet. Figure 1 illustrates the process.

Recorded Interviews			
Transcribed via YouTube			
Errors corrected			

Recorded Interviews

Transcribed via YouTube

Errors corrected

Videotaped plunges

Transcribed by hand
errors corrected

Dimension Analysis

3 coders

Guided by VALUE rubric

Reach consensus on
categories

Common Dimensions

Develop coherent,
discrete dimensions

Match dimensions for
both methods

Analyze

Illustrate the dimensions
Compare and contrast the
dimensions

Draw Conclusions

Tell a story about the
findings
Place the findings in
context

Figure 1. Illustration of the research framework.

3.5 Research Site

The study was conducted at a large, land-grant university in the Southwestern United States. All the participants were graduate students from Mainland China or Taiwan who were enrolled in the Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction) program on the main campus. According to the Enrollment Profile Fall 2014, 49,221 students were on the main campus in College Station. Of these, 30,814 were white (62.6%). Asian, African American, Hispanic or

Latino, and international students, respectively, comprised 4.8%, 3.3%, 17.6%, and 8.7% of enrollment.

The population was more diverse at the graduate level. In all the master's programs on the main campus, white students comprised 48.4%, reaching a population of 2,370. In the doctoral program, international students (47.8%) were the majority of the population of 2,318, whereas white students numbered 1,513, comprising 33.8% of the enrollment. The enrollment summary showed that this school was ethnically diverse and could be considered a sizeable multicultural institution, with a significant international presence.

3.6 Digital Storytelling and Cultural Plunge Course

For the past several years, instructors in Curriculum and Instruction have required graduate students in their classes to write, create, and present digital stories. The technique has been utilized in several courses, but it has been most often assigned to students in sections of a cultural and educational related course. In this required course, students must create a digital story based on a "cultural plunge," an immersion experience that exposes the participant to persons or groups from a culture that is decidedly different from his/her own. This assignment requires a student to step outside of his/her way of life and experience something new, learning how others live. The purpose is to foster both critique and reflection, to enable the student to understand other groups, experience what it would be like to be different, realize pre-existing biases, and gain insights into personal attitudes, opinions, and behaviors related to culture. The expectation was that this experience would make students more appreciative of their own culture and the diversity to be found in their world. (Houser, 2008)

3.7 Participants

The subjects of the study were students enrolled in a core course in the Curriculum and Instruction program in the College of Education. Most students in the program took the course in their first or second semester of graduate study. The cultural and educational related course examines the impact of culture on teaching and learning, offering perspectives on multicultural education. The data were collected in the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters. There was a total of 35 students, with 26 female students and 9 male students in the 602 sections. Most were in the master's program, and only three of them were pursuing the doctorate. Participants who submitted their digital story of the cultural plunge as a course assignment volunteered to provide their assignment to the researcher for this dissertation study. They were to receive a twenty-dollar gift card if they participated in the interview session as well.

The classes were ethnically diverse; fourteen students were white, six were Hispanic/Latinx, ten were Chinese, and five were African American. All the students had access to the Internet in school and at home. Participants were familiarized with digital storytelling software through online course materials and assistance from course instructors and a technology consultant. They were given an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study and told that participating in the study would not affect their grades in the course. The university's Institutional Review Board approved the project. (See Appendix A).

3.8 Role of the Researcher

The researcher worked as the teaching assistant for this course from 2011 to 2015. My primary responsibility was to grade weekly online discussions, based on textbook readings and additional chapters or videos. Additionally, I provided tutoring, technical help, and feedback on a major course project titled the "Cultural Plunge."

48

The project included a research paper and a digital story. Participants were expected to immerse themselves in an environment, which was not generally in common with their own culture. The objective of this project was to increase their knowledge base in cultural foundations and to share their feelings with the class. While describing the experience of the cultural visit was vital, the focus was on the feelings and attitudes of the students about the event. After two years of reviewing Cultural Plunge projects, I decided to use an analysis of the videos as my dissertation topic. I also volunteered to serve as their technology consultant for completing the cultural plunge project.

Interactions with the students over the semester familiarized me with the potential participants. The early contact increased the willingness of students to participate in the study. All students in the class agreed to authorize my research use of the digital stories they had submitted for the class assignment, and six of them agreed to be interviewed.

3.9 Sampling

3.9.1 For Semi-structured Interviews

Convenience sampling was used for this study, and the sample comprised students from the People's Republic of China in the Master of Education program at a large public university in the Southwestern United States. The students, two males and eight females between the ages of 23 to 35, were enrolled in the Cultural Foundations of Education course, which is generally taken in the first semester of the graduate program. Creswell (2007) suggested that a minimum of eight (8) participants are required in a qualitative study. The sessions took place in November 2014 and April 2015 on the university campus and via WeChat in Mandarin Chinese because the participants felt more comfortable communicating in their native language. The interviews were transcribed

into English using the YouTube translation service. After this process, errors were cleaned up, and the data were placed into Microsoft Word. Each interview took between 15 and 20 minutes.

3.9.2 For Videotapes

The sample of the videotapes comprised 10 tapes, which were taken from the projects that students submitted for the Cultural Foundations of Education. Seven of the tapes were from students who were also interviewed, and three of the tapes were from students in the course who were not interviewed.

3.10 Data Collection

3.10.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Fieldwork was conducted in 2014 and 2015 through a semi-structured face-to-face interview during which open-ended questions were asked. A semi-structured interview requires that an interview guide be provided to acquaint the participants on the subject matter, while the open-ended questions give participants the freedom to express their views and thoughts beyond what was initially asked (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2003), in what has been called "a guided interview." The interview was structured around a list of questions (See Appendix B).

3.10.2 Digital Story Videos

Based on a meaningful personal experience, a digital story comprises a mixture of images, video, music, and text, with the narrative written and spoken by the author. Unlike oral stories that may be subject to differing emphasis and interpretations, digital stories become permanent records that capture a particular moment in time relating an experience and become objects for personal reflection and critique that can be shared with others (Lathem, Reyes, & Qi, 2006). Creating a

digital story requires individuals to sift through their memory for turning points and meaningful experiences, organize information, write and use digital technology. Most importantly, an author must reflect on an experience (Barrett, 2005). An author must also select the elements of the story he/she believes to be vital, and to sequence images that meaningfully support the message of the text, which requires critical awareness of the meaning that the author wishes to convey.

Digital storytelling requires a structure and process through which authors construct meaning from cultural experiences (Vigotsky, 1978). Though writing, reflection, and sharing stories with an audience, digital authors shape personal understanding and individual subjectivity. Meadows (2003) called digital stories "tales told from the heart" whereby individuals make their own meanings and develop and present these to the real world. The blending of text, visual images, and the audio track to narrate the digital storytelling combine to convey a perspective, which is unique to the creator. Most importantly, for this assignment, "The digital story project provides a context for sharing experiences and an opportunity for thinking about identity, ethnicity, and culture" (Weis, Benmayor & Eynon, 2002, p. 5).

Students in this class are required to take a "cultural plunge," an immersion experience that exposes them to persons or groups from a culture markedly different from their own. This social/cultural awareness project requires each individual to enter a new environment and participate in some activity that is beyond the scope of his/her own culture. The cultural plunge requires the student to step outside of his/her way of life and experience something new, learning how others live, work, worship, or socialize and then reflect on and re-tell the experience. The expectation is that, as a result of the plunge, the student will become more appreciative of the diversity to be found in his/her rapidly changing world and classrooms (Nieto, 2006).

After the plunge, the student created a digital video story based on the cultural plunge,

following a set of specific guidelines (See Appendix C) to share the findings and the feeling with others in the class.

The 2-5-minute stories detailed a variety of experiences. Some participants visited a house of worship (not a denomination) different from their own. Others attended a party or picnic where guests were of a different ethnic group. Still, others worked in a soup kitchen, food pantry, or homeless shelter. The assignment intended to enable the students is to understand other groups, experience what it would be like to be different, realize pre-existing biases, and gain insights into personal attitudes, opinions, and behaviors related to culture.

The digital storytelling writing task required the students to compose a 200-500-word personal narrative, in the first person, present tense, about their cultural plunge. The personal narrative became the basis for the digital story. Once the script was completed, students digitally recorded the story using their voices. The recorded narrative established the framework for the digital story and shifted the narrative writing into the digital environment. Students also were given one-page of instructions for constructing a digital video and a grading rubric for the project.

The students in a class had to use a storyboard during the construction of the digital story. A storyboard is a series of drawings or pictures that show the changes of scenes and actions for a video (Merriman-Webster, 2017). Chung (2006) emphasized the use of the storyboard as a planning tool in the construction of a digital story, helping the author to visualize how a digital story would look. Students were given a choice to draw images, use personal photographs and video, or locate appropriate images on the Internet using key word searches. Emphasis was placed on selecting images that extended the meaning of the narrative and supported the structural development of the story. Thus, the video stories had a beginning, a middle, and end, and, in the end, students were to reflect on their intercultural experience. The digital stories were done in

English, as the course required.

3.11 Research Protocol

3.11.1 Semi-structured Interviews

A research protocol was developed to ensure uniformity throughout the interview process. This protocol specifically provided the purpose of the interview, title, instructions to the participants, and introductory questions, which sought their perceptions about the key issues that were related to the cultural plunge and the digital storytelling experience. Notably, the research protocol presented four open-ended interview questions, which aligned with the four highlighted research questions that the literature review informed. Based on the responses of the participants, the researcher probed further by asking follow-up questions, where necessary, to gather all the thoughts and opinions of the participants with regards to the subject matter. (See Appendix B). The researcher knew that the lived experience of the cultural plunge could be captured directly. However, face-to-face interaction and rapport allowed the researcher to develop the flexibility to explore unexpected issues, which emerged from the discussion (Sutherland & Cameron, 2015).

The instructors of the Cultural Foundations of Education course identified the students in their sections from Mainland China or Taiwan. These students were informed of the purpose of the study, the interviews, and the analysis of the videotaped stories. Consent letters were distributed and signed. (See Appendix A.) Through this technique, the researcher developed a profile of the respondents and gave them a schedule for face-to-face interviews, which were held in a private room in a campus office main building. Students no longer on campus were interviewed online via WeChat. Mandarin was used as the primary language for interviews, as interviewees said they felt more comfortable speaking in their native language.

The researcher obtained approval from the University's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, which adhered to the conventional ethics of research. The researcher assured the students that the interview was for academic purposes only and not to serve any other motive. The interviews ranged from 15 to 20 minutes in length. During the interviews, the participants and researcher agreed that the responses would be anonymous, and the participants would not be "recognized" at any point. All participants were required to sign a form identifying their willingness to participate and were informed of their right to opt out at any time. Participants who volunteered to take part in the study signed the informed consent form (see Appendix A) before an interview, or an analysis of the videotape was conducted. The names and any identifying characteristics of participants were obscured, and each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Data were gathered in November 2014 and April 2015.

3.12 Data Analysis

3.12.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The researcher made word-to-word transcriptions of the audio record of the interviews. In line with the suggestions offered by Attride-Stirling (2001) and Krippendorff (2004), the study adopted a thematic analysis approach. The analysis was conducted to enable the identification of the thoughts and perspectives about research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009). The researcher used YouTube translation software to produce an initial transcription of the interviews from Mandarin to English; afterward, the initial transcriptions were corrected. (See Kerr, 2012).

Next, the researcher and two additional independent coders familiarized themselves with Braun and Clarke's (2006) interpretation of the process, which calls for the following steps: familiarization with the data, transcribing the data (as necessary), reading and rereading the data,

noting initial ideas, generating initial codes, searching for codes in the data, modifying potential categories, defining and naming the resulting code, and producing the report. The factors related to the VALUE rubric that arose from the responses were coded via applying thematic analysis using guidelines drawn from the 15-point technique. (See Appendix E). The interpretation of the content was utilized to determine the connection of coded categories with the experiences and perspectives of the students from both the interviews and the videotapes. The coders followed the checklist of guidelines for thematic analysis, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), to guide the process. (See Appendix F for more details).

Typically, a researcher is expected to transcribe statements made and return the text to the participants for confirmation of their statements, but the researcher adopted an instant check for the interviews used in this study. Instant check here refers to confirming the statements made by the participants on the spot. This process was conducted because it would have been challenging to obtain a repeat appointment with some of the participants who, by then, had left the United States and were scattered across the People's Republic of China. Finally, care was taken throughout the process to avoid matching data to the pre-conceptions of the researcher (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The researcher created a data analysis sheet based on each interview as it related to the research questions. Each research question addressed the experiences of the participants, and the information gathered from each participant was examined first individually by three researchers, then collectively and comparatively. This assisted the researcher in creating coding categories and identifying interconnectedness in the information that was gathered (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher addressed the issues of credibility and transferability. Credibility deals with the accuracy of the findings as they relate to the interpretation

of the experiences of participants and their meaning (Creswell, 2007). According to Sagor (2000), the more data collection techniques and sources used, the easier it is to understand something under study. The research reported here provided rich, thick descriptions of the participants' experiences and attitudes by using both interviews and digital storytelling.

Throughout the coding process, all codes, patterns, and interviews were viewed together (Born & Preston, 2016). Bracketing, peer debriefing, and triangulation were used to enhance the validity of this study (Patton, 2005). After all these steps were completed, the researcher employed a "peer-review" strategy, during which the researcher and two graduate students, who were not enrolled in the cultural foundations course, analyzed, independently and anonymously, the same interview transcripts to compare codes and assertions and verify them from the original data.

3.12.2 Digital Story Videos

Throughout the coding process, all codes, patterns, and VALUE categories and interviews were viewed together (Born & Preston, 2016). Bracketing, peer debriefing, and triangulation were used to enhance the validity of this study (Patton, 2005). After all these steps were completed, the researcher employed a "peer-review" strategy, during which the researcher and two graduate students, who were not enrolled in the cultural foundations course, analyzed, independently and anonymously, the same interview transcripts to compare VALUE dimensions and assertions and verify them from the original data.

