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TEACHING CHINESE IN A U.S. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:
IDENTITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL CULTURAL CHALLENGES

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DISSERTATION
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ABSTRACT

Learning Chinese as a foreign language is becoming popular in the United States with the growing Chinese economy and influence. In this qualitative case study I have followed a native Chinese teacher who took up citizenship in the United States, Dr. Lin, and the Mandarin Chinese language program she created in a Midwestern elementary school. Three research questions guided the investigation: (1) How were Dr. Lin’s identities constructed, re-formed and evolve, and how did the power structures within the school influence her identities? (2) How did Dr. Lin’s identity influence her teaching and shape her students’ perceptions of Chinese language learning? (3) How did Dr. Lin engage student thinking and facilitate student understanding of Chinese text, expression, and narrative in the activities she used in the classroom, and what computer and internet resources were used in the classroom and at children’s homes after school?

Using case study and ethnography methodologies to structure this study and the theoretical frameworks of identity, sociocultural, and post-colonial theory and cultural imperialism to analyze the data, I found Dr. Lin had multiple identities in the environment she worked and lived in with many existing simultaneously. Dr. Lin’s teacher identity was influenced by her Chinese heritage as well as her teaching experiences at Shady Prairie Elementary School. Dr. Lin experienced various social, cultural and other challenges in working with students, faculty, staff and parents. Some frustrations stemmed from her lack of knowledge of the school’s, the student’s, and the community’s cultures before attempting to design a language program for the school. The focus of the Mandarin Chinese curriculum was placed on cultural awareness of China, while parents expectations demanded higher achievement in reading and writing the language. The tacit cultural knowledge Dr. Lin represented through her curriculum was engaged and reproduced by the students. Dr. Lin’s application of the computer and internet resources was limited and she did not have much support at school or in the district.

The social and cultural challenges that Dr. Lin experienced impacted her personal and professional identities and created certain power dynamics at Shady Prairie Elementary School. Lacking familiarity with the school culture and socialization habits with faculty and administrators, Dr. Lin occupied a “colonized” position with school
administrators as “colonizers.” Flipped over, her strong teacher-centered teaching style made her a colonizer of the students, reluctantly accepted by them, the colonized. In the multi-layers of colonization, Dr. Lin was becoming acculturated through mimicking the behavior and language of her American colleagues and friends at work and in life. She continued to become “the hybrid,” with mixed characteristics shaped by multiple social and cultural influences.
To those who toil and prevail for better lives in the strange lands
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Heavens are in motion ceaselessly;
The enlight'ned exert themselves constantly.
While the Earth is supportive and natural,
Only the virtuous can bear the utmost.

天行健，君子以自強不息
地勢坤，君子以厚德載物

– I Ching 易經

1.1 Rationale of this Study

With more than twenty years of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner and almost eight years of EFL teaching experience in Taiwan, learning the English language and multi Western cultures has been a big part of my life. Moving to the United States for my graduate studies in education, I taught Chinese-as-a-foreign-language for three years to mostly English-speaking students. Having Chinese language teaching experience and the experience of an international graduate student living and studying in the United States, I began to reflect on how English language learners all over the world, particularly in Asia, might be influenced by the United States’ culture. Moreover, I began to wonder what social, cultural, and linguistic challenges the non-American foreigners were experiencing as they settled into life in the United States. I was especially curious about those immigrants who have chosen to work in industrial and academic settings. Due to my strong interest in education, second and foreign language teaching and learning, and because of the growing popularity of Chinese language learning in the U.S. and throughout the world, I decided to focus my dissertation research study on a Chinese language program here in U.S. elementary schools. I particularly wanted to look in great detail at how a Chinese native speaker prepared herself in her home country to teach Chinese in America. I wanted to investigate her decision to move to the United States, and to explore how her pedagogy reflects her identity as Chinese and has altered in response to the foreign culture, and to probe how she has survived in U.S. academic
settings to teach Chinese as a foreign language, collaborating with her colleagues, administrators, and the parents of her students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Chinese language teaching and learning in the West has been an important topic attracting attention from educators and researchers in academia and the field of Education. When the world’s schools and parents conclude that being proficient in the Chinese language and having a familiarity with Chinese culture will make their children more able and more competitive in future markets, then adding Chinese language as one of the world-language selections to a school district’s curriculum becomes desired by school administrators and parents. In the next section, I will present the “Chinese Heat” situation in the U.S.A. I will analyze possible problems in the rush for Chinese language learning, basing the discussion on formal observations, but also on my experiences and understanding of the phenomenon.

1.2.1 Chinese language popularity or the “Chinese Heat”

Under the influence of fast flowing international trade and the growing economy in China, many U.S. parents recognize how opportune it is for their children to become fluent in Chinese (Dillon, 2010; Dube, 2007). Chinese language and culture classes have become a popular choice of parents and children over the past ten years. The Modern Language Association (MLA) has long been conducting surveys on the enrollment in languages other than English in U.S. colleges and universities. Their data in 2009 showed that Chinese was the seventh most popular foreign language, with the enrollment rising from 34,153 in 2002 to 60,976 in 2009 (Modern Language Association, 2007; Modern Language Association, 2010). For the younger U.S. students, there are about 1,600 American public and private schools offering Chinese language classes (Dillon, 2010). After the Advanced Placement test in Chinese was introduced in 2007, Mandarin Chinese became the third most-tested A.P. language with 7,970 students testing in 2011 (College Board, 2011a). It followed Spanish (College Board, 2011b) and French (College Board, 2011c). In terms of geographical distribution, Chinese language programs were mostly offered on the East and West coasts a decade ago, but are now provided in almost every state in the U.S. (Modern Language Association, 2011), many being created beyond the
boundaries of established Chinese-American and Chinese immigrant communities (Dillon, 2010).

1.2.2 Scarcity of Chinese language teachers

The desire for Chinese language instruction has increased dramatically, but the number of qualified Chinese language teachers has not grown simultaneously. To solve this problem, the College Board\(^1\) initiated a Chinese Guest Teacher Program supported by Hanban\(^2\) to send more than three hundred volunteer Chinese language teachers to work at American schools (College Board, 2011d). Teachers in this program have been allowed to stay in the U.S. from one to three years by contract and support the initiation of many of the fledgling Chinese language programs. Most of these schools ask their Chinese language teachers to stay longer as their programs develop and become well established. Additionally, most school districts in the U.S. require Chinese language teachers with native fluency to acquire state teaching credentials (Simmons, 2010). Even though the process of many state certification programs are restrictive, many of these visiting Chinese language teachers who are both English and Chinese proficient, participate in the various state credentialing programs and become teachers in U.S. schools for longer periods of time.

1.2.3 Challenges to teaching Chinese in the U.S.

There are more than 350 million English-learners in Chinese-speaking countries, partly due to the flourishing worldwide economic, cultural, and technological influence of the U.S.A. (Li, 2001). Many of them learn English and travel to the United States for such reasons as marriage, study, and work. Many of these Chinese immigrants never intended to teach Chinese language and culture to children of the United States before what is known as the “Chinese heat,” or the rise in popularity of the Chinese language

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1 The College Board, a not-for-profit membership organization, formed by 12 colleges and universities in 1900, dedicating to expand access to higher education and to standardize the application process for students and the admission offices. They developed the common entrance exam that was known as the SAT later.
2 Hanban (汉办) is the short name of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (中国国家语言国际推广领导小组办公室) and serves as its executive body. A non-government and non-profit organization, Hanban is affiliated with China’s Ministry of Education, committed to making Chinese language and culture teaching resources and services available to the world.
As a Taiwanese English language teacher, I know of many who were teachers of English-as-a-foreign-language in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan who have now become part of the U.S. Chinese-language teacher credentialing movement. These teachers might assume that teaching Chinese as a foreign language in the U.S. is the same as teaching English to Chinese speakers in their home countries. To many studying this situation, this assumption is considered incorrect since the contexts, cultural concerns, and linguistic knowledge of these two settings are very different. The linguistic knowledge and pedagogical strategies and skills of English and Chinese teaching are not automatically transferable. Native speakers speak their heritage languages, and teach their children, but few know how to teach that language to language-learners.

Another point is that many students in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are used to learning in the “cramming style,” where teachers lecture or disseminate information in their classrooms and students are expected to digest and/or memorize the information. By contrast, systematic learning and teaching demand much more interaction between the teacher and students, with a higher level of engagement of the students in the classroom. In most American schools, lessons are expected to be more enjoyable and participatory.

A third and more complex point is that there is an integral influence of Confucianism in Chinese language learning and education in general. Teachers have high social status in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. They are the learning authority in the eyes of students and parents. This is a huge contrast to the United States where teachers are low-level civil servants. Attrition and turnover rates are high (DeAngelis & Presley, 2007) and teachers suffer relatively higher stress from restrictive curriculum and instructional strategies, lack of support from administration and parents and from a growing diversity of student populations.

A fourth and important point is that, working in the American context requires familiarity with cultural registers, an awareness of common social norms, and sensitivities to the political ecology in schools and communities. Even when Chinese language teachers have learned the English language and have become somewhat familiar with American customs before moving to the U.S., many still have difficulty interacting appropriately with students, parents, school colleagues, and school
administrators (Asia Society, 2010). There is still a length of time needed for these individuals to adjust their understandings and knowledge and to acculturate.

My last point in looking at this issue is the increasing demand in most schools in the U.S.A. for teachers to be technologically competent—in terms of material preparation, in-class instruction, professional development, as well as the growth and development of their students’ technology skills (Manzo, 2009). Younger Chinese teachers may be more technologically proficient because of their higher exposure to various technologies, but much technological training may be needed for Chinese-language teachers who are older than generation Y³ (Tovar, 2007) or for those Chinese teachers who have been absent from classrooms for a long while and who might not often use a computer.

1.3 Research Questions

My description in the Problem Statement section presents some qualities of Chinese language teaching and classroom learning in the United States. I believe it takes a lot of effort for a Chinese native speaker to learn English and to be a competent Chinese language teacher in the U.S. However, I am seeking to understand the changes and development of their mental processes before, during, and after they move toward a stable teaching philosophy and identity. Recognizing a person’s history, past experiences, educational background, thoughts and reactions about events would help in defining this person’s identity and would give some understanding of their teaching intentions. In this study, I would like to move toward a deep understanding of the Chinese language teacher’s personal identity. Ultimately I would like to discover the complex layers of who they are, what might have further shaped their identities after they immigrated to the U.S., how their teaching was impacted, and what kind of teachers they expect themselves to be in U.S. teaching situations. In this study I will concentrate on a single teacher to begin this process.

In this dissertation project, I have focused on a single case, studying one teacher teaching an introductory Chinese language class. I arranged to study Dr. Lin at Shady Prairie Elementary School during the fall semester of 2012. I looked particularly at the

³ Tovar (2007) defined “Generation Y” as the group of people who were born between late 1970s to the early 2000s. The computer was invented before they were born, so many of them are used to having activities involving computer technology in their daily lives. Overall, people in Generation Y are technologically more savvy than the people in previous generations.
learning activities in her Chinese language classroom. I constructed a detailed record of the interactions between this teacher and her students, focusing on the language of teaching and learning and including materials and aids, especially computer technology. In my analysis I explored how the teacher engages students’ thinking and facilitated student understanding of the Chinese text, expression, and narrative. I also explored her pedagogical decisions and how they were influenced by the teachers’ Chinese culture, philosophy, and values.

Dr. Lin was born and brought up in China. Although she moved into American education and was influenced socially and culturally during her twenty or so years of residence in the United States, she still held a strong Chinese identity. It remained despite her having to follow requirements of her American school and district administrators. Some of which do not sit well with her Chinese beliefs and customs. Under the two strong influences, that of the traditional Chinese and American cultures, Dr. Lin’s pedagogical decisions regarding teaching content, classroom activities, and her use of technology, were influenced by her personal and teacher identities, illustrating her beliefs, values and norms. This is a study of Dr. Lin’s teaching practice, and not intended to be an evaluation of her readiness to teach.