3.13 Coding Process

All interviews and cultural plunge digital stories were collected and analyzed using categories and codes drawn from a modified version of the VALUE rubric of intercultural knowledge and competence developed the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment (See Appendix D).

The intercultural knowledge and competence VALUE rubric suggests a "systematic way to measure our capacity to identify our own cultural patterns, compare and contrast them with others, and adapt empathically and flexibly to unfamiliar ways of being" (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2018, p.1). The levels of this rubric are informed by Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and by Deardorff's (2006) intercultural framework, which is the first research-based consensus model of intercultural competence.

The VALUE rubric allowed for the use of a prescriptive method of coding, based on pre-established categories, to analyze qualitative data in the interview transcripts and digital stories (Saldana, 2016). It was amended to make it more appropriate to the context of the research, more transparent for the two coding assistants (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2018) and The amendment included the elimination of the category for the assessment of non-verbal communication because non-verbal communication was not a concern of this study.

The modified VALUE rubric used here contains three dimensions or categories: 1) knowledge, 2) skills, and 3) attitudes. Each dimension can be further divided into codes. Knowledge contains the codes of cultural self-awareness and knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks. The skills category contains the codes of empathy and understanding of cultural differences. And the attitudes category contains the codes of curiosity and openness. The use of the term "categories" follows Creswell (2013), who noted that, while the literature generally refers to those areas as themes, the term "category" may be used, as it refers to "broad units of

information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186).

The set of anticipated codes, based on the VALUE rubric, was determined beforehand to harmonize with the study's conceptual framework, paradigm, and research goals. This is *A priori* coding, in which there are pre-specified codes or more general coding frameworks. At the other end of what Punch (2014) called the "coding continuum" is emergent coding, in which the research starts with no pre-specified codes, but, rather, lets the data suggest initial codes. "This decision is not independent of other such decisions concerning research questions, conceptual framework and the structuring of data generally" (p. 174).

Saldana (2016) called such pre-established categories Provisional Codes. These can be generated from a variety of potential preparatory investigative matters, "including literature reviews related to the study, the studies conceptual framework and research questions, previous research findings, pilot study fieldwork, the researchers own phenomenological data, and researcher-formulated hypotheses or hunches" (Saldana, 2016, p. 294) The Provisional Coding System, which allows for the modification of the categories as researchers move through the coding process, is well-suited for studies, like this one, that builds on or attempts to corroborate previous research.

According to Trede and Higgs (2009), the nature of the research questions, and the type of knowledge that is to be generated influence the specific coding choices a researcher should make. In this case, the research questions seek information about the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs related to digital storytelling and intercultural competence. Values, attitudes, and beliefs are formed, perpetuated, and changed through such factors as social interactions, personal experiences, socio-economic status, social and governmental institutions, and ethnicity, culture, and religion (Charon, 2013). Saldana notes that Values Coding is appropriate for virtually all

qualitative studies, but "particularly for those that explore cultural values and belief systems, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions" (p. 132).

Previous researchers who have recommended Provisional Coding vary in the number of categories they recommend. Creswell uses a process he described as "winnowing," in which not all data are used. Winnowing only codes relevant data, when only "lean coding" is needed. (Creswell (2013). Thus, he begins with a list of five or six codes. Not only can this list serve as a possible series of Provisional Codes, notes Saldana, but the items also can be codewoven to explore possible interrelationships (Saldana, 2016).

Data analysis, as it is used here, is a systematic and repeatable technique that summarizes text into smaller content categories using codes that are based on specific rules and permit the researcher to build themes and patterns from data (Berry, 2018). The raw data were coded and categorized based on the VALUES rubric. At the last stage, the final forms of the categories were shaped, based on the recommendations of different experts in the field, and these are presented in the findings section. The purpose of analyzing the digital stories and the interviews was to obtain a general and in-depth idea of the participants' intercultural competence. Using multiple sources corroborates the coding and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Three independent researchers evaluated the digital stories using this rubric, which does not include technological skills in creating video or non-verbal communication. Their responses were compared to achieve intercoder reliability.

Intercoder reliability is a "widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion" (Lombard, Sydner-Duch, & Braeken, 2010, p. 2). Intercoder agreement is required in content analysis, like

thematic analysis, because this agreement measures "the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object" (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000, p. 98).

Intercoder reliability is a critical component of content analysis. If intercoder reliability is not established correctly, then the data and interpretations of that data cannot be considered to be valid (Lombard, Sydner-Duch, & Braeken, 2010). As Neuendorf (2002) notes, "given that a goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least intersubjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount. Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless" (p. 141). As Kolbe and Burnett (1991) noted, "interjudge reliability is often perceived as the standard measure of research quality. High levels of disagreement among judges suggest weaknesses in research methods, including the possibility of poor operational definitions, categories, and judge training" (p. 248).

Often a distinction is made between the coding of manifest content, information "on the surface," and latent content that lies beneath these surface elements. Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1997) noted that, for latent content, the coders must provide subjective interpretations based on their mental schema. This "only increases the importance of making the case that the judgments of coders are intersubjective, that is, those judgments, while subjectively derived, are shared across coders, and the meaning, therefore, is also likely to reach out to readers of the research" (Lombard, p. 266).

In this research, the search is for latent content. As a result, coders had a training session in which two interviews and two videotapes that are not included in the research were examined and analyzed. Results were compared, and the coders utilized this process to look for latent content in the main body of the study.

3.14 Limitations of the Study

This study focused on an in-depth understanding of interviewees and the transcriptions of the videotaped cultural plunges. Thus, the findings must be interpreted, considering several limitations. First, the study's sample was limited to a small number of participants. Second, the study captured the insights of individual participants. Therefore, utilizing more face-to-face interviews and videotapes may increase the understanding of the research problem. Also, the study only focused on ten interviews of students from Mainland China and Taiwan and ten transcribed videotapes. An excellent extension of this research would involve students from other cultures and backgrounds, as would be an examination of the non-textual elements of the cultural plunge digital stories, such as images and. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study provides useful insights and a pathway for future research.

3.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed and discussed the research methodology, which was qualitative analysis using transcriptions of interviews and the text of videotaped cultural plunge stories. Also discussed were the research protocol, the sampling, and the assessment of the text.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

The study first examined Provisional, or pre-determined, Codes from the VALUE rubric in the scripts of the digital stories and then explored them in the interviews. Then, the code categories reflected in both interview transcripts and digital story scripts were compared to determine if there were any inconsistencies between what the participants had experienced and reflected in their digital stories and what they expressed in the interview sessions, as students' immersion in an unfamiliar environment or situation may strongly influence their beliefs and feelings. (van der Hoeven Kraft et al., 2011). The examination found that the statements grounded in the digital stories were more related to "what" (the nouns), while the codes developed in the interviews were more related to "how" (the adjectives). The purpose was to answer the research questions relating to the cultural plunge, the digital story, and the students' intercultural competence.

4.1 The Semi-structured Interviews

In addition to the video materials, four main interview questions and six possible extended questions were developed to seek in-depth answers to the research questions. The first main interview question was, "while working on your digital story, based cultural plunge project, which part did you consider the most challenging." This served to explore the first research question regarding participants' attitudes toward using digital storytelling for their cultural plunge project.

Through the cultural plunge, the participants had to comprehend the unfamiliarity of the new environment. More importantly, they had to deal with their relationships with the place and

people. (Simm and Marvell, 2015). This realization informed the second main interview question was, "after watching your digital story again, please evaluate how you think your intercultural competence was affected." It served to answer the second research question about the potential relationship between the cultural plunge project and intercultural competence.

The third main interview question was, "what was the most impressive moment for you during your visit to the site at which you experienced the culture of others? Please explain the details of your experience." This question was designed to address the third research question related to memorable moments during the cultural plunge.

The last main interview question was, "how did you find that using digital storytelling techniques helped you complete your Cultural Plunge project? How do you compare it to a traditional journal writing an assignment?" This question was related to the fourth research question on the use of digital storytelling for the cultural plunge project.

4.2 The Coding Process

4.2.1 Coding Practice

Three coders sat together, watched two digital stories, created by students from previous classes who were not involved in this study, practice the coding process, and discuss the results. The coders received a coding training session to ensure they all understood the principles of the coding process. (Goodell, Stage & Cooke, 2016). After viewing the digital stories, each coder independently read the scripts of the digital stories for this pilot project and collected related statements that they believed were critical to understanding the meaning of the digital stories and the cultural plunges. In a process guided by Saldana (2016) and (2012), the reviewers then independently coded the interview transcripts, seeking to establish areas of agreement or

disagreement in their assessments. The coders also sought to determine if and how what they found was related to the VALUE rubric.

As a result of the analysis and discussion, the VALUE rubric was found to be an appropriate point of reference for the study (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, the three coders used the VALUE rubric to evaluate the participants' intercultural competence, as evidenced in the cultural plunge stories and the interviews.

Furthermore, the coders looked at what the participants' attitudes were toward using digital storytelling in their cultural plunge project, how the participants believed their intercultural competence was affected through the cultural plunge and the process of digital storytelling making, the most memorable moments of the project, and how they thought using the digital storytelling technique affected how the outcome of the cultural plunge project (Grbich, 2013).

4.3 Identification of Participants

The participants were used pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. This study used he/his/him to refer to the participants regardless of gender.

4.4 Dimensions Identified in the Cultural Plunge Stories using the VALUE Rubric

After coding the frequencies and analyzing the scripts of all the digital stories submitted by the participants, the three overarching dimensions from the VALUE rubric emerged: 1) knowledge, 2) skills, and 3) attitudes. The knowledge category contained the codes for cultural self-awareness and knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks. Empathy and an understanding of cultural differences and the ability to function and communicate cross-culturally were included in the skills category, and curiosity and openness were coded under the attitudes dimension.

This chapter first presents each participant's knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as they are reflected in the digital stories, and explains their VALUE scores. Then, the chapter looks for categories related to intercultural competence in the interview transcripts. Then, the chapter examines how the participants felt about the technology involved in creating the cultural plunge.

4.5 The Findings of the Cultural Plunge for Each Participant

The findings of each dimension in the VALUE rubric were analyzed individually. The VALUE rubric guided Participants' digital stories and interview data analysis. Table 1 represents information about participants and their digital stories.

Table 1. Participants Project Information

Participant	Project Name
Wuli	It's Not Just a Second-hand (Goods) Store
Fangchen	Potluck Party Was Different
Bailu	Chinese Girls Adopted by an American Family
Kaixin	First Time Learning Christian Music in a Church
Fuqiang	Relaxing on a Farm
Fanrong	All Kids Deserve Early Education
Pinbo	A Hospice Visit
Haoyun	Chinese Christian Church in the Town
Chenyan	Dogshow
Haiyan	Dinner with Mexican American Family

4.5.1 Participant Wuli

4.5.1.1 The Plunge

Wuli plunged into a non-profit organization as a volunteer. Wuli claimed that he had had little volunteering experience. When he was in China, he said, he spent his time doing "valuable"

things that were related to his academic achievement. He thought that being able to attend an American university for graduate study was the best reward for showing excellence in academic learning.

When he found out that he needed to walk outside the classroom and throw himself into a totally unfamiliar zone, he said his mind was "completely empty." He said he never thought that something, which was not in a book, would be evaluated and then be counted as part of his grade in his required course. This assignment was not something that would happen in a Chinese university. In his digital story, he went to observe and volunteer at a non-profit organization – a donation center that sold second-hand goods to low-income people. Wuli mentioned that all volunteers offered service without getting paid; so that every hour they were donating with their labor, which helped the donation center out tremendously, and kept them going each month. The center, he was told, could not survive without the work of volunteers. After work at the center, he purchased several items in the store to contribute more to the center and its clients.

4.1.1.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Wuli identified his own cultural rules and biases. Before he came to the United States, he said, he had been quite familiar and comfortable with his standard of academic achievement always coming first.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Wuli found the meaning of volunteering and demonstrated his understanding of how the non-profit organization worked. He said that he appreciated what he learned from the cultural plunge and then felt strongly enough about its excellent work that he contributed to the non-profit organization by buying items from the store.

4.5.1.2 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: Wuli recognized that he could hear the "voices" of people who could not afford clothes and shoes for perhaps the first time in his life. He also found people who would help others not only by donating their money but also by contributing their time. He also realized that he needed to change his behavior to help people who used the charity shop. "My cultural plunge assignment initially pushed me to the unknown culture. I dumped old stuff every half year, but since then, I have changed my mind that I may organize my used things and donate it for the good of people in need," Wuli said.

Understanding of cultural differences: Wuli noticed how this experience impacted his previous perspectives on academic achievement, that getting excellent grades was not the only thing that was important in life.

4.5.1.3 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: When the assignment was given, Wuli said he had had no idea about what his plunge would be. He came up with several options that he might want to explore; then, he chose to visit a non-profit organization. He was actively looking for opportunities to expand his horizons beyond the classroom, although he did not think about them before this assignment.

Openness: Wuli showed he liked to learn from culturally different others. His previous perspectives did not stop him from interacting with people from different cultures who worked and purchased in the charity shop.

Wuli's mean VALUE score was 16/24.

4.5.2 Participant 2 Fangchen

4.5.2.1 The Plunge

Fangchen went to a potluck party in a park. He was invited by his roommate to join a weekend gathering near their apartment. He had a chance to get to know his roommate's friends from other states, like New York, Florida, and Arizona. He said he was a little embarrassed at the beginning because he just brought a bag of Chinese snacks, as he would eat at home, and he did not know if others would like the snacks. It turned out well. Everyone was kind to him, and they shared food.

He tasted different kinds of foods though they were the type that he would typically eat. He said he smiled and said, "thank you, I like it." He thought everyone did that, and the greeting must be a way to be kind and polite to each other and to show appreciation for the food as well.