As part of this inquiry, I investigated the experiences that have influenced Dr. Lin’s professional identity as a teacher including understanding her background and her life stories about how she came to the United States and became a Chinese language teacher. I was interested to uncover Dr. Lin’s personal and professional identities and the kind of teacher she tried to be. And then, how her identity changed and evolved, from being an English language learner in her home country to being a member of a minority group in U.S. society and a Chinese language teacher in a U.S. classroom.

Next, I explored the relationships among Dr. Lin and her students, other teachers, staff members, and parents. In other words, I looked broadly at how all the participants were influenced socially and culturally by her Chinese program, both in and outside the school. In addition, what were Dr. Lin’s reflections after she came to understand new expectations from the students, parents, and school and district administrators? When she interacted with her colleagues and administrators at school, what was the power structure in these relationships and how did she see herself in that power structure? When Dr. Lin
interacted with her students in the classroom, what then was the power structure and
dynamics and how did she then feel? What were her students’ reactions?

Further, I also investigated how Dr. Lin used computer technology, including
computer software and internet resources, in assisting with her Chinese teaching and with
the students’ learning, and how those children used computer technology to enhance their
learning after school. I asked if Dr. Lin was provided with appropriate training and if she
was equipped with sufficient technological skills and knowledge to utilize the computer
and internet resources in her teaching. Also, did she encourage and promote the students’
Chinese language learning using computer and internet resources at home?

In summary, three research questions directed the inquiry of this study.

First, how were Dr. Lin’s personal and professional identities constructed, re-
formed, and evolved, from being an English language learner and teacher in her home
country, to being a member in a minority group in the U.S. society and as a Chinese
language teacher in the American classroom? And how did the power structure within the
school influence her identities?

Second, how did Dr. Lin’s identity influence her teaching and shape her students’
perceptions of the Chinese language learning?

Third, how did Dr. Lin engage student thinking and facilitate student
understanding of Chinese text, expression, and narrative in the activities she used in the
classroom? And what computer and internet resources were used in the classroom and at
children’s homes after school?

1.4 Overview of this Thesis

Chapter Two, the Literature Review presents three major theories to construct the
theoretical framework of this study. Identity theories, sociocultural theory, and a set of
theories describing the relationship between the West and Eastern cultures such as
globalization, Post-colonial theory and cultural imperialism are the most relevant theories
discussed that connect the topics of this study.

In Chapter Three, Methodologies and Methods, I discuss the plan of conducting
this study. I identify methodologies in case study and ethnography and data collection
methods in observation, field note taking, interviewing, document review. I also
introduce my research site, Shady Prairie Elementary School and their Mandarin Chinese
program. Following that, I present a comprehensive review of my case, Dr. Lin on her personal and educational backgrounds. At the end of the chapter, the discussion of my researcher’s role as well as data validity, reliability, and credibility issues are covered.

In Chapter Four, I present the findings from: my observations in Dr. Lin’s classroom; my interviews with Dr. Lin, the students, their parents, and school and district staff; and the analysis of the documents I collected inside and outside Dr. Lin’s classroom throughout out the study.

The central topics about Dr. Lin’s personal and professional identities, the power structures in Dr. Lin’s classroom and at her school, her pedagogical decisions and her use of technology are discussed in Chapter Five. I present various levels of my understandings about Dr. Lin, which integrate my observation of her teaching and personal life, my knowledge and experience about Chinese language and culture, and the application of the adopted theories in this study.

Last but not least, the reflection and the implications of the study are discussed to indicate my next steps of exploration on this topic.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

As the evolving identity of a Chinese language teacher is one of the major foci in this study, in this chapter I will first review the existing literature constructing an overall theoretical framework for identity theories, exploring personal identity to teacher identity increasing my own understanding of how professional (teacher) identity might be created. Then, I will extend my discussion to sociocultural theory, as it is a theory that looks into how social and cultural contexts influence people’s behaviors as well as identities. Following my review of sociocultural theories there will be discussion of my investigation of how teacher identity could be developed looking at teacher identity construction through sociocultural perspectives. The wide range of the literature review on teacher identity and sociocultural theory will hopefully support my analysis of the development of identity switching and of how an immigrant Chinese language teacher’s personal identity in American society, as well as the teacher’s identity in an American school, might have been constructed and changed. At the end of this chapter, I will further discuss how the world perceives “American Cultural Imperialism” and how this issue relates to language teaching and learning, especially in East Asia, and how this is connected to computer assisted language teaching and learning. Relevant studies will be reviewed and evidence will be provided that will connect various fields of academia with the over all theme of this research: teaching Mandarin Chinese in American school settings.

2.1 Teacher Identity

Teacher identity is a collective concept, accumulated and shaped by many personal experiences and historic social-cultural events. It covers various aspects of teacher’s lives and can be described through multiple constructs including: personal identity, social identity, political identity, cultural identity, as well as other identities. In this section, I will first introduce ‘identity’ and how it is defined in different fields and then provide the different definitions of teacher identity and how teacher identity is used in educational contexts.
2.1.1 Identity

Identity has been used in many ways in various fields. In the early and middle 20th century, identity was used in psychoanalysis to analyze the issues relevant to personal images for each individual. These psychologists believed that identity was formed and directed by its owners (Freud, 1909). Social psychologists such as Erickson (1994), Vygotsky (1978), and Moshman (2005) conceived identity as a dynamic and situated process of each individual’s psychological development over time. After the mid 20th century, sociologists and anthropologists gave identity a more cultural focus. Thus, identity is understood as being constructed or shaped by “cultural markers and social positionings” (Olsen, 2008, p. 4), such as race, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, and language. Later, in the early 1970s, identity was used by politics to address their social power and status (Bourdieu, 1991).

In general, ‘identity’ refers to what distinguishes that person, characterizing who he or she is. Personal identity consists of what makes a person unique as an individual and different from other people. Personal identity, a perceptual construct, is also the way a person defines and recognizes himself or herself (Olson, 2010). Wenger (1998) has defined his theory of identity as “the social formation of the person, the cultural interpretation of the body, and the creation and use of markers of membership such as rites of passage and social categories” (p. 13). The markers address issues of gender, class, ethnicity, age, and other forms of categorization, association, and differentiation, in an attempt to understand the person’s identity as being formed through “complex relations of mutual constitution between individuals and groups (p. 13).” Thus, a marker of someone’s membership in a community is like a label that shows membership characteristics of a person. But any individual characteristic that becomes distinguishing could be an identity mark. A marker or characteristic connects one person to others and differentiates one person from still others.

Partly in control of the individual, identity can be a way that someone wants others to see him/her and interact with him/her in society. Ludwig (1997) argued that individual identity is a property or set of properties that might temporarily exist and change quickly as time goes by. Wenger (1998) called this “learning as becoming” (p. 5). Wenger (1998) addressed Ludwig’s temporal idea and added ‘learning’ as the main,
driving force for identity change. He categorized identity as a learning process, saying that identity tells us who a person had been and who this person might be in the future by viewing the person’s past or his historical markers on their “trajectory”. This suggests that we can understand a person’s identity or even predict the person’s thoughts and behavior if we understand this person’s history, past experiences, and his participation in his community or communities. Identity literature shows how a person’s history and social-cultural understandings shape, develop, and form his/her identity.

2.1.2 Teacher identity

Laskey (2005) defined teacher professional identity as “a construct of professional self that evolves over career stages” (p. 901). Adding professional and career positionings to the general “identity” concept, teacher professional identity refers to how teachers perceive themselves (self-perception) and represent themselves to others. The nature of identity construction is improvisational (Holland, Lanchicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), discursive and dialogical (Bakhtin, 1981) within the sociocultural perspective. Cooper and Olson (1996) argued that teacher identity is continually being informed, formed, and reformed. Teacher identity can be understood and shaped by various experiences, events, environments, or influences as individuals develop over time and through interaction with others. When a person becomes a teacher, his/her own beliefs, identity, values, would be a part of his/her decision to commit to teaching and would contribute to his/her attitude in learning about instruction, subject knowledge, school settings, and his/her evolution of ideas. Knowles (1992) discovered that the pre-service teachers’ self-conception might be impacted by four sources: role models, prior teaching experience, especially remembered education classes, and informal, personal experiences of learning and activities. From childhood to their present state of adulthood, these multiple factors gradually shape a teacher’s identity until it manifests and becomes explicit (Franzak, 2002).

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) suggested that analyzing teacher identity is a way to examine teaching and teacher development. We comprehend teacher identity as a complex result of multiple influences on the teacher and are better able to understand a teacher’s experience at school in terms of teaching, professional interactions and teacher development (Trent & Lim, 2010). Olsen (2008) considered teacher identity as a valuable research frame and pedagogical tool. Teacher identity sometimes treats teachers as a
whole entity within and across social contexts, but teachers continually amend their perspectives of themselves in relation to others, interactions with students, parents, and colleagues, teaching purposes, and the cultures of their workplaces.

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the social nature of human lives and the interaction between people and the culture embedded in a person’s environment. Social nature exists in every aspect of life although most people are not aware of the extent to which and how, where, and when the sociocultural elements are learned. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) explored various social contexts and concluded that sociocultural perspectives have significant implications for teaching, learning, schooling, and education. Their conclusion coincided with Vygotsky’s (1986) argument that a child’s development cannot be learned only through studying the individual child. The external social environment that this child lives in must also be examined, so that a better understanding about the process of how a child’s learning is accomplished can be acquired. In other words, children learn through interacting with others in the social activities in the events or environment where they participated (Kublin, Wetherby, Crais, & Prizant, 1998).

Wertsch, del Rio, and Alvarez (1995) clarified the concept of sociocultural theory using Vygotsky’s view that “The goal of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this action occurs, on the other” (p. 11). Human beings live in groups. Most human activities are the result of social interactions between people, events, situations, or objects. Rogoff (1995) argued that ‘involvement’ (p. 141) is the key for relationship construction between activities, events and social and cultural environments. Interactions between people are usually meaningful and with purpose. The relationships between people, between human actions and objects or between humans, events, and the environment, form social norms, certain ways of recognizing and interpreting social behaviors that are accepted by the majority of the people in the groups. Sociocultural theorists provide us with a direction to look at human action from cultural aspects and emphasize the importance of interaction and involvement between people, organizations, environments, and events in history.
2.3 Teacher Identity Construction via Sociocultural Perspectives

Wenger (1998) categorized three modes of belonging for identity construction: engagement, imagination, and alignment. People have a sense of involvement and ownership when they engage in events and participate in a community of practice. Through engagement, individuals establish “a lived sense of who we are” (Wenger, 1998, p. 192) and become more aware of what they do and how to negotiate the meanings of the activities and relationships that involve others. Imagination describes individuals creating new ideas, images, or concepts of the external world, contexts, or events based on their existing knowledge and experiences. Alignment allows a person’s activities to coordinate with others’ participation in groups. An individual could be considered as part of a group for his/her participation and involvement in the group activities. The individual and other group members might share some characteristics in their constructed identities and may possess similar opinions and perspectives toward many things in the communities where they are both involved.

Wenger’s three identity construction modes hold that an individual cannot learn without socially interacting with others (Pea, 1993). A person will have “multi-memberships” (Wenger, 1998, p. 158) in one or several communities simultaneously. This multi-membership becomes the representation of a person. It is an individual’s identity constructed through negotiation, social interaction, learning processes and the interplay taking place between the activities in either local communities or a larger society. Wenger (1998) claimed that a person’s identity is a nexus of multimembership where the various aspects of an individual merge into one identity, yet different characteristics remain, existing separately in the different communities of practice where this person is engaged. Multimembership may exist at a single time or appear in different, often overlapping, time spans.