The event also reminded him of the parties he had with his Chinese family. The focus in China was on the food itself. His parents urged him to eat and criticized him if he wasted any food, even if he was full and could another bite. He said he preferred the atmosphere of the potluck in the park, where he could have a casual chat with people from different cultures, who were not just interested in the food on the plates, but also were also interested in who he was. He learned the word "potluck," and he thought that he might want to organize a potluck party and invite his Chinese and international friends.

4.4.2.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Fangchen sensed that he brought unrecognized international snacks. What he ate was different from the food brought by his roommate's friends.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Fangchen understood that potluck was not just about sharing food; most importantly, people got a chance to communicate with each other.

4.5.2.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: Fangchen was focused on himself at the beginning, as he was worried about how his roommate's friends would comment on his snacks. Because the snacks turned out not to be a concern to the people at the potluck, Fangchen. He became interested in joining the conversation and learning the perspectives of his roommate's friends on diverse topics, like the weather in different states, where they were from, and what they were studying.

Understanding of cultural differences: Fangchen could understand that he and other people were from different cultures, but they were willing to learn from one another about their background and opinions. "If I want to learn other cultures in the first hand, I will have to talk with people, and probably join a social activity…. I read a lot about culture and history of United States, but books do not represent all the sides of a culture," Fangchen concluded.

4.5.2.3 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: Fangchen showed interested in seeing American culture, although it seems he did not dig deep to find answers about cultural differences.

Openness: Fangchen developed interactions with culturally different others. He learned from the others and found the experience so enjoyable that he then planned to host a potluck with more international students.

FANGCHEN's mean VALUE score was 15/24.

4.5.3 Participant 3 Bailu

4.5.3.1 The Plunge

Bailu said he had a difficult time finding a topic that would be interesting and meaningful. He had a couple of choices, and he could not decide which could be the best for making a digital story for the culture plunge project. After talking to the teaching assistant, he decided he wanted something touching and unique. Bailu went to visit a family who had adopted two little Chinese girls. It was far away from the campus, so he asked the mom if he could spend a night with them. He was so excited when she said yes. He heard stories about the adoption of Chinese girl orphans by American families, and he wanted to learn whether this international and intercultural adoption was successful.

To his surprise, he said, the Chinese girls were "totally American," except for their physical appearance. They could not speak or read in Chinese: so they could only communicate in English. In his hometown, when someone was found to be adopted, he may be labeled "throw-away," "trash," or "no one's lover." He had a neighbor in China who had adopted a little girl at the age of three, but when she was around 12 years old, she heard about the mystery of her birth, and she was "completely heartbroken." Her adoptive parents could not stop other people from talking about her being adopted in so unfavorable a way, so they decided that they had to move to another city.

This adoptive family in the United States was just about happiness, he said. The eight-year-old girl told him that she and her sister were adopted, and, when they become older, their American parents would take them to China and find where they were from and maybe find their birth parents. Bailu said he saw that confidence and love were reflected in her eyes.

Bailu wished that all the abandoned girls in China could have an adoptive family like these two lucky girls. He had dinner with the family, and he played Rock Paper Scissors with the girls in Chinese. He believed that love has no boundaries, and all girls deserve to be loved.

4.5.3.1 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Bailu wanted his cultural plunge to be unique. He first had to find out who he was; then, he could find something different.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Bailu wanted to learn about an adoptive family because he had little knowledge of the American adoptive process, especially one involving Chinese children. He expected to see something he never thought about before. He gained an understanding of this type of American family and came away with a different perspective because these Chinese girls lived in a different culture.

4.5.3.2 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: He had expectations before visiting the adoptive family. These were based on his experiences in China, where adoption is a social shame. However, once he found the American adoptive family was not like what he expected and celebrated the new additions to the family, he abandoned his previous stereotypes and immersed himself in playing with the children.

Understanding of cultural differences: He demonstrated an understanding of an American adoptive family. He said he learned love, acceptance, and forgiveness through a cultural plunge.

4.5.3.3 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: He sought answers as to why the girls were abandoned, and how American adoptive families loved and accepted their children who were not biologically related and ethnically similar.

Openness: Bailu was very open to learning about culturally different others and understanding them. "I have to admit," Bailu said,

> that I have some kind of stereotype in my mind. Walking out my little space and immersing myself in a really culturally rich world makes me reshape my mind of people and culture. I think this project is a good start to prepare myself more culturally wise, and most importantly, to share it with other people through the medium of digital storytelling.

> Bailu's mean of VALUE score was 22/24.

4.5.4 Participant 4 Kaixin

4.5.4.1 The Plunge

Kaixin told a story about Christian worship. He said that he belonged to no organized religion. When he was young, his grandmother and mother sometimes took him to the Buddhist temple. He did not think it was about religion because he had no strong feelings about those long-ago temple visits. When Kaixin found that the cultural plunge project was about learning a different culture, he decided to go to a Christian church across from his apartment. Kaixin always wondered why so many were parked on both sides of the street on Sunday morning. Then, one day, he stopped and watched. He noticed people stepping out of their vehicles and going into the church. Kaixin thought if he followed them the sanctuary and had Christian worship with them, this would fulfill his cultural plunge homework assignment.

He said hello to a random group of young people and asked if he could join them to observe worship inside the church. They welcomed him in. He found the church had little decoration but was clean and tidy, precisely like the churches he saw on TV. He said he thought he would have Bible study and hear prayers soon. However, the first thing was the music. They had a band playing Christian music. He did not know the music style, and he could not quite understand what they

were saying. However, he could feel how passionate the people around him were. It was their love of God.

He said that they must love God deeply because they wrote and sang these beautiful songs. He thought worship was only about standing there and praying. It was not. The music was the most beautiful and touching part of his church visit. He said he has a different view about Christian worship as a result of his Sunday visit.

4.5.4.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Kaixin was aware that he belonged to no religion.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Kaixin also understood that people with different religions have different beliefs. He decided to visit a Christian church to learn about Christian culture.

4.5.4.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: Interpreted his culture plunge regarding region from his perspectives and the worldviews of Christians.

Understanding of cultural differences: Kaixin learned Christian music was beautiful, and he never heard these kinds of songs before in his culture. He also learned that worship was more than prayer and readings from holy texts.

4.5.4.4 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: He enjoyed the plunge with young Christians and discovered that the love of God elicited passion in the worshipers, although he did not ask more in-depth questions related to religion and beliefs.

Openness: Kaixin was very open to other cultures. He thought that, for him, every day was a cultural plunge because he was living in another country, and that, itself, was a constant immersion into a culture other than his own. "Knowing that I would need to make a digital story for my cultural plunge forced me to give the entire experience my all, and I threw myself into the research and the prayer service that I went to," Kaixin said.

Kaixin's mean VALUE score was 20/24.

4.5.5 Participant 5 Fuqiang

4.5.5.1 The Plunge

Fuqiang went to a farm 60 miles away from the university campus with other Chinese students. He said he expected to see advanced agricultural technologies utilized on the farm, as well as a variety of crops. Fuqiang had read articles about how amazingly developed American agriculture was. It turned out that they visited a small-sized farm, and there were no such advanced technologies. He still had much fun from horseback riding. He talked to the owner of the farm and the trainer of the horse. He found their farm life was "just as wonderful as any other peoples' lives." The owner and trainer did not live on the farm the whole week; the farm was their "weekend getaway place." They had jobs in Austin and did not make much money from running the farm. He learned that this kind of life could be very different, based on the location and size of the farm.

4.5.5.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Fuqiang recognized that agriculture in China was different. Chinese farmers were poor and did not have much land or resources. The situation was improving, but Chinese farmers, he said, had a long way to go to equal the U.S. farmer with agricultural technology.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: In the beginning, Fuqiang could not find what he was looking for on the farm, that is, the use of advanced agricultural technology. After talking to the owner of the farm and the trainer of the horse, he demonstrated an adequate understanding of the differences between big and small farms and the development of today's American farm.

4.5.5.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: Fuqiang recognized that living in a rural area in America could have both advantages and disadvantages. If he were to live on a farm, he would also want to have both a city and rural life, like the owner and horse trainer of the farm that he visited.

Understanding of cultural differences: Fuqiang realized that advanced agricultural technology is not used on all farms. The farm was not even growing crops. It would be occupied for other purposes soon if the farm was in China because land was precious there and must be productive to benefit the country and its people.

4.5.5.4 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: He asked questions about the history of the farm and why they did not grow crops anymore. He sought answers by talking with the people and even conducted his research

online after coming back from the farm, looking into the history of American and Chinese agricultural practices.

Openness: He found that it was more reliable to talk with a real person and not just obtain information from TV, which is filled with stereotypes. He said he was always ready to learn from new people and new cultures.

Fuqiang's mean VALUE score was 22/24.

4.5.6 Participant 6 Fanrong

4.5.6.1 The Plunge

Fanrong spent a day working at a Head Start school. Fanrong did not go to a daycare or preschool when he was young. At that time in rural areas in China, children who were too young to go to elementary school stayed at home with their parents or grandparents. Fanrong learned about the Head Start program from one of the courses he had taken the previous semester. He thought it could be beneficial to the children and a great way to release the pressure on low-income families. While he was there, he worked as the teaching assistant to help the headteacher run small group activities.

They did not allow Fanrong to take photos with the children, but the teachers and staff showed him around the buildings, and he was able to draw a picture of the classroom with the children working on crafting. Fanrong did not think that the preschool was much different from a regular school. He saw children laughing and said they had good manners. He said he wished he could help needy children in China have a similar Head Start program.

4.5.6.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Fanrong recognized that he had grown up in a different culture, and he had no preschool learning experience.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: He recognized that he and the headteacher, who was Caucasian, would hold different perspectives on teaching because of their cultural backgrounds.

4.5.6.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: Fanrong demonstrated that he intellectually and emotionally understood the children at the Head Start program were from poor families and may need more help in academic achievement at a younger age. He thought the Head Start program could be copied in China.

Understanding of cultural differences: Fanrong learned that preschool programs in China and America were different. In America, some children may attend a free preschool offered by the Head Start program. In China, there is no public preschool. Private preschool is too expressive for many people to afford. Based on economic needs, as well as traditional values, traditional most Chinese children are raised by their grandparents

4.5.6.4 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: Fanrong wanted to learn from the teachers, staff, and even the kids. He wanted to know why this free program is so successful that it did not look different from a regular preschool.

Openness: Fanrong was interested in interacting with culturally different others. He talked with teachers, staff, and children. He said, "the more people he talked with, the more aspects I learned about the program."

Fanrong concluded his interview by saying:

The cultural plunge forced me to look deeper into myself and my experiences. Without the cultural plunge, I would have never realized some vital traits about myself and my job. Planning out a story to show to the public and asking myself a deeper "why" was a fascinating path to travel down. Watching the end product made me so proud, and also showed me how I am changed because of my life experiences.

Fanrong's mean VALUE score was 18/24.

4.5.7 Participant 7 Pinbo

4.5.7.1 The Plunge

Pinbo had his cultural plunge at a hospice. His grandmother had died of Alzheimer's disease, and he was unable to company his lovely grandmother in her final moments. He decided to volunteer so he could learn more about senior living. Pinbo expected a hospice house that was full of nurses scrambling around older people. When Pinbo first entered the hospice house where he would be volunteering, he found that it was completely different from his initial thoughts. It had a beautiful garden. A cook prepared homemade food for the residents, and they ate truly delicious food three times a day.

Pinbo had a patient with whom he could not communicate with at the beginning, but after a time, he could read his body language. His patient did not know who he was, but the participant dreamed someday that they would meet again. He hoped that the patient "would be perfect and complete. We could hug each other, and he would be able to say my name." He was thinking of his grandmother and wished his grandmother would not have missed seeing and talking to him in her final moments.

4.5.7.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: This is not a typical cultural heritage group, but "if you have ever had a loved one in a hospice, you understand that the only thing that matters now is love and time a beautiful, peaceful place to enjoy family and friends without judgment or pain."

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: He said, "My hospice experience taught me to love more appreciate the small things enjoy the time I have with my family. I think teachers need all of these traits to listen to their students and to give them everything we can because that might be the only time they feel safe.

4.5.7.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: "I volunteered for just two hours, but I still remember all the good moments at the hospice that still live in my heart."

Understanding of cultural differences: If I make it to the stage where my quality of life is no more, I would want to be in that little Hospital house when a "light goes on inside. Life is measured not by time, but by how many breaths you take."

4.5.7.4 Dimension 3: Attitudes

Curiosity: Pinbo's grandmother passed away before he could see her last time. He wondered about life, and especially the final stage of life. He looked for answers by visiting the hospice.

Openness: Pinbo changed his mind after visiting the hospice about senior people's lives. He also learned that life is about being meaningful. Every single life, he said, deserves to be acknowledged and respected.

Pinbo's mean VALUE score was 19/24.

4.5.8 Participant 8 Haoyun

4.5.8.1 The Plunge

Haoyun also went to a Christian church. Haoyun's aunt was a Christian. He went to a Christian church in China with his aunt several years ago. He learned from history books that Christian culture is Western culture. Haoyun believed what his aunt and other Christian in that church were not authentic and more localized. However, he never had a chance to visit a real Christian church. He knew from his friend that there's a Chinese Christian church in the town. They would pick up students on campus and join them in the bible study. Haoyun decided to go with his friends because he wanted to learn the real Christian people and a Christian church.

By the time he arrived, he smelled Chinese food. Christian of the church even provided dinner for the visitors. Most visitors were students. They appreciate the food and praised and thanked God. Haoyun stayed for three hours discussing the bible with the bible study group. He enjoyed learning bible stories and decided to pay more visits for bible study.

4.5.8.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: Haoyun recognized that he could neutrally observe religions as he did not belong to any religion. He described himself as "unbiased."

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Haoyun showed some understanding of Christian. Before going to the church, he had minimal knowledge about Christians. The cultural plunge provided him with a chance to know Christian culture.

4.6.8.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: He respected Christian culture and "Bible study with Christian he learned how important was their beliefs to them." He thought it was quite new to him, but he admired people who took it seriously.

Understanding of cultural differences: After his visit, he said he knew "the authentic Christian church," and how people should worship and study the Bible. He confirmed what he learned from books that the church in his hometown is not genuinely Christian at all. It was more like a "mixed one" of Chinese culture and the Christian religion. He wondered how it could exist.

4.5.8.4 Dimension 3: Attitude

Curiosity: Haoyun learned the Western culture and Christian church from books and was not sure about real Christian culture. So he wanted to look for answers by a visit to a Christian church.

Openness: Haoyun carried questions to the church, and later, he said that the warmness and sincerity of Chinese Christian and the atmosphere of Bible study" were the best answers.

Haoyun would like to incorporate digital storytelling in his teaching when he goes back to China,

> I would have truly enjoyed the cultural plunge project. I would love to incorporate cultural plunge through the process of digital storytelling into my instruction, as I believe it would help grab the attention of my students in a far more engaging manner. Especially as an ESL teacher, I can think of a lot of fun ways to make a digital assignment out of our short stories and novels.

Haoyun's mean VALUE score was 19/24.

4.5.9 Participant 9 Chenyan

4.5.9.1 The Plunge

Chenyan went to a dog show. Chenyan never had a dog before, but his roommate kept a bulldog. His roommate took him and the bulldog to the annual dog show. He never saw so many breeds of dogs. He could not recognize them, and his roommate patiently introduced each one they met. However, he soon forgot. Chenyan still enjoyed the show, as he liked taking photos and posting them online, so his friends in China, who loved dogs, could see them. He said dog owners were "interesting and nice people." He talked to them and asked questions about their dogs and how to train dogs to not only be friends to humans and competition winners.

4.5.9.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: He felt that "dog people" were different from "no dog people." He also saw that people treated their dogs like babies. As for him, he said he was too busy and did not have the time for something like that.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Chenyan truly felt America society was dog friendly. He wanted a dog then.

4.5.9.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: He could feel how deeply the dog owners love their cute, smart, and loyal friends. He heard people laughing, praising each other's dogs, and cheering for their dogs walking through the show. All these voices and pictures made him realize that life could be better with someone you loved and someone who loved you.

Understanding of cultural differences: He had not seen a dog show before. He had a few friends who were keeping dogs, and occasionally they walked their dogs together in the park. A dog show revealed the owner's love and the dogs, comfortable with being petted, love for people.

4.5.9.4 Attitudes

Curiosity: Chenyan observed a dog show and learned the pet culture of America. He did not develop complex questions or look deeper into the reasons that pets are so important to people, especially Americans. *"I think my dog show observation overall led me to a different culture and I did learn something new, Chenyan said, " I think eye openness is important for international students, so I would like to try different cultural events later."*

Openness: Chenyan talked to dog owners and learned habitats of some breed of dog he never knew.

Chenyan's mean VALUE score was 18/24.

4.5.10 Participant 10 Haiyan

4.5.10.1 The Plunge

Haiyan went to a Mexican American family for dinner on Saturday night. He was invited by a Mexican friend he knew from the class. He thought Mexicans love kids, so it must be a big family. Haiyan brought chocolates and a bouquet to their house. The whole family warmly welcomed him. Haiyan classmate was the oldest child in the family, and he had two young siblings, a boy, 11, and a girl, 7. Before dinner, he played PlayStation 3 with the boy and the girl. Just like all other little kids, they fought for the right to choose what game they would play and how long each of them could play.

Parents were busy in the kitchen, and they taught him a little about preparing rice with spices. At the dinner table, everyone enjoyed their food. The talked about the new things going on around the world and everyone's news as well. The watched a soccer game after and then he went home. "It was a typical family day," he said. "Families are the same all around the world. We love each other".

4.5.10.2 Dimension 1: Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness: He identified that he had some stereotype of Mexican families, specifically that they were big and loud, and Mexican food.

Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks: Haiyan started to understand that the core of the family is the same no matter what the country. It was love that made everyone in the family listen to each other and share their feelings.

4.5.10.3 Dimension 2: Skills

Empathy: He felt very included that he was a member of their family. He considered himself "being Mexican for one day."

Understanding of cultural differences: He did not see a lot of cultural differences. They looked different, they spoke another language, and they ate different food, but they were just like his family in China. "Home is the most comfortable place, one where everyone gets relaxed."

4.5.10.4 Attitudes

Curiosity: Haiyan was curious about American Mexican culture, and he was glad to have the opportunity to observe and interact with the Mexican family. He asked himself about the

differences between a Mexican family and a Chinese family. His answer was that they were different on the surface, but underneath they essentially were the same.

Openness: He said he paid a visit to a Mexican family, and he put himself into the Mexican culture. He tasted authentic Mexican food and learned a few words in Spanish. Haiyan concluded:

I was afraid to talk to people the first month I came here because I was not quite fluent in speaking in English. Well, I think the real reason is I was not confident. Making mistakes is OK. That is why people make progress. The cultural plunge project provided me a chance to make cultural mistakes. I came to my Mexican American friend's family with some pre thoughts, but it turned out that family is just family, it reminded me of my family in China. Haiyan's mean VALUE score was 19/24.

4.5 The Technology

4.5.1 Participant Wuli

Using technology was an issue at the beginning, but Wuli was able to master the skills of creating a digital story. His reflection showed that he made progress in terms of knowledge and skills.

"I didn't know much about technology, and I felt like I didn't even know where to start looking at myself. However, after getting started on the first one, not only did I grow in the knowledge of how to do a digital story, but I also grew with the understanding of other people and me."

4.5.2 Participant Fangchen

In this interview, he said that he found the experience of making digital stories amazing. The technology was not a challenge for him.

85

"The first thing I want to mention is making the digital story video. Making the culture story videos was the most amazing thing which I have never experienced before. The technology involved in made it fun."

4.5.3 Participant Bailu

Bailu found collecting all the elements needed for digital stories was a little frustrated at the beginning since he was unfamiliar with the software, and he had to start it over again and again for a minor change. After a few hours working on putting elements together in the software, he found proud of himself. He could not wait to show it to his friends. Bailu said that he had no problems using digital elements in the cultural plunge project. He thought it was more fun to combine music, photos, and audios. He said,

Making the cultural plunge video was enjoyable. They allowed creativity and reflection upon matters of culture. One was my own culture, and the other was a culture into which I plunged.

4.5.4 Participant Kaixin

Kaixin had no previous experience making digital stories, but it only took him half a day to navigate all the functions of the software. He said that utilizing the digital storytelling technique made the whole process fun. It was not as "boring as just writing a journal."

4.5.5 Participant Fuqiang

Fuqiang thought that using digital storytelling for the cultural plunge project "might be distracting." He had to spend extra time on taking photos or drawing pictures, recording his narratives, and sort appropriate music, and most time-consuming part – acquisition of new

software. However, as the project moved, he enjoyed creating the digital story as it provided "multiple layers for his cultural plunge." He added, "It is much more exciting and more personable to create a digital story than it is to write an essay. Furthermore, it relates more to our students' lives because we are in the age of technology."

4.5.6 Participant Fanrong

Fanrong was reluctant to create a digital story at the beginning. He would have preferred to have a journal-writing assignment if that had been an option for him. He could not understand why he needed to record his voice in the assignment. He was not confident about showing anything to his classmate because of his accent. He submitted the assignment one day late because he needed time to watch the digital stories of other students first. He then found it did not need to be perfect. He discovered that this was a media "that people from different cultures could use to understand each other better." He asked a friend in the class to teach him using the tools of the software. After six hours, he had everything put together in the software and then showed it to the whole class.

4.6.7 Participant Pinbo

Pinbo said he was a member of a school organization for short movies, so had he learned all the skills of generating a video. He did not find the digital storytelling technique frustrating at all. He said he was quick to pick it up. "The cultural plunge project is a wonderful way to represent each person's unique perspectives and experiences," Pinbo said, "It helped us explore more about ourselves in that we had to be selective in what we chose to "show" others. The audio and visuals add a layer of meaning that words alone could not have expressed.

4.6.8 Participant Haoyun

Haoyun found a YouTube instructional video about making digital stories, step by step, which he said was very helpful. He learned it in an hour, and he said it took him around six hours to make his own digital story. He would prefer making digital stories instead of writing in journals. The images and his voice, he said, made his cultural plunge "vivid to people who are interested in his topic."

4.6.9 Participant Chenyan

Chenyan used a mobile device to shoot the scenes of the dog show. He thought it could be a waste of time generating a digital story because he's not good at it, and he did not think anyone cared. He then changed his mind. "No one cared about my journal writing either," he remarked. He said he did not want to show off his skills of mastering technology, but most importantly, he valued the story itself. So he chose not to have "fancy elements" in the digital story.

4.6.10 Participant Haiyan

Making the digital story was an issue for Haiyan, as he could not get started until the day the assignment was due. He had all the elements then, but it was not easy for him to put the pieces together. It was all resolved after he worked with another graduate student. The other graduate student taught him the whole process, from choosing the appropriate software to publishing the video on the course site. Overall, he said, it was not easy, not fun, but he claimed, "Seeing what I had completed was a reward to myself."

4.7 The Findings

4.7.1 Cultural Plunge Stories

Ten graduate students enrolled in the graduate-level cultural and educational related course participated in this study that was conducted in 2014-2015. The course was offered by the College of Education at a large public university in the Southwestern United States. Of the ten, three plunges involved families (visit to an adoptive family and a family farm, and dinner with a Mexican family), three were with voluntary organizations (a non-profit, Head Start, and a hospice), two involved larger-scale events (dog show and a potluck dinner in the park), and two were visits to churches.

A large part of this project is based on the VALUE rubric, which is used to assess authentic learning outcomes in areas such as communication, critical thinking, and intercultural and global awareness. On this scale, 4 represented the Capstone category, and 2-3 represented the Milestone category. The overall mean score for all participants in the study was 3.13, with a minimum of 2.50, a maximum of 3.67. Concerning various types of events, the overall score for family-related events was 3.50, for church visits 3.25, for voluntary activities 2.94, and for events-related activities, it was 2.75. See Table 2.

Table 2. Scores on VALUE Rubric

Participant	Plunge	Score	Mean*
Wuli	Non-profit	16	2.67
Fangchen	Potluck	15	2.50
Bailu	Adoptive family	22	3.67
Kaixin	Christian church	19	3.17
Fuqiang	Farm	22	3.67
Fanrong	Head Start	18	3.00
Pinbo	Hospice	19	3.17
Haoyun	Christian church	20	3.33
Chenyan	Dog show	18	3.00
Haiyan	Mexican family	19	3.17
	Overall Mean		**3.13**

These scores seem to suggest that participants who had more intimate experiences had higher scores on the VALUE rubric. One possible explanation was that the opportunity for one-on-one conversations was more engaging and provided more opportunities for better interactions and a better opportunity to ask questions about the culture and the plunge experience. For example, Bailu, who visited an adoptive family and was open to learning, was able to explore more deeply the nuances of an American family with adopted Chinese girls; Haiyan, who had a home visit with a Mexican-American family, was able to eliminate his stereotypes of the home life of Mexican-Americans and Pinbo, who volunteered at a hospice, had a profound interaction with a patent. He said, "I still remember all the good moments at the hospice that still live in my heart." Overall, he continued, "it is a meaningful platform for me to understand my grandma's last moments and remember her*."*

In contrast, Fangchen, who went to a potluck in the park did not seem to dig deep to examine cultural differences and Chenyan, who went to a dog show, did not do so either. Initially, Fangchen found it challenging to engage in conversations.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the semi-structured interviews regarding the use of the technology for the cultural plunge digital stories and an analysis of the cultural plunge stories themselves according to the VALUE rubric.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses the results of the study, including an analysis of the cultural videos

and places them in context, to answer the following research questions.

1. What were the attitudes of participants about using digital storytelling for their cultural
   plunge project?

2. How did they believe that engaging in the cultural plunge project affected their
   intercultural competence?

3. What did the participants see as the most memorable moment of their intercultural
   experience?

4. How did the participants find that using the digital storytelling technique helped them
   meet the goals of the cultural plunge project?

This includes a discussion of the content of the cultural plunge stories, where students went

for their plunge, and if and how these plunges impacted them and led to reflection. This chapter

addresses participants' intercultural competence through the cultural plunge assignment. Also, the

chapter covers the use of digital storytelling technology, and whether students faced any challenges

with the platform and how they surmounted them. The chapter also addresses the theoretical and

practical implications of the study and concludes with recommendations.

5.1 Dimensions

5.1.1 Dimension 1: Knowledge

5.1.1.1 Cultural self-awareness

Generally, as Liu found in his 2018 study, all Chinese students were aware of the culture.

For example, Wuli identified his own cultural rules and biases. Kaixin, who visited a church, was

aware that he belonged to no religion. Fuqiang, who visited a hobby farm, recognized that

agriculture in China was different. Fanrong, who visited a Head Start program, recognized that he had grown up in a different culture, and he had no preschool learning experience. Even Chenyan, who went to a dog show, felt that "dog people" were different from "no dog people." He also saw that people treated their dogs like babies. As for him, he said he was too busy and did not have the time for something like that.

Perhaps the most profound experience was that of Pinbo, who visited a hospice for Alzheimer's patients and had a grandmother die of Alzheimer's disease. He noted that a hospice was not a typical cultural heritage group, but "if you have ever had a loved one in a hospice, you understand that the only thing that matters now is love and time a beautiful, peaceful place to enjoy family and friends without judgment or pain."