2.4 Globalization and Cultural Imperialism in East Asia

As I stated previously, how personal and professional (teacher) identity are impacted by social and cultural factors is critical to this study. I would like to bring up the issue of cultural imperialism, especially the phenomenon of “pop culture” and its effects in East Asia in these times. I see cultural imperialism as an extension of globalization by Western countries, or more to the point, by the United States of America, developing its
influence and power through politics, economics, science and technology. I also consider it the origin of educational issues that I am concerned with in this study. Furthermore, I believe the history and the processes of “American Cultural Imperialism” reflect images for studying future globalization in the 21st Century. Reviewing this background helps the jigsaw of how Dr. Lin’s identities were shaped and how some of her life decisions were made in her youth.

2.4.1 Definition of cultural imperialism

Cultural imperialism can be understood simply as imposition of certain aspects of culture, such as manners, art, or language. Tomlinson (1991) quoted the definition of cultural imperialism from *The Fountana Dictionary of Modern Thought* as "the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture (from Bullock & Stallybrass, 1977, p. 303)."

Hancock (2007) also interpreted cultural imperialism as the imposition of a culture or language of a foreign viewpoint or civilization of a nation on another. Shukla (2011) also provided a negative connotation of cultural imperialism in that one culture overtakes another in a given situation, and that the imperialized group inextricably assimilates the values, traditions, beliefs and influences of the dominating culture voluntarily or reluctantly. From the definitions and interpretations above, the term cultural imperialism is usually applied in derogatory contexts with features of cultural hegemony.

2.4.2 Global impact of American cultural imperialism

American culture is presently the dominant influence in the process of globalization and has been so since the late 19th century. Some people view the American cultural expansion as a gift to the world, while others consider it as American imperialism and a threat to cultural diversity throughout the world (Sevenier, 2004).

Through the international market, the United States’ consumer products, such as food, films, popular music, clothing, sports, comics, news and media, and technology, are marketed almost everywhere in the world (Levitt, 1984). McDonald’s, Coke-Cola, rock music, Hollywood movies, Levi’s jeans, Microsoft computers can now be found in remote corners of isolated countries. CNN broadcasts in 120 countries (Sevenier, 2004). It is hard for the industries in what are called the “under developed countries” to compete
with American industry because, for example, it is much cheaper to buy a DVD of a Hollywood film than it is to produce one’s own movie (Cowen, 2007). The mass of goods and information exported from the United States promotes the expansion and intrusion of American culture into the local cultures in other parts of the world (Cameron, 2002).

In actuality, the popularity of American culture facilitates its influence and some consider American culture as a gift to the world, making technology widely available, noting that American acculturation is not as brutal as European colonization. The products and practices are promoted in the open market along with the American principles of freedom, democracy, equality, and human rights (Galeota, 2004). These ideas have been championed throughout the world. They are seen by many as bringing greater humanistic awareness for people in all cultures, languages, and beliefs. To some extent they support the rights of women, children, and disadvantaged people in the impoverishment (Sevenier, 2004). American culture is both gift and burden. Conversely, immigration to America brings people from a variety of countries, nourishing American culture with their diversity (Rausch, 2009). This mixture of cultures into the American culture makes it more easily accepted by people from almost everywhere in the world—without concern for homogenization, competition and materialism.

2.4.3 American cultural imperialism and English language education in East Asia

Current data show that ninety percent of the information available online is in English (Sevenier, 2004) and that English is spoken in the streets of more than 115 countries (Weber, 1997). With more than two thirds of printed materials written in English, Russian, Spanish, German and French (as estimated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) (MacBride, 1980), all easily translated into English, it makes a great deal of sense for people to understand the power of the English language and it is one of the strongest vehicles for American culture transmission. This is especially true if you consider the exchanges and interactions in business, art, culture, and politics (Hancock, 2007) from a cultural imperialism perspective. Just looking at the English language’s position among 3500 spoken languages and 500 written languages, demonstrates its dominance and emblematic standing (Tomlinson, 1991). Rothkop (1997) argued that English as the main world
language effectively connects the world and facilitates internationalization. He also glorifies the role of the United States of America by saying that it satisfies common interests in bridging the nations that are separated. To him, English serves as the international language. Thus the world is connected by American culture and values both explicit and embedded in language. Rothkop’s statements attest to the significant role that the English language plays around the world, the way it can supplant local languages and cultures, as well as the way it aids in the domination of world trade, politics, science, and technology.

Strongly influenced by American culture, general English language education has touched the minds of young Asians in East Asia. In fact, the English language is a required subject in East Asia for most students in all levels of their education. Being proficient in English has also become one of the critical attainments for those who seek job promotions and professional development. However, given the impact of “American Cultural Imperialism,” English language education results in important negative effects in East Asian countries. The following examples of negative effects from South Korea, Japan and China may help us understand the significance of the connection between the English language education and American Cultural Imperialism.

Studying the education reform efforts of the 1980s, Kubota (2002) reviewed the impact of globalization through how English education was adopted throughout Japanese education, redirecting Japanese students’ logical thinking and communication skills. Wada (1999) stated that Japanese has a circular logic whereas the English-speaking populations demonstrate a more linear logic. Certain Japanese Education policy makers believed that English logic is better for Japanese students in ‘learning to think,’’ therefore they adopted ‘debating,’ the common skill the English speakers practice, in their curriculum and used it as a pedagogical approach to train their students. By imitating the Western ways of negotiation and communication, their students could take a place in the new global economy. However, unambiguous self-expression and rational thinking have never been central to Japanese values and the emphasis and enforcement of the two skills contradict Japanese identity (Kubota, 2002).
Hui (2001) discussed the globalization issues specific to the impact of English language education in China. He provides evidence showing the pervasiveness of English education in China, such as English language being taught from the 5th grade in the elementary school through college levels, and there is at least one high school of foreign language that mostly emphasizes English language teaching in every large city in China. The effect is cumulative. Chinese students spend much greater time, effort, and budget enhancing their English abilities than learning their native language, Mandarin (Li, 2005). Since the 1990s, more people pay more attention to Western holidays, like Christmas, New Year’s, and Valentine’s Day than the traditional Chinese holidays (Johnson, 2012).

The case in this study, Dr. Lin, the Mandarin Chinese teacher at Shady Prairie Elementary School, had been through the Cultural Revolution and Modernization in China. Her English language ability was developed and her knowledge about American culture was shaped under the influence of this background. It is important to review this piece of history in East Asia so that we might better understand how her identities were developed and shaped by the influence of American culture in China and East Asia.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976), China abolished higher education and cut off interactions with other countries. The gap of science and technology between China and Western countries widened (Hui, 2001). Later, China imported English education and Western information technology, calling the practice ‘Modernization’ (Johnson, 2012). Tian Qing claimed in an interview with Johnson (2012) that for many Chinese, Modernization and heritage protection conflicted with each other. As he saw it the influence of Modernization was worse than the damage of the Cultural Revolution because “Cultural Revolution was forced on people. Modernization, however, is yearned for by the Chinese people themselves. It’s their own desire. (Johnson, 2012)”

2.4.4 American cultural imperialism and technology

McPhail (1987) defined electronic colonialism as how technology-advanced countries export communication hardware, foreign software with manipulated norms, values, and expectations to alter local cultures and socialization processes. Lee (1988) further interpreted communication imperialism as causing the indigenous values and
norms of a group to suffer deleteriously during the process of ownership and control over
the hardware and software of mass media. The indigenous group is subjugated by the
dominating culture. Ogan (1988) pointed out that the United States and Western Europe
produce most of the media products and market them to "under-developed" countries
cheaper than they can create their own products.

Some scholars in media and communications studies have reviewed Ogan’s
(1988) observations, agreeing that when cultural imperialism involves technology, the
United States and other technology-advanced countries should take the responsibility for
their imperialist behaviors. They should pay for intruding into and even harming the
cultures of the countries who are not yet as technologically advanced and are slow to
come up to the same level of development (Bowers, 1988; Jones, 1995). Several
examples in this section will demonstrate more clearly current technology imperialism in
the world and how countries try to defend their own cultures to prevent subjugation under
U.S. and Western technology expansion.

Once a handy technological tool is introduced into one country, it is almost
impossible to turn back and to avoid the cultural influence of that particular technology
(Cesarini, n.d.). For example, according to their business plan, Microsoft sells their
digital products all over the world, with some of their products taking over more than half
of the local market (Whitney, 2012). In order to resist being dominated and controlled,
Germany, Japan and several Latin American countries use Linux, an operation system
that mostly uses free and open source software, in their government and state owned
computers rather than depending on Microsoft products (Supurgeci, 2009). In fact, the
initiation of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project by Nicholas Negroponte in 2002
has a similar orientation. These OLPC computers use open source and open licensing for
their content. This design does not limit the access of people who are not able to afford
software products on the market, and it also encourages self-determination and
collaboration with peers, so that the participants in the program do not simply submit to
technology from dominant countries (Bicking, 2009). The act of donating free computers
to children in third world countries narrows the digital divide between people who do and
do not have access to computer technology (Parkins, n.d.) and will develop their
computer competency connecting them with the modern world at various levels. However, Bicking (2009) was concerned that OLPC could still be culturally disruptive. For instance, in some cultures, giving access to this free technology also provides youngsters choices for their future. This is particularly problematic for girls in some countries, as they may not be given opportunities to make their own choices, and neither should they abandon their own cultures for something they found appealing in the modern Western civilizations. China and Saudi Arabia both share this concern of the negative influences of Western/American Cultural Imperialism, and so their governments limit the internet access of their citizens by setting up strong censorship and allowing only certain websites and content access (Supurgeci, 2009).

The issues of the digital divide in terms of computer and internet access and how the technological disparities affect language learners are also discussed in the area of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Sehlaoui (2001) conducted a case study on how EFL/EFL pre-service teachers incorporated technology in their teacher education program. Sehlaoui found that this integration has the potential to cause cultural disturbance and domination. The participants in her study expressed being pushed to use computer technology; however, they neither had access to computers and the internet nor sufficient computer competence.

Bowers (1988) was concerned that there are inherent ideologies underlying the Western science and technology approaches carried into these computer-learning programs. Jones (1995) observed the culture in the internet communities online, in what he called “cybersociety.” and found that this technology might develop a new elite culture and foster student stereotypes and biases when the students and teachers are exposed to cultural materials through cross-cultural communications with other uses online. The dominant culture could possibly reinforce the hegemonic aspects of education and be strengthened and protected via technology by engaging more of the dominant social class that might have more sufficient access to the computer technology (Sehlaoui, 2001).

The issues of “American Cultural Imperialism” involving computer-based technology are related to the Mandarin Chinese teacher’s teaching at her school in the United States. The Mandarin Chinese teacher in this study is surrounded by rich
computer and internet resources at her school. With this comes a certain level of assumption on my part, that there is an expectation from the school administration that the teacher will make regular use of it in teaching. However, she and language teachers elsewhere may not be competent to utilize the computer technology and to find materials useful for her teaching. In fact, the cultural imperialism involved in this situation might impact the Chinese language teacher and her teaching in two ways. First, Dr. Lin is pushed to use computer technology within her school context and this conflicts with her practice and belief that she can teach her Chinese classes very well without it. Secondly, the cultural content she retrieves from internet that involves her personal perceptions and acknowledgement might not be appropriate for her students. The technology just heightens the cultural conflict in the classroom.

2.5 Conclusion

Identity is one representation of a person. It shows a version of who the person is and sometimes how this person wants other people to see him or her. A person has various social experiences that are influenced by the events and people in their life, so each person forms a personal identity, professional identity, cultural identity, social identity, political identity and others. Teacher (professional) identity is constructed through the same process, also being shaped by others participating in the work environment, such as students, parents of the students, community members, teacher colleagues, and school district authorities. Sociocultural theory provides a good foundation for teacher identity construction, transformation and reformation.