5.1.1.2 Knowledge of cultural worldview framework

Participants reflected on several elements, including the meaning of volunteering in the United States, the meaning of the sharing of food, what family life was like, and the importance of religion to life in the United States. Both Fangchen and Haiyan understood that the sharing of food offered a chance for people to communicate. Pinbo, who volunteered at a hospice and Fanrong, who volunteered at Head Start program, learned how and why Americans volunteered, and the economic and personal value of volunteerism. This was a new concept to them, as volunteerism is not a part of Chinese culture (Liu, 2018).

Several participants came to a new understanding of American families. Bailu learned about an adoptive family and the love that they gave to the two Chinese girls and the fact that they had become Americanized. Moreover, Haiyan, who visited a Mexican-American family, grew to

understand that the core of the family is the same no matter what the country. It was "love" that made everyone in the family listen to each other and share their feelings.

Kaixin and Haoyun learned about the value of religion in the context of Americans in the Southwest. Both said they had minimal knowledge about religious beliefs, although Kaixin did understand that people with different religions have different beliefs, and he decided to visit a Christian church to learn about Christian culture.

5.1.2 Dimension 2: Skills

5.1.2.1 Empathy

In his 2018 study, Liu said that it was difficult for the Chinese students to find similar or shared experiences with Americans, that is, to develop empathy. That contention was not borne out by the cultural plunge experience. Participants were mostly able to interpret intercultural experience from their perspectives of and that of others and act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group. Perhaps the best exemplar of this skillset was Wuli, who served as a volunteer in a non-profit organization. He believed that, for perhaps the first time in his life, he could hear the "voices" of people who could not afford clothes and shoes. He also found that people in the United States were generous; they would help others not only by donating their money but also by contributing their time.

Another compelling case was that of Bailu, who visited a family that had adopted two Chinese girls. This visit jarred his expectations. On his visit, he found that the American family was unlike what he expected based on his experiences in China. In a Chinese adoptive family, parents tried to keep it confidential; their adopted kids typically would not know they're not blood-related until growing up adults or after going to college. When he plunged into this adoptive family,

he abandoned his previous stereotypes (Li, Heath, et al., 2017) and immersed himself in playing with the children.

Fanrong demonstrated that he, intellectually and emotionally, understood the children at the Head Start program were from poor families and may need more help in academic achievement at a younger age. He thought the Head Start program could be copied in China. He hoped that such a program could be started in the pool villages of China.

Kaixin and Haoyun, who visited Christian churches, both developed an understanding of what Christianity meant to the community. Kaixin enjoyed the music, and Kaixin respected the Christian culture and "Bible study with Christian he learned how important was their beliefs to them." He said the religious experience was "quite new" to him, but he admired people who took it seriously.

5.1.2.2 Understanding of cultural differences

This research supports previous studies showing that Chinese students come to recognize and appreciate cultural differences (Liu, 2018; Zhang, 2016) Participants in this study demonstrated various understandings of differences in areas, including life perspectives, religion, education, and family values. Generally, the participants knew that they were from a different culture than their plunge hosts, but they were willing to learn from one another about their background and opinions. For example, Wuli found getting excellent grades was not the only important thing in life, and Pinbo said that "If I make it to the stage where my quality of life is no more, I would want to be in that little Hospital house when a "light goes on inside. Life is measured not by time, but by how many breaths you take."

Both Kaixin and Haoyun visited Christian churches. Kaixin learned Christian music was beautiful; he had never heard these kinds of songs before in his culture. He also learned that worship was more than prayer and readings from holy texts. After Haoyun's visit, he said he knew "the authentic Christian church," and how people should worship and study the Bible. He confirmed what he learned from books that the church in his hometown in China was not genuinely Christian at all. It was more like a "mixed one" of Chinese culture and the Christian religion. He looked began to appreciate the fact that Christian practices and rituals needed to be localized to appeal to people from different cultures.

Fanrong learned that preschool programs in China and America were different. In America, some children may attend a free preschool that the Head Start program offered. In China, no public preschool existed, and private preschool was too expressive for many people to afford. Thus, based on tradition and economic realities, grandparents were called upon to rear their grandchildren.

Among the most interesting observations were those about the family. Bailu demonstrated an understanding of an American adoptive family. He said he learned love, acceptance, and forgiveness through a cultural plunge. Interestingly, Haiyan, who visited a Mexican American family, offered a profound comparison with families in China. He did not see a lot of cultural differences, although the people at home and his plunge family's table looked different, spoke another language, ate different food. At the core, he found this family just like his family in China. He said, "Home is the most comfortable place, one where everyone gets relaxed."

5.1.3 Dimension 3: Attitudes

5.1.3.1 Curiosity

Curiosity deals with asking questions about other cultures, seeking out, and articulating answers to these questions that noting that these reflect multiple cultural perspectives. Most of the

participants engaged in this practice, although Fangchen showed an interest in seeing American culture, he did not dig deep to find answers about cultural differences. Additionally, while Kaixin enjoyed the plunge with young Christians and discovered that the love of God elicited passion in the worshipers, he did not ask more in-depth questions related to religion and beliefs.

Several of the participants, however, delved deeper. For example, Bailu, who visited an adoptive family sought answers as to why the adoptive girls were abandoned, and how American adoptive families were open about all their family members and loved and accepted their children, who were neither biologically related nor ethnically similar. Fuqiang, who visited a hobby farm, asked questions about the history of the farm and why the owner did not grow crops anymore. He sought answers by talking with the people and even conducted his research online after coming back from the farm, looking into the history of American and Chinese agricultural practices.

Several of those who engaged in deeper questioning had personal reasons for doing so. For example, Pinbo's grandmother passed away before he could see her for the last time. He wondered about life, and especially the final stage of life. He looked for answers by visiting the hospice. Haoyun had learned the Western culture and Christian church from books and was not sure about real Christian culture. So he wanted to look for first-hand answers through a visit to a Christian church. Lastly, Haiyan was curious about Mexican-American culture. He asked himself about the differences between this family and a Chinese family. His answer was that they were different on the surface, but underneath, they mostly were the same. In this, the students showed a high degree of empathy, a quality that Liu's (2018) contended they would not possess.

5.1.3.2 Openness

Openness is related to the initiation and development of interactions with culturally different others. Participants in this study demonstrated varying degrees of openness, much more than would be expected by previous researchers (Yuan, 2011). Generally, those who were involved in interactions with smaller groups like families demonstrated more openness than those involved in interactions with larger groups.

Nonetheless, all participants demonstrated some degree of openness. Wuli showed he liked to learn from culturally different others. His previous perspectives did not stop him from interacting with people from different cultures who worked and purchased items in the charity shop. Fangchen learned from the others at the potluck dinner and found the experience so enjoyable that he then planned to host a potluck with more international students. Fuqiang found that it was more reliable to speak with a real person, and not just obtain information from TV, which, he said, is filled with stereotypes. He said he was always ready to learn from new people and a new culture. For Pinbo, his visit to a hospice was perhaps a life-changing experience. He said that he learned to respect all human life, even that of the frail and elderly.

Perhaps the most prescient observation was that of Kaixin, who had gone to a Christian church. He observed that every day was a cultural plunge for him because he was living in another country, and that, itself, was a constant immersion into a culture other than his own.

5.3 Technology

5.3.1 Issues with the Software

Of the 10 participants, only two had notable issues with the technology, and eight did not. WULI began with little knowledge of the technology at the beginning but was soon able to use it after a bit of practice, and Bailu found the process "frustrating" at the outset. However, he stuck it

out, and, after a little trial and error, was able to create his story and could not wait to show it to his friends.

Six of the participants had little or no experience with the software but were able to learn quickly. For example, Kaixin had never used the technology, but it "only took half a day to navigate all the functions of the software." Fuqiang had to learn the software but did not find it difficult. Haiyan said that it was not easy. However, he claimed, "Seeing what I had completed was a reward to myself."

Lastly, two of the participants were knowledgeable about the software and the process. Pinbo had been part of a university video group where he learned all the necessary skills, and Haiyan used a mobile device with which he had experience, and he said he had no issues.

5.3.2 How they learned the technology?

Of the ten students, two knew the process well, five of the students solved their issues on their own, two sought help from classmates, and one used a YouTube instructional video. Wuli noted that "after getting started on the first one, not only did I grow in the knowledge of how to do a digital story." Bailu was unfamiliar with the software, and he had to start it over again and again for a minor change. After a few hours of working on putting elements together in the software, he finished and was proud of himself. Fanrong and Haiyan turned to classmates for help. Haiyan turned to another graduate student who taught him the whole process, from choosing the appropriate software to publishing the video on the course site. Haoyun found an instructional video that took him through the process step by step and took only about an hour.

5.3.3 What they thought about creating a digital plunge story?

Overall, once technological issues were resolved, all ten students found the process rewarding. Just as Robin (2019) and Condy, et al. (2012) found with their students, the Chinese participants described digital storytelling as "amazing," "fun," "enjoyable," and "valuable." They said it permitted them to be creative in the way that a typical Chinese book-lecture-test assignment or "boring" journal writing could not (Zhang, 2016). They said it allowed for creating "multiple layers" in their storytelling. Students were proud of their efforts. For example, Bailu said he could not wait to show his video to his friends

5.3.4 Did the video plunge help in the process of reflection?

Previous research has shown that the digital storytelling process enables the author to reflect on the experience depicted in the video (Green, Walters, Walters, & Wang, 2015; Walters, Green, Wang & Walters, 2011). In this study, all participants felt that video cultural plunge project helping them reflect on who they were, and Americans were. By gaining first-hand knowledge, many thought that making the video of the cultural plunge project helped counter stereotypes about Americans and how they lived. For example, Wuli said that he "grew with the understanding of other people and me" because of the assignment. Bailu noted that these videos allowed "creativity and reflection upon matters of culture. One was my own culture, and the other was a culture into which I plunged." Moreover, Haiyan noted that the video plunge project eliminated the stereotyped misunderstanding of Mexican-American families.

5.4 Discussion about the Findings

5.4.1 Reflection

Participants were more likely to choose a topic that was related to their previous life and experiences, like farm life, churches, and family dinners, and schools. They were nervous about the plunge for personal and technological reasons. Personal reasons included issues with speaking the English language and the ability to relate to other people. However, once they engaged in the plunge, everyone seemed to learn something about themselves and/or their culture. Often, they did not find what they had expected. What they learned from TV and movies about US cultures before they left China was not verified by reality (Li et al., 2017). They felt that they got more out of the plunge because they had to make a video rather than keep a journal. They went to a different cultural setting with questions and stereotypes in mind. The cultural plunge allowed them to seek the answers and to discard stereotypes. Digital storytelling made it more entertaining and educating.

5.4.2 Technology

The technology seemed to be an issue at the beginning of the plunge project, but students were able to manage it later either by self-learning online or by seeking help from classmates, teaching assistants, or friends. Many believed that they could not make a good digital story, but the results surprised them. Many also thought that the project was not going to be fun or not necessary for documenting the cultural plunge. After completing the whole digital story, they changed their minds and began to appreciate digital storytelling. They wanted to publish it and share their story with friends and classmates. Thus, no matter the struggle to make their video, they were proud of their final creations.

5.5 Implications

5.5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study was based on grounded theory, which is a research methodology whose foundation is the concept that, over time, observation leads to more fully developed theories (Tie, Berks, & Francis, 2019). This current study adds to the body of knowledge about Chinese students, who, although they comprise the largest group of international students, are understudied (Huang & Krider 2006), which creates a knowledge gap that this research attempt to fill.

Additional, steps that could be taken are to utilize the findings of this study to pilot a scale related to the development of measures examining intercultural competence based on the VALUE rubric and conclusions of this study. Once developed in the form of a questionnaire, this could serve as an instrument to measure baseline intercultural competence and knowledge, as well as to measure the outcomes of specific courses.

Finally, this study contributes to an understanding of the six phases of Bennett's (2013) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, especially in what he calls "differentiation," and how one develops the ability to recognize and live with difference, particularly concerning adaptation and integration stages in the context of students from an Asian culture, with a long and proud history (Communicaid, 2019; Liu, 2018). Although general instruments like the Survey of Intercultural Constructs have been created, one size certainly does not fit all, given the distinct feature of the Chinese culture (Hofstede Insights, 2019). In this regard, knowledge of Chinese students would provide more specific knowledge and insights (Myeni, 2014).

5.5.2 Practical Implications

The number of Chinese students attending American institutions of higher education is by far the largest in the United States, and American institutions have the responsibility not only to teach them the "nuts and bolts" of subject matter but also to educate them about their place in an increasingly multi-cultural world. Although learning the technology is essential, the experience of placing themselves in a cultural learning experience and to reflect upon that experience is critical. In an increasingly global world, these students must learn how to navigate the waters of cultural differences so that they can respect the norms, behaviors, and beliefs of others and to compare and contrast these norms, behaviors, and believes with their own (Huang &Klinger, 2007).

In this instance, students were able to learn and reflect upon a range of activities, including family and family life, religion, volunteerism, and ways of viewing the world. This first-hand knowledge is more powerful than that gained second-hand from friends and over the media, and this knowledge allows them to "view over the hill" to obtain a glimpse of what life is like in another culture.

Such knowledge is profoundly vital in an increasingly global world. One of the implications is that should these individuals, who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program, become educators, they will be more prepared to work with culturally diverse students.

Indeed, many reasons exist for studying elements of intercultural understanding, including:

1. "Understanding your own identity.

2. Enhancing personal and social interactions.

3. Solving misunderstandings, miscommunications & mistrust.

4. Enhancing and enriching the quality of civilization.

5. Becoming effective citizens of our national communities " (Issa, ZaraAli-Garga, Yunusa, n.d, p. 10).

Even in the context of the People's Republic of China, becoming interculturally competent is vital. The population of China is non-homogenous. The Chinese government recognizes 56 ethnic groups and more than ten different languages (CIA Factbook, 2019). Besides, regional differences exist among the various provinces, as do differences between the urban and rural areas. Moreover, travel, trade, and technology have placed China in a global frame. Thus, the ability of that country's teachers to reflect upon and respect different norms, behaviors, and attitudes is essential. They must recognize their own stereotypes and prejudices so that they can correct their own biases as well.

This chapter addresses the cultural reflections of participants on Chinese and American culture through the creation of a digital story of a cultural plunge. Although assignment instructions did not ask that the cultural plunge should be a comparison between Chinese and American culture, the participants did this on their own and mentioned their perspectives and experiences with Chinese culture and American culture.

Wuli reflected on his growing up with academic success was always so that he ignored other aspects of a meaningful life. It was his volunteer work at a donation center that changed his worldview of being successful and self-satisfied. He did not blame anyone for the lack of opportunity to serve his home community in the last 20 years, but he thought it was because all other students in China were academic achievement orientated, and the competition for college admission based on scores was fierce. In America, on the other hand, the whole society was raising the next generation not only with academic success as a goal, but also to be responsible for the world around them.

Fangchen compared a Chinese party and an American party in the park. In his opinion, Chinese parties were more food-centered; people enjoyed the moments of food tasting, and they

discussed food preparation and cooking. Conversations started with praising someone's cooking skills. Bailu compared the Chinese adoptive family and the American family that adopted Chinese girls. His opinion was that Americans were more open in terms of discussing adoption. Fuqiang compared Chinese and American farm and agriculture, and his conclusion was technology changed the development of rural life. Fanrong went to the preschool for children from low-income families and wished China would provide free preschool for kids from rural areas. Haoyun's visiting to an American Christian church reminded him that the church he knew in China was localized to attract more Christians. Haiyan found that the core of the family was the same regardless of the nation. In Mexico and China, love is the most important and beautiful part of being a family member.

In this study, participants found that:

1. Chinese youth were less likely to contribute to volunteer work as they were stressed out by college admission exams.

2. When they had to be involved in a social event, the Chinese tend to start their conversation by praising the food.

3. Chinese were reluctant to talk about the details about adoption. There was a strong social stigma about adopting or being adopted.

4. Chinese agriculture was improving but still was less developed than Americans.

5. Chinese rural areas were short of affordable and public preschools.

6. A Christian church in China was different from a Chinese Christian church in the United States, as the church had to adapt to the local culture to attract local worshippers.

7. Love was the core of the family, no matter where that family lived.

5.6 Recommendations

Recommendations are divided into two categories. The first regards the cultural plunge as a learning opportunity, and the second concerns technological skills.

5.6.1 Learning Opportunities

1. A single cultural plunge should not be considered sufficient in and of itself. Rather a cultural plunge should not be part of a life-long learning process.

2. Students should be directed towards reflection opportunities in which they can be intimately involved with the people with whom they interact. Those who interacted with larger groups were less impacted by the project that those who engaged in smaller settings.

3. Students should select cultural plunge activities that are related to their personal experience. By doing so, they will have a fundamental knowledge that will permit better opportunities for questions and a more informed basis for comparisons.

4. Students should be encouraged to take this learning into the classroom so that they can teach their charges how to reflect on their own experience.

5. One deficiency among the students was their openness to diversity. Students might be trained to be more aware of the process and being open. Teaching such a concept will present a challenge in the context of Chinese cultural heritage. In the context of Hofstede's insights, China is a "highly collectivist culture where people act in the interests of the group and not necessarily of themselves," in which "personal relationships prevail" (Hofstede Insights, 2019). Members of Chinese society also attempt to avoid uncertainty, which might inhibit their ability to interact with strangers (Hofstede Insights, 2019).

5.6.2 Technology Skills

1. A survey of students should be developed to assess technology skills so that their abilities and competencies can be evaluated.

2. Those with the necessary skills should be encouraged to help those with fewer skills or technophobia from the each-one teach on perspective.

3. A list of YouTube links should be assembled and embedded in the syllabi to make finding materials more accessible and to allow students to go over these learning materials as much as they desire.

4. A list of links to appropriate software should be provided.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Study

This study was an analysis of a small group of participants, based on semi-structured interviews and an analysis of the cultural plunge projects. Future studies could include a larger number of students and a mixed-methods approach, using both thematic analysis and more quantitative methodologies, like a survey. This would permit an association of themes or dimensions with demographic characteristics like age, gender, place of residence, and educational background. Additionally, a longitudinal study could be conducted to determine if and how these students use the skills they developed in their classrooms and their professional lives. Despite the findings of this study, to generalize the features of the culture in words. People hold different views of culture. Thus, the reflection of these ten participants represented their perspectives and understandings only. Lastly, a comparison could be made between groups of international students from different countries, of which the top five groups include China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Canada (Statistia, 2019).

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the cultural plunge videos to examine the three VALUE dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which have been found to be related to the development of cultural competence. The chapter also outlined research, practical, and theoretical implications. It included recommendations to improve the technological process and the selection of topics for future cultural plunges.

Chinese students, like their peers from other countries, face multiple personal and social challenges at U.S. universities (Yuan, 2011). Previous research has addressed problems international students' academic stress (Houser, 2008; Huang & Klinger, 2006;), language barriers (Banks et al., 2001; Chevalier, 2014; Parekh, 2001）and cultural adaption （Yan and Berliner, 2013）However, little research has addressed Chinese graduate students' intercultural competence. Much of that research focuses on the difficulties they face when understanding diversity and navigating across cultures, how they struggle to understand cultural differences and similarities, make connections, develop relationships, carry on conversations and become involved in social activities. Yet, through the cultural plunge and the digital story assignment, reported here, they were able to do all these things. Clearly, the work they did made a profound difference in their knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to their intercultural competence.

One important feature of this study is that it views the attributes of multicultural and digital immersion of individuals. As digital natives, they learn through technology (Dingli & Seychell, 2015); as multicultural individuals, they are culturally open to the world through social media and other technology improvements in the digital age. (Matveev & Milter, 2004; Ohler, 2006) The cultural plunge provided an opportunity for students to walk to another culture that is different from their own (Milner, 2003; Nieto, 2006; Houser, 2008; & Carjuzaa, 2007); the digital

storytelling process made it more interesting and informational (Robin, 2008; Lambert, 2010; Reed & Hill, 2010).

The study also provides a meaningful strategy for young educators who return home with their American graduate degrees and wish to share their experience with technology, diversity, and culture with their own students, who live, as the apocryphal Chinese curse would have it, in interesting times. As study participant Pinbo said, "I want to teach my students that there is more to life than grades. When we learn about other people, we learn about ourselves, and I know who I am much better after this [cultural plunge] assignment."

REFERENCES

Allport, G.W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. New York, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Cultural competence. Retrieved from https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Cultural-Competence/

Anderson, M., & Jang, J. (2018, 31 May). *Teens, social media & technology 2018*. Washington, D.C: Pew Research Center for Internet and Technology. Retrieved from https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Inquiry and analysis VALUE rubric.* Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/inquiry-analysis

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research, *Qualitative Research*, *1*(3), 385–405.

Bakhtin, M. M. (2002). Discourse in the novel. In M. Holquist (Ed. and Trans.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (pp. 259-422). Austin: University of Texas Press**.**

Banjong, D. & Olson, M. (2016). Issues and of international students in the United States. *International Journal of Education*, *4*(1), 1-14.

Banks, J. A. (2001). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In J.A. Banks & C. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives* (pp. 15-30). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Banks, J.A. (1997). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.). *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 3-24). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Banks, J.A. (2015). Multicultural education: History, development, goals, and approaches. In *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and* teaching (6th ed.) (pp. 42-67). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Banks, J.A., Cookson, P., Gay, G., Hawley, W.D., Irvine, J.J., Nieto, S., Schofield, J.W., & Stepha, W.G. (2001). *Diversity within unity. Essential principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society*. Seattle, WA: Center for Multicultural Education, The University of Washington.

Banks, J, & Banks, C. (2015). *Multicultural education*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Barrett, H. (2005). Researching and evaluating digital storytelling as a deep learning tool. The REFLECT Initiative. Retrieved from http://helenbarrett.com/portfolios/ SITEStorytelling2006.pdf

Bartlett, T. & Fischer, K. (2011). The China conundrum. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicletrends.com/article/The-China-Conundrum/129628

Benhabib, S. (1986). *Critique, norm and utopia: A study of the foundations of critical theory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Bennett, J. M. (2008). Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In M.A. Moodian (ed.), *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations* (pp. 95-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Bennett, J.M. (1993). Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R.M. Page (ed.) *Education for the intercultural experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Bennett, J.M. (1993). Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21–71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *10*, 179–196

Bennett, S., Maton, K. & Kervin, L. (2008). The 'digital natives' debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *39*(5), 775-786. Retrieved from http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/ict/NewPGCE/PDFs/Digital%20Natives%20 Debate%20Critical%20review%20of%20evidence.pdf

Bhat, A. (2019). Types and methods of interviews in research. Retrieved from https://www.questionpro.com/blog/types-of-interviews/

Bishop, J. (2009). Preservice teacher discourses: Authoring selves through multimodal Compositions. *Digital Culture & Education*, *1*(1), 31-50.

Blocher, M. (2008). Digital storytelling and reflective assessment. In K. McFerrin et al. (Eds.), Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2008 (pp. 892-901). Chesapeake, VA: AACE. Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/noaccess/27286/

Blocher, M. (2008). Digital storytelling and reflective assessment. In K. McFerrin, R. Weber, R. Carlsen & D. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 2008--Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (pp. 892-901). Las Vegas, Nevada, USA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/27286/

Boase, J. (2008). *Personal networks and the personal communication system. Information Communication and Society*, *11*(4), 490-508.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.

Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, *18*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from http://www.semiootika.ee/sygiskool/tekstid/bruner.pdf

Burgess, J. (2006). Hearing ordinary voices: Cultural studies, vernacular creativity and digital storytelling. *Continuum*, *20*(2) 201-214, doi: 10.1080/10304310600641737

Burnouf, L. (2004). Global awareness and perspectives in global education. *Canadian Social Studies*, *38*(3). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1073942.pdf

Buttjes, D. (1990). Teaching foreign language and culture: Social impact and political significance. *The Language Learning Journal*, *2*(1), 53-57. doi.org/10.1080/ 09571739085200471

CEBD. (2019). Qualitative. Retrieved from https://www.cebd.org/conducting-research/ qualitative/

Chow, P. (2011). *What international students think about the United States education: Attitudes and perceptions of prospective students in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education. Retrieved from https://fye.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/435/2016/08/IIE_Student_ Attitudinal_Survey_Report-1.pdf

Chu, Y. & Walters, L. (2013). The Question-asking behavior of Asian students in an American university classroom," *Journal of English as an International Language*, November 8(2):10-29.

Chung, S.K. (2007). Art education technology: Digital storytelling. *Art Education*, *60*(2), 17-22. doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2007.11651632

CIA Factbook. (2019). China: People and society. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html

Colomb, G. & Simutis, J.A. (1996). Visible conversation and academic inquiry: CMC in a culturally diverse classroom. In S. C. Herring (Ed.), *Computer-mediated communication: Linguistic, social, and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 203-224). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Communicaid. (2019). Cross cultural theory: Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity http://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/cross-cultural-theory-developmental-model-of-intercultural-sensitivity/

Condy, J., Chigona, A., Gachago, D., Ivala, D. (2012). Pre-service students' perceptions and experiences of digital storytelling in diverse classrooms. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 11(3), 278-285.

Craft, M. (2017). *Teaching in a multicultural society: The task for teacher education*. London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2007), *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Cui, G., & Van Den Berg, S. (1991). Testing the construct validity of intercultural effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *15*(2), 227-240.

Culture (2019). American Sociological Association.https://www.asanet.org/topics/culture.

Cunningham, B. (2007). *Digital native or digital immigrant, Which language do you speak?* Retrieved from NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web site http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Digital-Natives.htm

Davis, M., & Waggett, D. (2006) Enhancing pre-service teachers' reflective practice via technology competencies and e-portfolio development. Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education. Retrieved from http://www.uvm.edu/pt3/?Page=papers.html&SM=researchsub.html.

Deardorff, D.K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of International Studies in Education*, *10*(3), 241-266. doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

Deardorff, D.K. (2011). Assessing Intercultural Competence. New Directions for Institutional Research 149 Spring: 69-79. DOI: 10.1002/ir.381

Dempsey, A. (2012). *Cross-cultural Interactions of Chinese graduate students at a midsized US university* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Bowling Green State University.

Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for a narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, *87*(2411), Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1577362

Denning, S. (2009) What is a story? What is narrative meaning Retrieved from http://www.stevedenning.com/Business-Narrative/definitions-of-story-and-narrative.aspx

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. New York, NY: D. C. Heath.

Digital Storytelling. (1999). *Dana Atchley's digital storytelling can teach us about communicating with emotion* Retrieved from http://www.bricklin.com/ webphotojournals/dstory.htm

Dingli, A. & Seychell, D. (2015). *The New Digital Natives: Cutting the Chord.* Berlin: Springer.

Doering, A., Beach, R., & O'Brien, D. (2007). Infusing multimodal tools and digital literacies into an English education program. *English Education*, *40*(1), 41-60. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40173267

Dreon, O. Kerper, R.M., & Landis, J. (2011). Digital storytelling: A tool for teaching and learning in the YouTube Generation. *Middle School Journal*, *42*(5), 4-9.

Duncum, P. (2004). Visual culture just isn't visual: Multiliteracy, multimodality and meaning. *Studies in Art Education*, *45*(3), 252-264.

Focho, G. N. (2010). Language as tool for a global education: Bridging the gap between the traditional and a global curriculum. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching 3(*1), 135-148.