Chinese language teaching has become popular in the U.S.A. in recent years. Many English language learners migrated from China to the U.S. to teach Mandarin Chinese at American schools. Most are competent in both Chinese and English languages, but most still have much to learn about teaching American children in American schools. No matter that they are English language experts in their home country or wish to become Chinese language teachers in American schools, their personal identity and teacher identity are constructed and shaped by Chinese life experiences, events, people, environments, and their own history.

American and Western cultures strongly threaten indigenous cultural preservation in “third world countries” during the process of globalization and modernization. In this
chapter, American Cultural Imperialism is emphasized for its particular impact on English language education in East Asia and the incorporation of computer-based technology in different countries of the world. Japan, Korea, China and other East Asian countries have been impacted by American Cultural Imperialism to various degrees, as follows:

First, some Korean companies expanded their English language teaching and publishing industry and made profits by maintaining a close relationship with the United States. Japan applied American logical thinking and brought debating activities into its curriculum, although this contradicts the traditional Japanese thinking model and indirectly impacts their national identity. China imported English language education after their Cultural Revolution to catch up with the science and technology development of American and Western countries. To its dismay, many Chinese youngsters found the American culture more appealing than the traditional Chinese culture. Computer technology and internet resources from the dominant cultures could also interfere with the traditional values and norms of the people who have limited or low technological capacity and access. Both the Linux operating system and the One Laptop Per Child project are for opposing American technology and Microsoft product dominance and to prevent the American cultural and inherent ideology invasion. China and Saudi Arabia use censorship to control the internet content for their citizens so as not to overwhelm their citizens with American and Western culture.

The Mandarin Chinese teacher in this study had been exposed to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Modernization and the Open Door Doctrine as well as to American science, technology, and English language education. She developed her bilingual foundation in the English language in China and has been exposed to American social, cultural and technology influences both when she was in China and in the United States. This study looked into the ways a Chinese teacher was shaped by her traditional Chinese culture, American culture and American Cultural Imperialism, and the ways her identities influenced her instruction.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGIES

This chapter describes how this study was conducted. First, case study and ethnography methods are reviewed. The theoretical background of the two methodologies and what fundamental knowledge they provided for organizing and implementing this research are presented. Next, the protocols and instruments for data collection, observations, interviews, and document review, are discussed. The process and brief introduction about the participants are also covered. Then, the context information of the research site in Shady Prairie Elementary School is described to deepen my readers’ understanding about this study. Following that, a thorough review of Dr. Lin’s personal history, educational background, past experiences and stories are presented. After knowing more about Dr. Lin, the researcher’s role is addressed based on my past experience, my perceptions on being a researcher, and my responsibilities and levels of involvement in this study. Last, I present a brief literature review about data validity, reliability, and credibility and explain how I utilize a data triangulation method to enhance those essential qualities of my qualitative research.

3.1 Case Study

3.1.1 Definition of case

From Stake’s (1995), *The Art of Case Study Research*, Schwandt (2001) defined a case as “a specific and bounded (in time and place) instance of a phenomenon selected for study. The phenomenon of interest may be a person, process, event, group, organization, and so on” (p. 22) in his Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry. As one of the most respected scholars to apply case study method in program evaluation, Stake (1995) stated his idea of a case. “The case is one among others. In any given study, we will concentrate on the one. … The case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing” (p. 2). From his interpretation, a child can be case. A teacher can be a case. However, the teacher’s teaching might not be called a case when it lacks specificity and boundedness. In other words, attention to a case should be to it as an object rather than a process. Stake adopted Louis Smith’s term ‘bounded system’ to elaborate the features of a case. He
emphasizes the importance of the boundary by using the Greek symbol Θ (theta) to represent the image of a case. In Stake’s idea, case is an integrated system. The parts in the system do not have to be functioning well, but they exist within a clear boundary, a system.

### 3.1.2 Case study method

Case studies have their origins in the discipline of medicine and law (Krathwohl, 2004) and later been broadly developed in the social science fields, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, management, and in other fields (Merriam, 1988). Yin (1989) argued that a case study methodology is best used to explore how and why questions in order to acquire close or in-depth understandings of a phenomenon in real life context (Bromley, 1986). Good case study research can bring the researchers and readers to an understanding of a complex issue or object. The findings of a case study might extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous investigation.

Kothari (2004) also noted, “case study deepens our perception and gives us a clearer insight into life…. It gets at behavior directly and not by an indirect and abstract approach” (p. 115). Kothari (2004) argued (from Gandhi’s famous idea of monitoring your belief) that the case study method helps obtain genuine perceptions of personal experience and personal experience can attribute behavior patterns to a person’s inner thoughts that might become words, and words might become actions, and actions might become habits.

When case means something more than just “n of 1” (Schwandt, 2011, p. 22), a case study usually requires holistic investigation and analysis of a case in its naturally existing environment by one or more methods (Johnson, 1992). Stake (2000) affirmed the importance of context: a case study researcher should pay attention to contextual information, such as time, social situation and location of the case. “Interpretation in context”, described by Cronbach (1975, p. 123), is one of the ways to differentiate case study from other research designs. Merriam (1998) wrote that by seeking integrated description and explanation the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon are uncovered. Contextual analysis is unique, as Yin (1989) observed, case study is an approach principally suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context. In an empirical study, investigating a case
within a real-life context or the natural environment where the case exists is the way to achieve comprehensive understanding.

### 3.1.3 Critics of case study

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is that the study of a small number of cases offers poor grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings (Eisenhardt, 1989). Some say that the intense exposure to the context and the case biases the findings (Soy, 1997). Researchers have different purposes for conducting research and in the methods they choose, not always for generalization. For case study methods, Stake (1995) asserted, “Case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases” (p. 4). He further affirmed that the focus of case study is “particularization, not generalization” (p. 8). Cohen and Manion (1994) disagreed, saying that:

... the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs. (p. 106)

According to them, a generalisation is possible to achieve within the circle of the population to which the observed unit belongs. This idea of generalization implies applying one case or one feature into another or many more. What if we look more broadly in what generalization is and how it functions in the world? Kuhn (1977) defined generalization as one of many ways to gain accumulated knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) elaborated Kuhn’s idea of knowledge accumulation by indicating the fact that it is possible for knowledge to be formally generalized when it enters into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in an area or a society. He further claimed that we should avoid the limitation of following the formal generalization because knowledge can be transferrable even when it is not generalized formally. Thus, a descriptive case study without any strong attempt to generalize can still be valuable in adding knowledge during the process and contribute toward scientific innovation.
3.1.4 Application of case study

Case study methodology does not limit the research to a specific manner of data collection (Merriam, 1988). Usually archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations are included (Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (2011) affirmed that multiple resources of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, make a good case study. Stake (1995) differentiated between intrinsic and instrumental case study. Instrumental case study aims to reach goals beyond understanding the individual case. On the other hand, an intrinsic case study indicates the researchers who are interested in the given cases for and of themselves, not for the purpose of learning other cases in general.

In this dissertation, I studied Dr. Lin, the Mandarin Chinese teacher, as my case. I looked into the people, activities, and materials around her. I examined the contexts, the phenomena, and the issues within her working and living environments. I sought to understand her identity formation and evolution, to analyze the challenges she experienced in her teaching practice and life, and to figure out how her identities influenced her teaching strategies and how the Mandarin Chinese program run by her influenced others and in what way. The design of case study method helped me appreciate the particularity of Dr. Lin as a person and allowed me to comprehend the complexity of her job in its context. That satisfied my intrinsic interest in understanding Dr. Lin as a teacher teaching Mandarin Chinese in an American elementary school. Figure 1 shows the plan of my case study. The idea was adopted from Stake’s (2010) case study model in *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. 
The circles around the outside represented the contexts in this study. The content inside the big circle in the middle indicated what the research would be working as the guide for data gathering. Four major activities, in-class sessions, lunch and bus duties, after-school program, and the follow up after classes, had been marked for observations. The main documents for review were the available online resources related to the Mandarin Chinese program at Shady Prairie Elementary School and the district, the report cards, the Chinese curriculum and Dr. Lin’s lesson plans. For Dr. Lin’s Chinese teaching study, four contexts were worthy of examination: the history of the Mandarin Chinese program, Dr. Lin’s personal and education background, social and cultural contexts in this study, school, district and community support for the Mandarin Chinese program. The existing research about Chinese teaching in American elementary schools was helpful to update the researcher with the current issues and phenomenon in this field. The issues in the box in the bottom were the major questions for the researcher to think about and find out. The other parallel box presented the information that the researcher needed to explore the case.
3.2 Ethnography

The primary tool I used to construct my case study of Dr. Lin was ethnography.

3.2.1 Definition

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) defined ethnography as “an integration of both first-hand empirical investigation and the theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organization and culture” (p. 1). Ethnography is a qualitative design specifically studying activities of a group of people to see how they make sense of their lives, environments, and customs. Ethnographers live with the participants for extended periods and describe and interpret the shared and learned values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group (Harris, 1968) in ethnographic reports. Ethnography can be understood as “the process and product of describing and interpreting cultural behavior” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 80). It is a way of conducting qualitative research as well as a presentation of the qualitative researchers’ understanding of a group of people’s cultural behavior.

3.2.2 Brief history and development

In the nineteenth century, ethnography was originated and used by Western anthropologists as a descriptive account of a community or culture, usually one located outside the Western European society (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). At that time, ethnography was commonly compared with or treated as complementary to ethnology, the “historical and comparative analysis of non-Western societies and cultures” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 1). In the early twentieth-century, anthropologists such as Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mead initially adopted the natural sciences as a model for research (Creswell, 2007). But unlike traditional scientific approaches, they began to do their fieldwork by collecting first-hand data concerning existing “primitive” cultures — a society that was considered lacking cultural, technological, and economical sophistication or development by Western standards (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

During the 20th Century, anthropological ethnography became one of the inquiry models of Western sociology. Here the researchers were more concerned about the impact of urbanization and industrialization on towns and villages within the United
States and Western Europe (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). From the 1920s to 1930s, sociologists, such as Park, Dewey, and Mead at the University of Chicago, used a “case study” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 2) method, applying some key anthropological field research concepts, to study human social life in the United States (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The “Chicago School” utilized the theories, concepts, and terminologies in sociology to describe the phenomena in the societies they studied. These researchers also started to be concerned with issues like political power and social class (Deegan, 2001).

In the latter half of 20th Century, cultural studies became prominent (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Cultural studies researchers began employing historical and textual approaches, but later they included more ethnographic methods to gain direct and deeper understanding of the issues of cultural consumption (Turner, 2003). Recently, ethnography has spread to various fields and has become more multidisciplinary, to evolve into such methods as structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, cultural and cognitive anthropology, feminism, neo-Marxism, ethnomethodology, critical theory, and postmodernism (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

### 3.2.3 Types of Ethnographies

There are many orientations and forms for ethnographies, such as confessional ethnography, life history, autobiography, feminist ethnography, ethnographic novels and visual ethnography presented in the form of photos and videos, and electronic media as well as written report form (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 1989; LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992; van Maanen, 1988). In this section, I will discuss realist ethnography and critical ethnography, two of ethnographies that are perhaps most commonly employed in social science studies and in educational research.

**Realist Ethnography.** Many people publish scholarly monographs based on their master or doctoral thesis, disciplined by a strongly “objective” ethnographic account (Tedlock, 2000). Creswell (2007) categorized this type of ethnography as realist ethnography, “an objective account of the situation, typically written in the third person point of view and reporting objectively on the information learned from participants at a site” (p. 69). In the realist ethnographic approach, the ethnographers report the “facts” from the outside with a third-person unemotional and uninvolved voice to report what they see and hear from the participants (Creswell, 2007). They stay close enough to
observe the participants, but at the same time, they try to keep a certain distance to remain objective and keep an unbiased “lens” and tone to present and interpret what is observed and learned from the individuals being studied. Of course, not everyone agrees that any social observation, realist ethnography or otherwise, can be truly objective.

In terms of participant relationship, Tedlock (2000) criticized this simultaneously emotional involved and objectively detached participant observation method as paradoxical and “strangely empathic yet impassive” (p. 465). She proposed a deeper involvement in her methodological position, “observation of participation” (p. 465–466), where ethnographers both invite and acknowledge others’ co-participation within the context and environment. It is doubtful if ethnographers can remain neutral and unbiased during the study design, data collection and interpretation, and report writing process. As indicated before, van Maanen (1988) argued that realist ethnography reflects a stance taken by the researcher toward the participants with whom they work, strangely empathic yet impassive. Chen (2000) also commented that it is naïve to think that ethnographers can collect, interpret and report the objective data in an unbiased style without coloring it with personal preference, political goals, and judgment.

**Critical ethnography.** This type of ethnography refers to “ethnographic studies that engage in cultural critique, structured by the larger political, social, and economic issues that focus on oppression, conflict, struggle, and power” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 44). Rooted also in anthropology and the Chicago school of sociology (Quantz, 1992), critical ethnography is a type of anthropological, qualitative, participant-observer methodology associated with critical theory (Madison, 2005). Critical ethnographic researchers utilize field methods to study culture and lived experience of a group of people seen as emotionally inseparable from the contexts of the critical ethnographers and the participants they study (Simon & Dippo, 1986). The intent of critical ethnography is to work toward political enlightenment and ethical reflexivity (Thomas, 1993; Madison, 2005). These researchers speak out against inequality and domination (Carspecken & Apple, 1992) and advocate for those being studied (Thomas, 1993). Critical ethnographers are interested in power imbalances and how they play out culturally (Creswell, 2007).
3.2.4 An ethnographers’ methods of research

Many qualitative approaches have similar ways of collecting data with different focuses and orientations. In this section, I would like to describe ethnographic work in terms of types of ethnographic data and the unique features of an ethnographic approach.

**Fieldwork.** Picken (2009) used “fieldwork” as a term to refer to the major data collection method of ethnography. Fetterman (2010) further called ethnographers “fieldworkers” (p. 34) who use various methods and techniques to investigate directly, in face-to-face manner, noting the influence of local context. In other words, fieldwork in ethnographic investigation seeks out the participants’ cultural behavior and environment. Brewer (2000) claimed that ethnographic data collection methods are used to capture the ordinary social interactions and meaningful activities in the participants’ natural setting. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) indicated that ethnographic researchers have a history of interacting overtly and covertly in their participants’ daily lives for a lengthy period of time, watching what they do, listening to what they say, and asking questions through informal conversations, collecting documents and artifacts, and taking notes on the setting, the background noise, and the passage of time. Wolcott (2008) described ethnography as “a matter of detail” (p. 85). In Wolcott’s opinion, ethnography looks at voluminous detail of the cultural group that is studied, so he recommends that ethnographers document as much detail and complexity as possible in one’s observations and notes.

**Features of ethnographic work.** Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) summarized five main features for most existing ethnography work (p. 3). I believe these features help us understand better the essence of ethnography. They also provide guidelines for new ethnographers for their future studies.

First, the research takes place in the field, inside or outside, wherever the action is. Ethnography studies people’s actions and activities in everyday contexts as they happen naturally. The contexts are part of the participants’ lives, thus, they are not created or designed by the researcher, such as a laboratory experiment or formal interview is.

Second, participant observation and informal conversations are the main sources of data collection. Although gathering documentary evidence and formal interviews are sometimes used to collect ethnographic data, observation and informal conversations are
desirably less intrusive way that ethnographers immerse themselves into the participants’ culture and discover what people think (Fetterman, 2010).

Third, ethnographic data collection is relatively unstructured. Ethnographers usually do not have a fixed plan or research design at the beginning of the study and the data interpretation categories are usually not managed before the data are collected. Issues, plans, and data collection and interpretation become more specific and clear after the ethnographers merge with into the group being studied.

Fourth, small-scale action facilitates an in-depth study. Ethnographic focus is usually on a few cases and even a single setting, often just one group of people. Comparison can be done through multiple cases exploration; however, it is not economic and sometimes not workable in terms of time consummation.

Fifth, ethnographic data analysis focuses on the interpretation of meanings of the behaviors of the shared-culture group and the implication of these actions to the local people or even to wider contexts. The largest part of ethnography, the report, is composed of narrative description.

Ethnography tries to maximize the opportunity for the researcher to become deeply acquainted with the participants.

3.2.5 Application of ethnography

Guided by these ethnographic features, I spent a year and a half in my fieldwork with Dr. Lin, understanding how she managed the Mandarin Chinese program, and attempting to understand the participants’ expectations and attitude toward Dr. Lin’s Chinese teaching. Investigating the participants’ daily activities and behavior in the natural social and cultural contexts was the principle that I followed throughout my data collection. There might be some inevitable intrusion, for example, my existence and observation in the classroom, or my questions to the participants that required self-reflection. However, I was aware of the importance of assessing my impact on the people and environments (Creswell, 2007). “Going native” (Tedlock, 2000, p. 457) was another tenet that I tried to practice. With different social and cultural background, it was sometimes hard for me to recognize my participants’ ideas or fit in the environment where they work and live. However, caring about what the participant’s needs and feelings and how the study might influence them, their culture, and their environment
was my concern. I understood that subjective interpretations could happen when focusing on this case for in-depth understanding and analysis. Schwimmer (n.d.) stated that researchers’ personalities, social, cultural education, and political backgrounds and life experiences will influence how they interpret and report their investigations of other cultures. I am interested in understanding the deeper nuances and my participants’ stories and experiences. Objectivity is not my concern in this study. I strive for an empathetic understanding.

3.3 Methods

In order to collect information to answer my research questions, I used staff, student, and parent interviews, classroom observation, teacher-parent conference and faculty meeting observations, and school and program related documentary review. I also observed the classroom activities in the after-school program that were led by Dr. Lin. During my data collection, given permission, all the formal conversations and some of the classroom observations were audio recorded. Overall, this study lasted for a year and a half from the beginning of my classroom observation to the last time I discussed the issues and concerns in this study with Dr. Lin.

In this case study, I looked at one Mandarin Chinese teacher teaching one, fifth grade class, in one elementary school in the U.S.A. I included many other participants related to this Mandarin Chinese program. As Wolcott (2008) suggested to ethnographers and almost everyone, there should be a focus on “one of something” (p. 92), focusing on one village, one key event, one institution, or one individual is the better way to acquire some complete knowledge of the studied topic. This “to do less more thoroughly” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 93) is an ideal way of looking at my research subject, allowing me to spend most of my time and energy focusing on one Mandarin Chinese teacher in one Mandarin Chinese program in one American elementary school and related contexts. I explored my participant’s current and past stories and even investigated her future career plan on teaching and professional development.

3.3.1 Participant observation

I focused on one, fifth grade class in Shady Prairie Elementary School and observed this class and its surroundings for a semester, about twelve weeks, in fall 2012.
Before I officially started my classroom observation, I visited Dr. Lin and her students in the classroom several times in the spring semester, 2012 and helped them with “prop making” for their event performance. I gained a brief understanding about Dr. Lin and her students through those visits.

I sat in the classroom for all four fifth grade sections for about four weeks, four times at least for each section and forty minutes each session. Later, I selected Section D as my target class because of the good mixture of the students in terms of the variety in ethnicity, in-class performance, interactions between Dr. Lin and the students. From the fifth week, I went for the classroom observation only when Section D had the Chinese class with Dr. Lin. In Section 5D, there were nineteen students in total, eight male and eleven female. Four of the students were White, eight were African American, five were Asian, one was Hispanic and one was Pacific Islander.

I went in the classroom before the fifth graders arrived. I sat quietly at the back corner of the classroom and started audio-recording when the classes began; one long-range digital audio recording device were placed near the researcher and another recorder was carried by Dr. Lin during class as Dr. Lin permitted. By using more than one recorder, I recorded many of the conversations between the students and Dr. Lin and other audible interactions in the classroom. I also took notes to remember key events or happenings that took place during the observation times. The audio file of each classroom observation was saved in the researcher’s computer as well as in a secure online server. Excerpts from the audio files were transcribed right after each observation.

I participated in one of the teacher-parent conferences (Expectation Night) and two faculty meetings during the semester. I took notes during my observations of the meetings but did not audio record any of the sessions. The event information was shared by Dr. Lin. She encouraged me to request permission to join those meetings, so I could gather more information that helped my research. In the Expectation Night, I saw the interactions between Dr. Lin and the parents. I also saw some parents’ attitude toward their children’s Chinese learning. Most of them were very supportive and they were positive about what they had learned in Dr. Lin’s school. The two faculty meetings were for second grade and special teachers to discuss the themes and plans of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. In the second grade teachers’ meeting, the teachers sat
with the Primary Years Program (PYP) coordinator and brainstormed ideas for the knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action of the PYP curriculum. For the special teacher meeting, the art, music, PE and Chinese teachers met with the PYP coordinator and they discussed dates and changes that they needed to collaborate with the class teachers for the PYP theme related activities.

Other than the classroom and event observations, I also visited the school, observing and talking with other teachers, staff, and students. I visited student lunch at the cafeteria and observed and helped Dr. Lin’s bus duty several times in the afternoon. By those chances, I met with other staff, students and parents outside the classroom and gained their perspectives about the Chinese program. Through those casual visits, I also learned much about the atmosphere and culture of Shady Prairie Elementary School. Very often I walked with Dr. Lin on the hallway at school, I observed how she interacted with her colleagues and learned her thoughts about those people.

3.3.2 Interviews

With Dr. Lin. I formally interviewed and talked with Dr. Lin repeatedly during the entire study. We had five formal interviews. The longest lasted for three hours and the shortest was about an hour and a half. In the major interviews, my questions covered themes, such as her academic background, belief, thoughts and ideas, teaching philosophy, American life experience, past and current Chinese teaching experiences, and her plans for future life and career. With her permission, I audio recorded all the interviews to accompany my note taking.

I also talked with Dr. Lin for at least thirty minutes after each classroom observation and we went out to a restaurant several times. Later, I maintained regular communication with her and periodically asked for updates about her teaching and life until February 2014. We talked widely about her husband and two sons, parenting, weekend plans, her relatives and friends in China, her impressions about American and Chinese societies. These soft topics helped me understand her personal life and her values and attitudes toward complexities within American society.

With school and district staff. Five teachers and one district administrator were also invited to interview. They were asked to share their understanding about the Mandarin Chinese program and their experiences working with Dr. Lin. I was requested
to disguise their identities, so I called all of them Ms. here and am not sharing their age, gender or ethnicities. In the table below, I listed the basic information about the teachers and staff and a brief summary of their perspectives. All the interviews were audio recorded with the interviewees’ permission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Thoughts about the Chinese Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. King</td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher</td>
<td>Dr. Lin is great; she brought us to a new level of understanding the Chinese culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bruce</td>
<td>2nd grade teacher</td>
<td>Some of my female students really like the Chinese class because they can dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rivera</td>
<td>ESL teacher &amp; the search committee of the Chinese teacher</td>
<td>She’s good, but she can do better by adding more activities in her class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Suiter</td>
<td>Instructional coach</td>
<td>She worked very hard to organize the Chinese New Year Celebration. That was very successful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Mason</td>
<td>IB school specialist</td>
<td>Dr. Lin runs the Chinese program very well. It was the critical part of us being an IB school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sanchez</td>
<td>Director of ESL/Bilingual Education</td>
<td>Dr. Lin is my good friend and she certainly knows how to run the Chinese program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Information about the staff interviewees

With students and parents. Five students, balanced in gender, from the fifth grade were recruited for interviews as well. Dr. Lin was asked to suggest student interviewees; however, she was not told the list of interviewees. The students were invited to talk about their learning experiences with Dr. Lin and the Mandarin Chinese classes. In addition to their learning experiences, they were guided to discuss why they attended Shady Prairie Elementary School and if possible would they again join the Mandarin Chinese program and the Traditional Chinese Culture after-school program, and what they expected themselves to get out of the Mandarin Chinese program. An interview with a student was about thirty to fifty minutes. The interviews were held in the quiet corners at Shady Prairie Elementary School. All of the students joined this study were audio recorded with their parents’ consent.

Four of the student interviewees’ parents were invited to talk about their children’s Chinese learning situation at home, why they chose Shady Prairie Elementary
School and how they expected their children to utilize the Chinese language ability. The parent interviews followed after their children’s interviews. Ms. Wu, who was a Chinese native speaker and knowledgeable about Chinese language learning, was also invited to interview although her daughter, Elsa, was only in the second grade. Each parent interview took place in a quiet corner of a coffee shop, their work place, or over the phone as they chose. The longest interview lasted for about two hours and the shortest was only about twenty-five minutes. These were also audio recorded with the participants’ permission. The student and parent participants’ information is showed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Response in the Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holly*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chinese-</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Restaurant Owner</td>
<td>Excited to share what he knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyssa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Bus Driver</td>
<td>Very brief answers to all the questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuki*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American White &amp; Japanese</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>about 45</td>
<td>Movie Maker</td>
<td>Passionately talked about her parenting but knew little about Yuki’s Chinese Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jed*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>about 50</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Cared all about Jed’s learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hispanic - Guatemala</td>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Chinese-</td>
<td>Ms. Wu</td>
<td>about 50</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>Expected low in her daughter’s Chinese learning at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students with an asterisk (*) next to their names were in the gifted program.

Table 2. Information about the student and parent interviewees

Holly was transferred to the gifted class from another school for her third grade. She loved writing and she was the editor of the school newspaper. She was one of the representatives that gave a speech in Mandarin Chinese at the Expectation Night. She loved her previous school better because she did not encounter racism and bullying there. She said, “The people and teachers there were nicer and I was not seen as a geek there.” Holly’s father owned a Chinese restaurant in town. He came to the United States from China at his early thirties. He cared very much about Holly’s academic and psychological
development at school. He liked Holly to have Chinese as a language skill, but he wanted Holly to be more Americanized.

Alyssa just transferred to Shady Prairie in fall 2012. She loved this new school, teachers, friends and the Chinese program because “There is less drama in Shady Prairie,” said Alyssa. She showed strong interest in Chinese learning and she helped Dr. Lin clean the classroom after class several times. The interview with Alyssa’s mother was short. She chose the telephone interview as it worked better for her schedule. All her responses to my questions were very brief. She did not have much idea about Alyssa’s Chinese learning at school and she did not pay much attention to her learning at home. Her young children cried several times during our interview.

Yuki was also new to this school. She transferred to Shady Prairie because she needed more friendship and academic input. She enjoyed the teachers, friends and “workload” at school. Yuki was talented in ballet dancing and ice-skating. She became one of the key characters in Dr. Lin’s dancing programs in the celebration events. Yuki’s mother did not agree that children should spend too much time studying. However, she did not challenge Yuki’s decisions as long as she enjoyed her school and life. Yuki’s parents were both very well educated. Yuki’s mother had a very tight schedule, so we talked over the phone or when she accompanied Yuki to her ice skating competition. As most parents in my interviews did, she did not know much about Yuki’s Chinese learning at school. She would not push her to learn Chinese if she did not want to, but she would like her to choose Japanese if it was offered at her school as Japanese was Yuki’s mother’s heritage language.

Jed joined the fifth grade Chinese class although he was a fourth grader in his fourth/fifth grade gifted class. With very well educated immigrant parents from Tunisia, Jed and his older brother and older sister all had very good academic performances at school. Jed liked his school and the Chinese program in general. Jed’s mother could not complete her doctoral dissertation because she spent most of her time taking care of her three children. She spent time participating in her children’s activities at schools and she also checked their studies at home. Jed’s mother practiced Chinese homework with Jed. She also taught Jed to use “Google translate” to look for meanings for a new language and to search for resources for foreign language learning.
Diego was a quiet boy who talked only when he was asked questions. But he showed his passion in Chinese learning. He expressed that it was fun and easy for him to learn Chinese. He always got good grades and positive comments from Dr. Lin. For Diego, performing well at school was one of the ways to honor his parents. “Dr. Lin said, I am talented in Chinese learning. Actually I am good at Chinese and math. My parents are very happy when they heard my teachers say I am very smart,” said Diego. Due to the busy working schedule and the language barrier, Diego’s parents rejected invitations to my interviews.

Ms. Wu worked as an accountant in a university and she also helped the Chinese Heritage School on Sundays where her children went since being very young. She was actively involved in the activities amongst the Chinese circle in town. Ms. Wu did not expect her daughter’s Chinese learning to be extensive at Shady Prairie because the class time was too little and the students’ language levels varied considerably. She suggested including more cultural aspects instead of language instruction in Dr. Lin’s teaching.

I probably should not have included so many students from the gifted class, Holly, Yuki and Jed, in my student interviews. However, they were the ones that responded to my invitations. A compensation of ten and fifteen dollar gift cards were given to students and parents who helped my interviews.

Most of the interviews were semi-structured. An outline for each interview was prepared to remind myself of the topics, but no sequence or order of the questions needed to be followed. After each interview, the file was saved in my computer as well as in a safe online server. The audio files were transcribed and some chosen parts of the transcription and the notation were presented to the participants for member checking. They had a chance to identify mistakes about what they said and to comment upon what the researcher had written about them.

3.3.3 Document review

I collected information from the websites of Shady Prairie Elementary School and the district. From the web resources, I reviewed the history and development of the school and the district, the curriculum and lesson plans of the Mandarin Chinese program, school, district, and state report cards, the announcements and background about the magnet schools and the International Baccalaureate school and other
information related to the Mandarin Chinese program. Dr. Lin’s teaching materials for her regular classes and the after-school program were also collected and analyzed. News and reports online or in local newspapers were also resources. Furthermore, Dr. Lin forwarded some email communications between herself and the principal, an instructional coach, other teachers, and the director of ESL/Bilingual Education to me to provide me with the background information for some events that she discussed with me. The information I obtained was a valuable resource for conversations and discussions with my participants. It was also used for the purpose of data triangulation during analysis of the data.

3.4 Shady Prairie Elementary School

3.4.1 Low-income neighborhood

Constructed in 1958 and a charter school for the State Accelerated School Project since 1989, Shady Prairie Elementary School was located in a moderate sized city in Illinois state. According to 2013 district statistics, Shady Prairie had more than five hundred students enrolled, the biggest enrollment among the elementary schools in the district. The student population was reported as 35% African American, 18% White, 11% Asian and 31% Hispanic. Compared with other neighborhood schools in the district, Shady Prairie had the largest Hispanic student population and the least White student population. Shady Prairie had 30% of LEP (Limited English Proficient) students, ranking it first among district schools. In terms of economic status of the households in the community, Shady Prairie Elementary School had the greatest amount of low-income students, 84%, in the district. Although Shady Prairie did not have a low student attendance rate or a high student mobility rate, only 43% of its students, the second lowest rate in the district, “met and exceeded” the ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) performance standards for reading in 2013. Overall, Shady Prairie Elementary School did not make “Adequate Yearly Progress” for 2012-2013.

3.4.2 Magnet school and an IB PYP school

Shady Prairie Elementary School served as one of the district’s four elementary sites with gifted programs and was pursuing designation as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. World Culture was their theme as one of the three
magnet schools in the district. The other two schools were STEM (Science, Technology, 
Engineering and Math) Academy and a Micro Society that students learn through project 
based and Micro Society ventures emphasizing local and global issues. Shady Prairie 
Elementary School used the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB-
PYP) as its teaching and learning strategy, focusing on nurturing in its students a sense of 
their roles and responsibilities as human beings in a global society. Shady Prairie 
Elementary School also offered the district elementary English-Spanish bilingual 
education program.

3.4.3 Mandarin Chinese program

In terms of foreign language learning, Shady Prairie Elementary School started a 
Mandarin Chinese program in the fall of 2011. A one-page document titled “Mandarin 
Goals” shared by Ms. Sanchez, the Director ESL/Bilingual Education, stated five goals 
for the program: 1) Communication: students could use a language other than English to 
communicate with others, 2) Cultures: Students learned knowledge and demonstrated 
respect towards the culture of the host country and host country’s major language, 3) 
Connections: Students strengthened their knowledge of other disciplines through foreign 
language learning, 4) Comparisons: Students gained understanding and developed insight 
into the nature of different languages and cultures, 5) Communities: Students actively 
participated in multilingual communities in the host country and around the world. This 
document also noted the flexibility of materials used in the Mandarin classes. “Rather 
than rigidly adhering to instructional textbooks, teachers expand and modify them to 
meet the needs and abilities of their students.” The Foreign Language in the Elementary 
School (FLES) was suggested as its instruction model.

The district planned the Mandarin Chinese program as a FLES (Foreign Language 
in the Elementary School) program where the recommended instruction was thirty 
minutes a day, five times a week for four or more years. Good fluency with integrated 
language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and cultural awareness was 
expected (Lipton, 1998). However, Shady Prairie Elementary School could not give 
enough time to Mandarin Chinese learning. Therefore, their Chinese program, lasting 
forty minutes (grade three to five) or twenty-five minutes (kindergarten to grade two) 
every four days, was more appropriately called as a FLEX (Foreign Language
Experience) program where the instruction was about ten or twenty minutes, once or twice a week and little fluency and language learning motivation was encouraged (Lipton, 1988). Regardless the rationality of the foreign language program in Shady Prairie Elementary School, the district and school set the goal of the program as culture immersion. They promoted knowledge about Chinese culture, positive attitudes toward the Chinese language and multicultural attitudes, and knowledge towards other cultures and languages.

They chose Dr. Lin from the two candidates as the full time Mandarin Chinese teacher because “She demonstrated a mini lesson by teaching us to identify the tones of a Chinese word “ma”, and that was impressive,” said Ms. Rivera. Actually, Dr. Lin was the only Mandarin Chinese teacher at Shady Prairie from fall 2011 to the time she left Shady Prairie in January, 2013. She had a doctorate in Education from the Department of Educational Psychology in the University of Illinois and Illinois state certification.

All of the Shady Prairie students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade were required to take Mandarin Chinese class. The students for each year were mixed and divided into four sections of approximately twenty students with each section having an equal number of students classified as “gifted,” general, and special education. Each section of students had one Chinese session every four days lasting about forty minutes for third, fourth, and fifth grade students and twenty-five minutes for kindergarten to second grade students.

3.5 Dr. Lin—the Mandarin Chinese Teacher

Dr. Lin had been through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China, which impacted her thoughts and much of her personality. She was shaped by the extraordinary environment in China during this traumatic social movement. During the decade, millions of Chinese youth assaulted traditional standard bearers of power and authority, such as party leaders, teachers, and family members. Schools stopped functioning and thousands of historical relics and artifacts were demolished. This social movement had extensive impact on Chinese society.

As an only child, Dr. Lin was protected well by her parents. While most young people were required to go to mountainous or rural areas to experience the arduous life there, Dr. Lin’s mother, as a doctor, and father, as a soldier, used their connections to
keep Dr. Lin home in their city and working in a telecommunication bureau. She started
to work when she was fourteen years old. With a remarkable memory for telegraph
codes, Dr. Lin said she was one of the best telegraph operators in her department
although she only had an elementary school education. During the ten years of the
Cultural Revolution, no formal school education resumed in China, Dr. Lin and other
youngsters learned various skills with their mentors or older family members and friends.
She joined the art troupe that belonged to her father’s unit in the army. There, she learned
singing and dancing skills and she developed her appreciation of art and music. She also
learned to cook from her grandmother. In Dr. Lin’s memory, she did not lose too much
during the Cultural Revolution. Instead, she thought that she learned useful skills and
gained valuable memories by staying with her family and friends during the ten years. Dr.
Lin said,

I think I was very lucky that I could stay in the city during the Cultural
Revolution. All the schools were closed at that time. I, therefore, missed my
middle school and high school education. However, that gave me time to learn
singing, dancing and playing the pipa (4-stringed Chinese lute).

Dr. Lin was not satisfied to be just a telegraph operator receiving very low wages
and gaining almost no respect from people. With her father’s encouragement, Dr. Lin
decided to take the national college entrance exam in 1978, the second national college
entrance exam after the Cultural Revolution ended. She was admitted to Northeast
Normal University. Four years later, she continued her graduate study in the Department
of Educational Psychology in the same university. Dr. Lin stayed and taught for a few
years after graduating from the graduate school in the Northeast Normal University.
During those years, she published a few scholarly papers with the researchers in the
Institute of Psychology in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Then she was awarded a
scholarship from the United Nations (UN) in 1987. With the support of the scholarship,
she could visit a university in the United States. However, she was encouraged by her
mentor to not waste her time and the scholarship by just visiting the university and
traveling around the United States for a year and a half. Studying in a doctoral program
seemed to be a worthwhile investment as it was a more rewarding way of spending the
scholarship and she would learn the language and the culture of a country more deeply.
She chose to go to University of Illinois and started her doctoral study in January 1987.
Later, she was awarded with her doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree in the Department of Educational Psychology in 1993. Dr. Lin said she had never thought of studying further in the doctoral program because, she said, “It was too far away from my life. I thought of getting married and having children after my master’s study. Master’s degree was good enough at that time for me to teach at the universities and make my living.”

She had the support of the United Nations’ scholarship in the first eighteen months of her doctoral study and later she supported herself by teaching Chinese language and collecting research data for her advisor in an elementary school near her university on her research assistantship. It was the starting point of her teaching career in the United States. She spent sixteen years in the same school teaching Chinese language to Chinese heritage children whose parents were visiting the university nearby for a short term, from three months to a year. The children were offered Chinese classes in language arts and mathematics, so they could keep up with other children back at China. In 2003, Dr. Lin quit her job and went back to China to take care of her sick mother. She spent eight years in China and her two sons who were born in the United States had a chance to learn Mandarin Chinese at Chinese schools.

Dr. Lin supported herself and the two boys by teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the universities in and around her city in China. The eight years of EFL teaching was a pleasant experience to her because the profession of academic professor is highly respected in Chinese society, except during the Cultural Revolution. Especially with her American doctoral diploma and her U.S. identity, she was paid very well teaching in those Chinese universities. She recalled that the students were resourceful and active learners. “My students were wonderful to me. They helped me solve computer problems and they even helped me outside the classroom by taking care of my boys and tutoring them after school,” said Dr. Lin. She was very satisfied with the performance of her students in China, and she complimented them as diligent and autonomous English learners. Most of them received a cramming style of English education with vocabulary recitation, memorizing grammar rules, and sentence structures without using them. Dr. Lin said when she recalled how English was taught in China, “The ways of learning English hasn’t changed in the past twenty years in China. My students were still learning English in the ways that I used before.” However, Dr. Lin said
she was popular among students for her American style of teaching that adopted a great amount of singing, role playing, open discussions, and chances for oral practice. Furthermore, she was titled “professor” in the Chinese universities, and everyone there respected her highly. She also enjoyed collaborating and interacting with them. Dr. Lin said, “I did not have any complaint about my teaching in China; my students were great, my colleagues were nice and they sought help on English teaching from me very often.”

In 2010, she brought her children back to the U.S. because her boys had become teenagers and she wanted them to connect with their peers socially and culturally in U.S. schools.

Shortly after Dr. Lin came back to the United States, she found the job posting for a new Chinese teaching position in Shady Prairie Elementary School and she was offered the position after the interviews. She officially started to teach Chinese language to American children in the fall of 2011. She admitted that it was very challenging to teach in Shady Prairie Elementary School and the teaching and the event performance preparation took most of her personal time after school and on the weekend. Dr. Lin described her daily schedule,

It was hard to establish a new program. The district and school started this program, but we had nothing except the students. There was no existing materials or plans that I could follow. I had to write a curriculum, select appropriate learning content, organize activities and plan my lesson every day. Idea brainstorming and implementation took lots of time and energy, especially since I was the only teacher in the Chinese program. At the first year, I never arrived home before eight o’clock at night. I sometimes stayed at school working for the props for the students’ performances until eleven at night. My weekends were also occupied by schoolwork.

She said she enjoyed being with the children and teaching them, but the pressure of overloaded work and tension between her and the school administrators and a few colleagues made her decide to leave Shady Prairie Elementary School. She discovered a job opening at the school where she had spent sixteen years. She left Shady Prairie Elementary School in January 2013 and went back to teach Chinese language and mathematics to the Chinese heritage children from China again. She liked the challenges at work and she appreciated the opportunities of the professional development in the district. However, she had her concerns,
Healthy and happy life is my priority now. I love the teaching experience in Shady Prairie Elementary School where I could use all my potential and creativity. However, I do need a more stable job condition since I have my family that needs my support. Also I prefer a more harmonious relationship with colleagues and students. I really want to avoid conflicts with colleagues, students and their parents. It’s getting better at the second year, however, the classroom management also took me a lot of time. I wish I could spend my energy more on enhancing their Chinese language skills.

Another factor in her to leaving was that her husband was also teaching in the Chinese program at the old school. So they could cover each other and share the responsibility of taking care of their children more easily.

Dr. Lin liked the philosophy that people should live long and maximize their potential. She thought she was using her best potential contributing her ideas for teaching Chinese language and culture and organizing event performances at Shady Prairie Elementary School. However, for the long run, she wanted to pursue health both physically and emotionally, so she could take good care of her family. More important, she could not lose her job as her sons and family were still in need of her support. The two boys were the center of Dr. Lin’s life. She took good care of their daily needs as well as their schoolwork. When Dr. Lin was under the stress of being evaluated by the school administrators in late September 2012, she was helping her older son with his mid-term reports in the freshman year in college. The pressure from both work and home stressed her out, so she rejected my requests to audio record her classroom teaching and interviews. She was afraid to say something to offend the school administrators and then lose her job. The table below summarizes the important events and the years in Dr. Lin’s life.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-1976</td>
<td>Cultural Revolution worked as a telegraph operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Passed the College Entrance Exam (After Cultural Revolution ended, the College Entrance Exam resumed in 1977.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Awarded with the UN Scholarship and entered the doctoral program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Awarded the PhD degree in Educational Psychology at University of Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Went back to China and started to teach EFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Came back to the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Started Chinese teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School in the fall semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Left Shady Prairie Elementary School in early spring semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Important events in Dr. Lin's life**

When Dr. Lin looked back at her education and life experiences, she said she was lucky because she always had help from people at critical points in her life. Those people encouraged her and directed her to make good decisions. When she first arrived in the United States, she adapted well to the food, weather, and social and cultural differences. She enjoyed learning in the university. She believed that English language learners should study in an English speaking country to experience the language and culture in the authentic environment. Dr. Lin said that if she went back to work in the education field in China after she completed her doctoral degree in the 90s, she could have been promoted to leading positions in the universities or the education bureau in her province. However, she was never sorry for settling down in the United States with her husband and two sons. She was sad about not spending enough time with her parents before they passed away. However, she knew that her parents would understand and support her choices, as her life quality in the United States was far better than she would have in China. A year after Dr. Lin left Shady Prairie Elementary School, she would not recall the unpleasant experiences she had there. Rather, she felt it was destined that she would teach there because the job vacancy was available at the perfect time after she and the boys moved back to the United States and when she needed a job. Dr. Lin thought teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School kept her upbeat and brought out the best in her.
3.6 A Researcher with Multiple Roles

The researcher in qualitative research is an instrument (Piantanida & Garman, 1999; Barrett, 2007; Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). He/She interacts and collaborates with the participants, gathers data, translates, and interprets data generated from the respondents into meaningful information (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). Researchers work with the participants closely, so they have a more direct connection to the nuances and particularities of the case they are working on. I would argue that in any ethnographic case study research, a researcher could be more sensitive to the situation and learn more quickly if they either immerse themselves in the research for a long period of time or if they have some relevant experience and knowledge about the case prior to the initiation of study.

In this study, I am an outsider to the Chinese language and culture teaching and learning at Shady Prairie Elementary School. I am a foreigner to this country and to the school system. The school system here is totally different from the school system in my home country, Taiwan. Although I have been involved in some U.S. school research projects during my graduate study these past several years, I am still learning the policies, terms, and structures found in the U.S. school systems, and I have never been a credentialed Chinese language teacher in a U.S. elementary school.

However, to a certain level, I am familiar with the issues in this study. In this study, I was an insider to the Chinese language and culture teaching and learning that is taking place in the U.S. I have also taught Chinese language privately with English-speaking children in the elementary and high school levels for three years. I also have been through the process of being an English learner who then became a Chinese language teacher in this country. As a teacher of English as a foreign language in Taiwan, I realize the problems and issues of applying the English language teaching skills, attitudes, and assumptions of Mandarin Chinese teaching to English-speaking children.

During my study with Dr. Lin, I became her helper. First, my instructional technology skills were used to compensate her weak skills. Second, I was her class aid when she needed assistance, for example, I watched the students when she was away, took the students to the assistant principal, worked with the boys on the activities in the after-school program, and was her substitute when she could not make the bus duty in the
afternoon. Third, I was a reliable audience that listened to her life and work stories. As we knew each other longer and she trusted me better, Dr. Lin shared a lot of her personal thoughts and stories with me. I was glad that the resources I provided were helpful for my study, but I was also concerned that the boundary between my role as a researcher and her helper and friend was fading.

As my reader, you might question the biases of my data collection, analysis, and interpretation because I might put too much of myself into this study. I would argue that through studying Dr. Lin’s Chinese language and culture teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School and listening to her experiences and stories, I also offered an opportunity to acknowledge my own experience that is similar and not totally different from what I have experienced. We shared some similarities, such as some Chinese traditional values and perceptions of American students. However, we also possessed different understandings of Chinese language teaching and learning in the American elementary school classrooms due to our different backgrounds, contexts of Chinese language teaching, and the various social and cultural environments in which we live. My cultural insights and participation helped me to better understand and interpret what was happening in this case study.

I helped Dr. Lin teach part of the students in the Traditional Chinese Culture after-school program in Shady Prairie Elementary School and I also provided suggestions to her for using computer programs and internet resources to assist the students’ learning. Therefore, in addition to my researcher’s role, I was also a participant in this study when I was involved in the teaching and consultant role. Evaluating her teaching is not the intent nor the focus of this study, but there is a chance that I may lead the reader to some judgments on how she organized her teaching materials, used her teaching strategies, and chose the way she used or did not use computers and internet resources because I also played a researcher-participant role in this study. I have attempted to avoid this pitfall by sending my draft to several third-person readers who are outside this study, seeking their input, comments and suggestions.

3.7 Data Validity, Reliability, and Credibility

Carefully pursuing both case study and ethnographic approaches in this study was a step toward validation, meaning gaining assurance that the case is well characterized.
The data collected from the interviews, observations, and document review within this framework of case study and ethnography should be credible and reliable. It is up to me to recognize these technical characteristics and to assure adequate redundancy, seek and discredit alternative interpretations and express my findings with caution. I was working toward credible interpretations.

Ethnography and case study have similarities that help us understand the technical characteristics of their representations. The former portrays cultural aspects in naturalistic descriptions and the latter portrays episodic aspects of the case’s experience, but the two overlap. Both representations need to be valid, i.e., to carry trustworthy meanings and implications; to be reliable, i.e., to be seen the same by different researchers; to be credible, i.e., to be within the realm of reality and expectation as seen by readers of their reports. When the researchers apply both case study and ethnography to writing, their narrative report is often in the first person, it is less formal and more personal. The narrative pieces might have transferable meanings and true-to-life stories; however, Denzin (2000) observed that narratives are just the reflection of past experiences and events. They do not establish the truth of events but they may tell of the truth of experience.

Thus, as different people have different experiences, it is not to be insisted that all researchers and all readers will give the same meaning to a culture or case. Naturalistic researchers want to enable people to see objects the same way but also to see them differently. Thus reliability is too strong a requirement, but validity is needed in that the report needs to work toward being harmonious and consistent with each reader’s interpretation. Guba (1981) has set both reliability and validity aside and asks for credibility, that the reader can see how the description is coherent and meaningful within differentiated realities.

The subjectivity in the narratives raises credibility concerns. However, Ellis and Bochner (2000) claimed that since individuals have their own criteria of validity, it is hard to judge the validity of others’ stories. To these researchers, validity means verisimilitude and the readers should feel the experiences described in the narratives are lifelike, believable, and possible. In this study, I heard many stories about Chinese language teaching. I as the researcher learned to choose how to treat what the participants
said. I asked different questions in different interviews and other informal situations, especially with Dr. Lin, to check the consistency of her responses, which is a step to validity.

Reliability and validity are the essential characteristics of qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Denzin (1978) and others proposed that triangulation is a strategy to approximate reliability and validity in qualitative research and to enhance the researcher’s truthfulness. Creswell and Miller (2000) claimed that triangulation is “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). Several forms of triangulations (Denzin, 1978) were applied in the research design in this study. First, this study was structured by identity theory and sociocultural theory. Both theories and the post-colonial theory (to be introduced in chapter five) have been used to analyze data. Second, the data collected in this study were from different techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document reviews. The different techniques of information gathering provide chances to compare and tease out the genuineness of the phenomenon.

Member checking was also implemented in this study. The data transcription and the brief report that I kept to reflect on what happens in the classroom or other events have been presented to the relevant participants for revision, correction, and even to add their interpretation of the data. This member checking increased the reliability and credibility of the data (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). In addition, my prolonged engagement with the Mandarin Chinese teacher, school faculty and staff, and students in the research site increase the credibility of the fieldwork.

3.8 Conclusion

The content in this chapter presented information about how this study was conducted from the design to implementation. First, the nature of case study approach was discussed and adopted as the umbrella methodology of the design. Dr. Lin was studied as the case of the study. Following that, ethnography was introduced and its features and strengths were used as guideline to instruct the procedure of this study. Both helped gain in-depth understanding about Dr. Lin, her behavior and thoughts and discovering the participants’ experiences and stories in the natural social and cultural contexts they lived in.
Observations, interviews, field note taking and document analysis were applied as data gathering methods. Classroom sessions for the fifth grade students and Section 5D, Expectation Night and two faculty International Baccalaureate curriculum meetings were observed. Five students, five parents, five faculty staff at school and 1 district administrator were invited to talk about their experiences with Dr. Lin and her Mandarin Chinese program. Classroom observation and interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes. The information on the school and district websites and local news, the school, district and state report cards, and Chinese curriculum, lesson plans, teaching materials and other resources were retrieved and analyzed. Some email communications provided by Dr. Lin were also reviewed.

Shady Prairie Elementary School was located in a low-income neighborhood. In addition to the Mandarin Chinese program, it also contained the gifted program and an English-Spanish bilingual education program. As one of the three magnet schools, the school’s teaching and learning curriculum focused on World Culture and they were pursuing to be an International Baccalaureate World School. The Mandarin Chinese program in Shady Prairie Elementary School was more as a FLEX (foreign language experience) program. Dr. Lin was hired as the Mandarin Chinese teacher when the Mandarin Chinese program started in fall 2011. She taught from kindergarten to fifth grade, four sections for each grade and about twenty students in each section. Each student had a twenty-five (K-2) or forty (grade 3-5) minute Mandarin Chinese session every four days.

Dr. Lin missed going to middle and high schools during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). She developed her interests in musical instrument and dance and learned life skills during the ten years without formal school education. After she completed her bachelor and master’s studies, she was awarded with a scholarship from the United Nations that enabled her to start her doctoral study in the University of Illinois in the United States. Dr. Lin started her Chinese teaching job in an elementary school as a research assistant during her doctoral study and taught sixteen years in total at this school by the time she left. In 2003, she went back to China and taught English as a foreign language in the universities in China. She came back to the United States in 2011 and took the Mandarin Chinese teaching position in Shady Prairie Elementary School in fall,
2011. Then she resigned in spring 2013 and took a Chinese teaching position in the school where she taught for sixteen years. Reviewing Dr. Lin’s life history and experiences provided me with the background knowledge about her and that helped me understand the orientations of some of her decisions in her teaching.

I had multiple roles in this study. I am an outsider to the school context, to the American school system and to this country. However, I can also be considered as an insider. I am a native Chinese speaker with several years of Chinese and English language as foreign language teaching experience. I studied Dr. Lin and her Mandarin Chinese program as a researcher. I was also an aid to help Dr. Lin in and outside her Chinese classes. As Dr. Lin and I knew each other longer and better, we became friends. My involvement with multiple roles in this study might cause biased data collection, analysis and interpretation. However, without having close interactions with Dr. Lin, I could not gain enough understanding about her and her Mandarin Chinese teaching. Seeking input from several third-person readers outside this study helped reduce my biased opinion.

Qualitative data and report in this study might valid, reliable and credible by how my readers evaluate my study. Individuals have their own criteria of validity. It is hard to judge the validity of someone else’s story. As the researcher, I attempted to examine the validity in what my participants say. I asked different questions in different interviews and other informal situations, especially for Dr. Lin, to check the consistency of her responses. Triangulation is a strategy to achieve validity in a qualitative research and to enhance the researcher’s truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon. Two methodologies, both case study and ethnography, several ways of data collection, interviews, observations and document analysis, and three theories, identity theory, sociocultural theory, and post-colonial theory were used in this study to triangulate the findings from different resources. Member checking also increased the reliability and credibility of the data. Last, the researcher’s prolonged engagement with the Chinese language teacher, school faculty and staff, and students in the research site would increase the credibility of the fieldwork.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the evidence and examples of what I experienced while studying Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese program. I give pertinent details of the settings and classroom environment and a vignette to present a typical session of Section 5D. More detailed description is provided on the content and materials of the curriculum, Dr. Lin’s teaching strategies and styles, her teaching focus, the traditional Chinese culture after-school program, and the skills and strategies used by Dr. Lin. I also discuss the relationships between Dr. Lin and her students and her colleagues on the issues and conflicts they had during her teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School. At the end of the chapter, I present my observations and thoughts on Dr. Lin’s changes.

4.1 Classroom Settings & Surrounding Environment

The Chinese language classroom in Shady Prairie Elementary School was about the same size as the other general education classrooms, but much smaller than the art and music classrooms. The front and back walls were filled with display boards. There were bulletin boards and whiteboards on both front and back walls. There was also a Smart Board— an interactive whiteboard system—in the center of the front board that was one of the main tools Dr. Lin took advantage of during her lessons.

4.1.1 Displays and decorations

Half of the front whiteboard was used for teaching although Dr. Lin very seldom wrote anything on it. A huge green poster named “Essential 55,” was posted on the other half of the front whiteboard. It contained a list of principles for discovering the successful student in every child by Ron Clark, an educator invited to give a talk during the district’s teacher training. Dr. Lin mentioned Clark’s speech several times during the times I was with her at the school and other places. She also spoke of Clark’s speech and books inspiring her to a great extent. On the back wall whiteboard, two traditional Chinese dresses were hung as decoration.

Three big bulletin boards held abundant information on the Chinese language and Chinese culture. The front bulletin board to the right side of the Smart Board held a large
map of Mainland China and showed geographic and ethnic information on China. Next to the map were several red paper cuttings and images of the dragon and lion dance that, Dr. Lin explained, delivered the blessings of the Chinese New Year. On the back wall and on both sides of the whiteboard, two bulletin boards were covered by eight colorful Chinese vocabulary and phonics charts. Some other objects with the traditional Chinese symbols, such as a big red lantern, two umbrellas – red and pink, and a large red Chinese knot, were also used to decorate the Chinese language classroom. Additionally, Dr. Lin maintained the bulletin boards along the hallway outside the Chinese language classroom. She used pictures of traditional Chinese food, architecture, art, clothing, and other objects and activities situated in the Chinese culture. She also displayed pictures of her students’ performances in school events and class projects.

Dr. Lin hardly ever referred to the various posters hanging in her classroom, even the vocabulary and phonics charts and the “Essential 55,” perhaps seeing them as classroom decoration. She never initiated review or used them in her daily teaching during the times I observed her lessons. However, several times during my observations I witnessed a few students sitting in the back rows turning their heads to look for answers to the questions on their worksheets. Many times the answers to the worksheets could be found in the charts. Some students correlated vocabulary used by Dr. Lin with the words on the posters.

4.1.2 Technology equipment

An LED projector hung from the ceiling. An interactive Smart Board system equipped with two speakers that was mounted in the center of the front wall between the whiteboard and the bulletin board. A laptop that was used to control the Smart Board sat lower than the whiteboard, in front of the left speaker. Dr. Lin used the Smart Board mainly as a projection screen to display teaching materials she had stored in her laptop. She played videos from DVDs and internet websites and showed Word files and Power Point slides using this technology. The interactive function of the Smart Board was not used by Dr. Lin. During my four months of observations in the classroom, the Smart Board was used every day, except the days that the LED light bulb of the projector did not function. In addition to the laptop that was used to control the Smart Board, Dr. Lin also had a desktop computer on her desk at the right corner in the front of the classroom.
She seldom used her desktop computer. She used the laptop that connected to the Smart Board most of the time to prepare for her lessons and to check for email.

A big box TV set with a build-in cassette player was put on a portable media cart that blocked half of the whiteboard. The TV and the cassette player were hardly used during my observations, except one or two class sessions when the projector light bulb was broken. I noted the limitations this placed on Dr. Lin’s use of the whiteboard. There were about thirty laptops in a steel cabinet near the windows. They were neither power-charged nor were they given to students to use in class. Dr. Lin said that the computers had been given to her students to use at the beginning of the Chinese Mandarin program. However, she had never let her students use them. Actually, Dr. Lin said, she was never instructed on how to use them as a resource in her teaching. Six of the laptops were taken out and used by her students the semester I observed her classroom. Dr. Lin designated a space at the back of the classroom and allowed only “good students,” those who she considered were performing well in class, to use them. The original purpose of setting up the laptops was for students participating in the Chinese culture after-school program to engage in Chinese language learning activities.

The facility and the technological resources were relatively rich and modern at Shady Prairie Elementary School and this was apparent in the Chinese language classroom; however, the maintenance and support for the technology was problematic and was considered a large issue by Dr. Lin. Mr. Morris was the computer and technology support person for Shady Prairie. Dr. Lin was supposed to let him know when she planned to use the classroom laptops or when problems with her computers occurred. However, Dr. Lin explained that she found it was “almost impossible” to get immediate support from Mr. Morris. If Dr. Lin had problems with her computer, Smart Board or the projector during the class sessions, she usually had to change her lesson and taught the lessons without those technologies. During my observations, Dr. Lin experienced quite a few computer problems, such as video files that could not be played, software that did not work, or the LED light bulb of the projector being burnt out. Technology issues like these were usually took from a few days to a few weeks to be resolved. This was frustrating for Dr. Lin and other faculty members who often made the decision not to use technology in lessons—a reasonable choice for those who were not able to solve issues themselves.
4.1.3 Furniture and storage

Students’ workbooks, blank paper, worksheets and the props and costumes for the students’ campus-wide performances were kept in the wooden and steel storage cupboards along the wall near the hallway