Garrido, J.R., Hernández-León, E., Figueroa-Sandoval, B., & Aillon-Newman, M. (2018). Learning and experience: Aesthetics of multimodal texts in higher education. *Digital Education Review*, *33*, 170-184.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2), 106-116. doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gibbins, T. (2013). *Digital alchemy: A hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of digital storytelling for peace and justice* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Maryland, College Park. Retrieved from https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/14450/Gibbins_umd_0117E_14366.pdf;sequence=1

Given, J. (2006). Narrating the digital turn: Data deluge, technomethodology, and other likely tales. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, *1*(2), 54-65. Retrieved from http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume3/QSR_2_1_Given.pdf

Globalization 101. (2017). SUNY Levin Institute. https://www.globalization101.org/what-is-globalization/

Gorski, P., & Clark, C. (2001). Multicultural education and the digital divide: Focus on race. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *3*(3), 39-44. doi.org/10.1207/S15327892MCP0303_7

Green, M., Walters, L., Walters, T. & Wang, L. (2015). Not just another research paper: Understanding global sustainability through digital documentary. *The Social Studies*, *106*(1), 37-46. doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2014.964390

Gregori-Signes (2008). Integrating the old and new storytelling in the EFL language classroom. *GRETA Journal, 16*(1-2), 43-49.

Groden, C. (2015, 2 December). Dear international students: Thanks for your tuition. Now go home. Love, Uncle Sam. *The New Republic*. Retrieved from

https://newrepublic.com/article/120463/immigration-law-discourages-international-students-working

Gudykunst, W. B., & Hammer, M. R. (1984). Dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: Culture specific or culture general? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *1*, 99-110.

Hall, E. (1959). *The Silent Language*. Anchor Books: New York, NY.

Hammer, M. R. (1987). Behavioral dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: A replication and extension. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *11*, 65–88. doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(87)90032-0

Hanek, K.J., Lee, F., & Brannen, M.Y. (2014). Individual differences among global/multicultural individuals: Cultural experiences, identity, and adaptation. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, *44*(2), 75-89. doi.org/10.2753/IMO0020-8825440204

Heo, M. (2009). Digital storytelling: An empirical study of the impact of digital storytelling on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and dispositions towards educational technology. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, *18*(4), 405-428.

Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills CA: SAGE Publications

Hofstede Insights. (2019). *China*. Retrieved from https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country/china/

Houser, N. (2008). Cultural plunge: a critical approach for multicultural development in teacher education, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *11*(4), 465-482, DOI: 10.1080/13613320802479034

Huang, J. & Klinger, D. (2006). Chinese graduate students at North American universities: Learning challenges and coping strategies. *Canadian and International Education / Education Canadienne et International,* *35*(2). Retrieved from http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cie-eco/vol35/iss2/5.

Huber, J., & Reynolds, C. (2014). *Developing intercultural competence through education*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/developing-intercultural-enfr/16808ce258

Hull, G.A., & Katz, M-L. (2006). Crafting an agentive self: Case studies of digital storytelling. *Research in the teaching of English*, *41*(1), 43-81.

Hung, C. M., Hwang, G. J., & Huang, I. (2012). A project-based digital storytelling approach for improving students' learning motivation, problem-solving competence and learning achievement. *Educational Technology and Society*, *15*(4), 368-379.

Hung, H., & Yuen, S. (2010). Educational use of social networking technology in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *15*(6), 703-714. doi.org/10.1080/ 13562517.2010.507307

Hunter, C. & Pearson, D. (2015). *Interculturalization and teacher education: Theory to practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hur, J.W., & Suh, S. (2012). Making learning active with interactive whiteboards, podcasts, and digital storytelling in ELL classrooms. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Practice, Theory, and Applied Research*, *29*(4), 320-328. doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2012.734275

IGI Global Dictionary (2019). https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/digital-natives/7645

International Student Services, Texas A&M University, Student Headcount by nationality—Fall 2018. Retrieved from ss.tamu.edu/ISS/media/ISS-Files/ISS-PDF/ISS Information/Fall_2018_Headcount-final.pdf

Issa, A.A., ZaraAli-Garga, F., & Yunusa, M. (n.d.). The meaning of and theories of intercultural communication and how it promotes peace among the nations of the world. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/15920041/THEORIES_AND_MEANING_OF_INTERCULTURAL_COMMUNICATION

Kealey, D. J. (1989). A study of cross-cultural effectiveness: Theoretical issues, practical applications. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *13*(3), 397–428. doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(89)90019-9

Kearney, M. & Schuck, S. (2008). Exploring pedagogy with interactive whiteboards in Australian Schools. *Australian Educational Computing, 23*(1), 8-13.

Kerr, D. (2012). YouTube debuts video translator for 300 languages. CNET. Available at https://www.cnet.com/news/youtube-debuts-video-translator-for-300-languages/

Kolbe, R. H. & Burnett, M. S. (1991). Content-analysis research: An examination of applications with directives for improving research reliability and objectivity. *Journal of Consumer Research, 18*, 243-250.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications,

Kurubacak, G. (2007). Transformative power of digital citizenship: Critical perspectives on culture, new media and pedagogy. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497489.pdf

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009), *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative interviewing.* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

La Belle, T.J., & Ward, C.R. (1994). *Multiculturalism and education: Diversity and its impact on schools and society*. SUNY Series, Frontiers in Education. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lambert, J. (2006). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Berkeley, California: Digital Diner Press.

Lambert, J. (2010). *Digital storytelling cookbook*. Berkeley, CA: Digital Diner Press.

Lambert, J. (2010). *Digital storytelling cookbook*. Berkeley, CA: Center for Digital Story Telling. Retrieved from https://wrd.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/cookbook.pdf

Landis, D., Bennett, J., & Bennett, M. (2004). *Handbook of intercultural training* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Langellier, K. M., & Peterson, E. E. (2004). *Storytelling in daily life: Performing narrative*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Lathem, S., Reyes, C., & Qi, J. (2006). Literacy autobiography: Digital storytelling to capture student voice and reflection. In C.M. *Crawford*, R. Carlsen, I. Gibson, K. McFerrin, *J.* Price, R. Weber & D. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference 2006* (pp. 700-704). Chesapeake, Virginia: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.

Li, Z., Heath, M., Jackson, A., Allen, G., Fischer, L. & Chan, P. (2017). Acculturation experiences of Chinese international students who attend American universities. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. American Psychological Association, 48(1), 11–21.

Lombard, M., Sydner-Duch, J.S., & Braeken, C.C. (2010). Practical resources for assessing and reporting intercoder reliability in content analysis research projects. Retrieved from http://matthewlombard.com/reliability/index_print.html#Tinsley, 2000

Liu, Y. (2018). Acculturation of Chinese students in the U.S.: Un-abandoned Chinese identity and intra-ethnic communication. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 27(1): 55-71.

Luo, J. & Jamieson-Drake, D. (2013). Examining the educational benefits of interacting with international students. *Journal of International Students*, *3*(2), 85-101.

Lustig, M.W., & Koester, J. (2003). *Intercultural competence*. London: Pearson.

Malita, L., & Martin, C. (2010). Digital storytelling as web passport to success in the 21st century. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *2*(2), 3060-3064.

Manning, M.L., Baruth, L.D. & Lee, G.L. (2017). *Multicultural education of children and adolescents*. Abingdon-on-Thames, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Margaryan, A., Littlejohn, A., & Vojt, G. (2011). Are digital natives a myth or reality? University students' use of digital technologies. *Computers & Education, 56*(2), 429-440. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.465

Martin J.N., & Hammer, R.M. (1989). Behavioral categories of intercultural communication competence: Everyday communicator's perception. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *13*, 302–320. doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(89)90015-1

Matveev, A.C., & Milter, R.C. (2004). The value of intercultural competence for performance of multicultural teams. *Team Performance Management*, *10*(5/6), 104-111. DOI: 10.1108/13527590410556827

May, S. (1999). Critical multiculturalism and cultural difference avoiding Essentialism. In S. May (Ed.), *Critical multiculturalism: Rethinking multicultural and antiracist education*. London: Falmer Press.

McDrury, J., & Alterio, M. (2003) *Learning through storytelling in higher education.* London: Kogan Page.

Meadows, D. (2003). Digital storytelling: Research-based practice in new media. *Visual Communication*, *2*(2), 189-193.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implantation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam-Webster (2019). Reflection. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reflection

Meyeni, A.D. (1983). *Intercultural sensitivity: Theory development, instrument construction and preliminary validation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Massachusetts. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3253&context=dissertations_1

Mills, J. (2010). Expanding horizons: Screen literacy and global citizenship. *English in Australia*, *45*(2), 39-45.

MKB. (2019). *Why is intercultural communication important to know?* Summary from the interview with Dr. Milton Bennett. Retrieved from https://mkbconseil.ch/intercultural-communication-important-know-summary-interview-dr-milton-bennett/

Modood, T. (2007, 22 May). Multiculturalism and nation building go hand in hand. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/23/comment.britishidentity

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Murnen, T. J. (2007). The digital video documentary: Engaging students in ideological becoming. *American Reading Forum.org.* Accessed May 3, 2012. http://americanreadingforum.org/yearbook/yearbooks/03_yearbook/pdf/Murnen.pdf.Nieto, 2006

NAFSA (2019). International student economic value tool. Available from http://www.nafsa.org/Policy_and_Advocacy/Policy_Resources/Policy_Trends_and_Data/NAFSA_International_Student_Economic_Value_Tool/

National Center for Educational Statistics (2019). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/ indicator_rbb.asp.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2010). *Teachers' use of educational technology in U.S. public schools: 2009.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010040.pdf

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Neuman, W. L. (2000). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Nieto, J. (2006). The cultural plunge: Cultural immersion as a means of promoting self-awareness and cultural sensitivity among student teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *33*(1), 75-84.

Noffke, S., & Brennan, M. (1988). *The dimensions of reflection: A conceptual and contextual analysis*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, April. ERIC document ED 296968.

Norton, J.L. (1997). Locus of control and reflective thinking in preservice teachers. *Education*, *117*(3), 401-410.

Nowell, L., Norris, J., White, D. & Moules N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16(1).

O'Sullivan, M. & Guo, L (2010). Critical thinking and Chinese international students: An East-West dialogue. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, *5*(2), 53-73.

Ohler, J. (2006). The world of digital storytelling. *Educational Leadership*, *63*(4), 44-47.

Oramas, J. E., Gringarten, H., & Mitchell, L. (2018). Chinese students in US Universities: A qualitative study of cross-cultural learning experiences, transition, and adaptation. *Journal of International & Interdisciplinary Business Research*, *5*(1), 21-40.

Ovando, C. J., Combs, M. C., & Collier, V. P. (2005). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

Parekh, B. (2001). Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory. *Ethnicities*, *1*(1), 109-115. doi.org/10.1177/146879680100100112

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Pedersen, E. Martin (1995). *Storytelling and the art of teaching*. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ih_9hgqF9IEaN9d84qx0d9rdNNj1eu8BURCAk_Ax6_g/edit#

Perekh, B. (2001). *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory*. London: Macmillian.

Pew Research Center for Internet and Technology (2018, 5 November). *Around one-third of parents of young children regularly let their child watch videos on YouTube*. Retrieved from https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/11/07/many-turn-to-youtube-for-childrens-content-news-how-to-lessons/pi_2018-11-07_youtube_0-05/

Phillips, L. & McLawhon, R. (2013). Assessing intercultural competence. *Diversity & Democracy*, *16*(3).

Polkinghorne, D. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Porter, A. (2013, 28 January). The problem with technology in schools. *The Washington Post*.

Potter, W. J., & Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999). Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*(3), 258-284.

Prensky (2001). Digital natives, digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon*, *9*(5), 1-6. doi:10.1108/10748120110424816

Race, R. (2015). *Multiculturalism and education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Rance-Roney, J. (2008, March). Digital storytelling for language and culture learning. *Essential Teacher,* 29-31. Retrieved from https://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/12189/Judith_Rance-Roney_Digital_Storytelling.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Ranker, J. (2008). Making meaning on the screen: Digital video production about the Dominican Republic. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51*(5), 410-422. doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.51.5.4

Rao, P., Kumar, S., Gaur, V. & Verma, D. (2017). What constitutes the financing gap in Indian SMEs – owners' perspective? *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets*, *9*(2), 117-131, https://doi.org/10.1108/QRFM-01-2017-0001

Rathje, S. (2007). Intercultural competence: The status and future of a controversial concept. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *7*(4), 255-266. doi: 10.2167/laic285.0

Reed, A., & Hill, A. (2010). "Don't keep it to yourself!": Digital storytelling with South African youth. *International Journal of Media, Technology and Lifelong Learning*, *6*(2), 268-279. doi.org/10.12973/ejmste/78032

Rhodes, T. (2010). *Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using rubrics.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Roberts, J. (1998). *Language teacher education*. London, England: Routledge

Robin, B.R. (2006). The educational uses of digital storytelling. In C. Crawford, R. Carlsen, K. McFerrin, J. Price, R. Weber & D. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 2006--Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (pp. 709-716). Orlando, Florida. Waynesville, NC: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/22129/

Robin, B.R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st century classroom. Theory I=into Practice, 47, 220–228. doi: 10.1080/00405840802153916

Robin, B.R. (2019). Digital storytelling as an effective instructional tool for teachers. *Educational Use of Digital Story Telling*. Retrieved from http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=27&cid=27&sublinkid=30

Rolon-Dow, R. (2011). Race(ing) stories: Digital storytelling as a tool for critical race scholarship. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *14*(2), 159-173. doi: 10.1080/13613324.2010.519975

Sadik, A. (2008). Digital storytelling: A meaningful technology-integrated approach for engaged student learning. *Education Technological Research Development*, *56*, 487–506. doi: 10.1007/s11423-008-9091-8

Saldana, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press

Sarkodie-Mensah, K. (1998). International students in the U.S: Trends, cultural adjustments, and solutions for a better experience. *Journal of Education for Library and Informative Science*, *39*(3), 214-222. http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 40324159

Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2003). *Research methods for business students* (3rd ed.). Harlow, United Kingdom: Prentice-Hall.

Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students* (4th ed.). Harlow, United Kingdom: Prentice-Hall.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2011). *Research methods for business students* (5th ed.). London: Pearson Education.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sercu, L. (2004). Assessing intercultural competence: A framework for systematic test development in foreign language education and beyond. Intercultural Education,*15*(1),73-89. doi: 10.1080/1467598042000190004

Shank, G. D. (2006). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Shenoy, R. (2019, 5 February). The US may face obstacles in the global race for Chinese students. Minneapolis, MN: PRI. Retrieved from https://www.pri.org/stories/ 2019-02-05/us-may-face-obstacles-global-race-chinese-students

Sheppard, K. (2004). *Global citizenship: The human face of international education. International Education*, *34*(1), 34-40.

Shields, S. (2015). My work is bleeding': Exploring students' emotional responses to first-year assignment feedback. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *20*(6), 614-624. doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1052786

Signes, C. (2014). Digital storytelling and multimodal literacy in education. *Porta Linguarum*, *22*(22), 237-250. Retrieved from https://www.ugr.es/~portalin/articulos/PL_numero22/ 16%20%20Carmen%20Gregori.pdf

Stage of Life. (2011.). *Teen communication* trends. Retrieved from https://www.stageoflife.com /Portals/0/High%20School%20Images/WritingContest/Teen%20Communication%20Pol l%20Data.pdf

Statista. (2019). Number of international students in the United States in 2017/2018 by country of origin. https://www.statista.com/statistics/233880/international-students-in-the-us-by-country-of-origin/

Stewart, E.C., & Bennett, M.J. (1991). *American cultural patterns: A cross-cultural perspective*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey.

Stier, J. (2009). Intercultural communication and intercultural competence. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *11*, 1-11.

Stromquist, N.P. (2007). Internationalization as a response to globalization: Radical shifts in university environments. *Higher Education*, *53*(1), 81-105. doi.org/10.1007/s10734-005-1975-5

Sudweeks, S., Gudykunst, W.B., Ting-Toomey S., & Nishida, T. (1990). Developmental themes in Japanese-North American interpersonal relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *14*(2), 207-233. doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(90)90006-I

Sylvester, R., & Greenidge, W-L. (2009). Digital storytelling: Extending the potential for struggling writers. *Reading Rockets*. Retrieved from https://www.readingrockets. org/article/digital-storytelling-extending-potential-struggling-writers

Tackvic, C. (2012). Digital storytelling: Using technology to spark creativity. *Educational Forum*, 76(4), 426-429. doi: 10.1080/00131725.2012.707562

Taylor, C. (1994). *Multiculturalism*. Princeton, PA: Princeton University Press.

Technopedia (nd). https://www.techopedia.com/definition/28094/digital-native.

Tesoriero, F. (2006). Personal Growth towards Intercultural Competence through an international field education programme. *Australian Social Work*, *59*(2), 126-140. doi.org/10.1080/03124070600651853

Texas A&M University. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.aau.edu/who-we-are/our-members/texas-am-university

The Centre for Literacy (2014). What is literacy? Retrieved from http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/about/literacy

The New London Group. (1994). *Multiliteracies*. Retrieved from https://www.learning-theories.com/multiliteracies-new-london-group.html

The StoryCenter. (2019). Our story. Retrieved from https://www.storycenter.org/press

Tiba, C., Condy, J., Chigona, A., & Tunjera, N. (2013). Digital storytelling as a tool for teaching: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa, 10*(3), 285-301.

Tie, Y.C., Birks, M., & Francis, K. (2019). Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *SAGE Open Medicine*. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2050312118822927

Tinsley, H. E. A. & Weiss, D. J. (2000). Interrater reliability and agreement. In H. E. A. Tinsley & S. D. Brown (Eds)., *Handbook of applied multivariate statistics and mathematical modeling (*95-124). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Trask, B., & Hamon, R (2007). *Cultural diversity and families: Expanding perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tsou, W., Wang, W., & Tzeng, Y. (2006). Applying a multimedia storytelling website in foreign language learning. *Computers and Education*, *47*(1), 17-28. EJ732127

Van den Berg, I., Admiraal, W. & Pilot, A. (2006). Design principles and outcomes of peer assessment in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(3), 341-356. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075070600680836

Van Gils, F. (2005). *Potential applications of digital storytelling in education*. Paper presented at the 3rd Twente Student Conference on IT. Enschede, The Netherlands, June. Retrieved from https://wwwhome.ewi.utwente.nl/~theune/VS/Frank_van_Gils.pdf

Vezzosi, M. (n.d.). Critical thinking and reflective practice: The role of information literacy. Retrieved from http://dspace-unipr.cineca.it/bitstream/1889/91/2/ BP100%20Vezzosi.pdf

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wahyuni, D. (2012). The research design maze: Understanding paradigms, cases, methods and methodologies. *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research, 10*(1), 69-80.

Wales, P. (2012). Telling tales in and out of school: youth performativities with digital storytelling. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, *17*(4), 535-552. doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2012.727625

Walsh, M. (2010). Multimodal literacy: What does it mean for classroom practice? *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 33*(3), 211-239.

Walters, L., Green, M, Wang, L., & Walters, T. (2011). From heads to hearts: Digital stories as reflection artifacts of teachers' international experience. *Journal of Teacher Education, 20*(2), 37-52.

Walters, L., Green, M. Goldsby, D. & Parker, D. (2018). Digital storytelling as a problem-solving strategy in mathematics teacher education: How making a Math-eo engages and excites 21st century students. *International Journal of Education and Science*, *2*(1), 1-16.

Walters, L., Green, M., Wang, L. & Walters, T. (2011). From heads to hearts: Digital stories as reflection artifacts of teachers' international experience. *Issues in Teacher Education*. *20*(2), 37-52.

Weis, T., Benmayor, R., O'Leary, C, & Eyon, B. (2002). Digital technologies and pedagogies. *Social Justice, 29*(4), 153-167. https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768155

Weis, T.M., Benmayor, R., & Eynon, B. (2002). Digital technologies and pedagogies. *Social Justice*, *29*(4), 153-167.

Westwood, M.J. and Bergen, W.A. (1988) A culturally embedded model for effective intercultural communication. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*, *11*, 115-125. doi.org/10.1007/BF00155972

Willingham, D. T. (2007). Critical thinking: Why is it so hard to teach? *American Educator*, *31*(2), 8-19.

Wiseman, R.L., & Koester, J. (1993). *Intercultural communication competence*. *Volume 17 of International and intercultural communication annual*. Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE Publications.

Wiseman, R.L., Hammer, M.R., & Nishida, H. (1989). Predictors of intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *13*(3), 349-370. doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(89)90017-5

Wolfe, S. & Flewitt, R. (2010). New technologies, new multimodal literacy practices and young children's metacognitive development. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *40*(4), 387–399. doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.526589

Woo, E. (2000, 30 December). *Dana Winslow Atchley III; Pioneered digital storytelling*. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-dec-30-me-6346-story.html

Yan, K., & Berliner, D. C. (2013). Chinese international students' personal and sociocultural stressors in the United States. *Journal of College Student Development*, *54*(1), 62-84.

Yang, Y.-T. C., & Wu, W. C. I. (2012). Digital storytelling for enhancing student academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation: A year-long experimental study. *Computers & Education*, *59*, 339-352. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.12.012

Yuan, W. (2011). Academic and cultural experiences of Chinese students at an American university: A qualitative study. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, *20*(1).

Zhang, Y. (2016). International students in transition: Voices of Chinese doctoral students in a U.S. Research University. *Journal of International Students 6(1) 176-194.*

Zapata, D. (2018, 29 July) *Benefits of diversity in the classroom*. Miami, FL: Manifezt Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.manifezt.org/benefits-of-diversity-in-the-classroom/

Zhou, Y. (2018, 2 October) The impact of Chinese students in the US, charted and mapped. *Quartz*. Retrieved from https://qz.com/1410768/the-number-of-chinese-students-in-the-us-charted-and-mapped/

Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2018, 9 May). International students in the United States. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/international-students-united-states.

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study: An Examination of Graduate Students' Cultural Reflection through Using Digital Storytelling. Liangyan Wang, a doctoral student in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture, is conducting the study.

As a student in EDCI 602, you will need to create two videos regarding your Cultural Autobiography and Cultural Plunge Projects. Your digital videos are a course requirement and that Dr. Walters will grade. If you participate in this study, your digital stories will also be evaluated by Liangyan Wang by using a rubric designed for research purposes only. Liangyan Wang will not share any evaluation process with Dr. Walters. Dr. Walters will have no access to your participation information until your final grades have been submitted.

Your contribution to this study is around 20 to 60 minutes. You will need around 20 minutes to complete all the surveys, and 15 to 20 minutes to take the additional interview if you wish to. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You will earn 25 bonus points for participating in the research of using digital storytelling in EDCI 602 and completing each assignment-related survey. You will also earn 5 bonus points if you agree to participate in a 15-20-minute interview after submitting both the cultural autobiographies and the cultural plunge videos. The interview can be face-to-face or through Skype of WeChat. Interviews will be audiotaped. Your real name will not be used in research; all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Dr. Walters will not have access to the names of participants until all assignments and discussions are graded.

Your refusal to participate or discontinue participation at any time will involve no penalty. If you do not wish to participate, there is an alternative assignment for you. You must read "Finding my whiteness," which is in the Module for week 14, and write up a 500-word essay.

The information that you will share with if you participate in this study will be kept completely confidential to the full extent of the law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list linking participant's names to study numbers will be destroyed. Surveys are only for research purposes. Should you have any concerns regarding participating in the research, please contact Liangyan Wang at wendy_cloudy@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may contact the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program at 979.458.4067, toll-free at 1.855.795.8636, or email at irb@tamu.edu.

Please sign the form below indicating if you are or are not willing to participate in the study.

I _____ (do/don't) wish to participate in this study. I _____ (am/am not) willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. I _____ (do/don't) give my permission for audio recordings to be made if I choose to participate in this study.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant (print)   Signature   Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Questions

Question 1. What was the most impressive moment for you during your visit to the site at which you experienced the culture of others? Please explain the details of your experience.

Question 2. How did you find that using digital storytelling techniques helped you complete your Cultural Plunge project? How do you compare it to a traditional journal writing an assignment?

Question 3. While working on your digital storytelling based cultural plunge project, which part did you consider the most challenging?

Question 4. After watching your digital story again, please evaluate how you think your intercultural competence was affected?

Possible extended questions

How did the addition of digital imagery change the way that you wrote your story?

Did recording the narrative change the way you told your story?

What was the best part of the digital storytelling experience?

What was the most frustrating part of the production process?

How did you feel about having others watch your video? What is the potential value of sharing stories in a community of learners?

Do you plan to use digital storytelling in any other future assignments/activities, for fun?

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR THE CULTURAL PLUNGE

OBJECTIVE: To participate in a social/cultural awareness project and share your findings with the class.

Assumption: you are taking this course to increase your knowledge base in cultural foundations.

- Each person in the class is to participate in a cultural plunge that requires her/him to be in an environment and participate in something that you would not normally do within your own culture. The majority of people in the setting are from a group different from your own
- You are on the turf of the focal group.
- It must be a type of experience you have not previously had.
- The event must take place after the start of this class (no experiences from when you were in high school!)

Examples to consider:
- Attend a different religious service (Muslim Mosque, Hindu Temple, Christian Church, or Jewish Synagogue). This must not be a different denomination but a different religion.
- Participate in an activity in which the organizing group is totally different from you.
- Work in a soup kitchen or a free clinic, participate in Special Olympics, attend a meeting, or a special event that involves and draws people from another culture. NOTE: going to a festival or an exhibition is not acceptable.

You are to create a 3- to a 5-minute digital story about the cultural plunge.
This story is a personal reflection. Focus on your feelings about the event.

- What did you expect?
- What did you find?
- What did you learn?
- How did this make you feel?
- Did it impact the way you view your own culture and the culture of others?
- How will this experience affect how you teach and interact with others, particularly your students and colleagues?

VALUE GUIDELINES

Below verbatim from the introduction to the guidelines.

"The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition: Intercultural knowledge and competence is 'a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.' (Bennett, 2008).

Framing Language: The call to integrate intercultural knowledge and competence into the heart of education is an imperative born of seeing ourselves as members of a world community, knowing that we share the future with others. Beyond mere exposure to culturally different others, the campus community requires the capacity to meaningfully engage those others, place social justice in a historical and political context, and put culture at the core of transformative learning. The intercultural knowledge and competence rubric suggests a systematic way to measure our capacity

to identify our own cultural patterns, compare and contrast them with others, and adapt empathically and flexibly to unfamiliar ways of being. The levels of this rubric are informed in part by Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). In addition, the criteria in this rubric are informed in part by Deardorff's intercultural framework, which is the first research-based consensus model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). It is also important to understand that intercultural knowledge and competence are more complex than what is reflected in this rubric. This rubric identifies six of the key components of intercultural knowledge and competence, but there are other components as identified in the Deardorff model and in other research."

Table 3. Scoring Rubric[1]

	Capstone	**Milestones**		**Benchmark**
	4	3	2	1
Knowledge Cultural self-awareness	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases (e.g., not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g., with a strong preference for those rules shared with their own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g., uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
Knowledge Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.

[1] Reprinted with permission from *"VALUE: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education."* Copyright 2019 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm.

Skills Empathy	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with their own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
Skills Verbal communication	Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings) and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Recognizes and participates in cultural differences in verbal communication and begins to negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Identifies some cultural differences in verbal communication and is aware that misunderstandings can occur based on those differences but is still unable to negotiate a shared understanding	Has a minimal level of understanding of cultural differences in verbal communication; is unable to negotiate a shared understanding.
Attitudes	Asks complex questions about other cultures,	Asks deeper questions about other cultures	Asks simple or surface questions	States minimal interest in learning more

Curiosity	seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives	and seeks out answers to these questions.	about other cultures.	about other cultures.
Attitudes Openness	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment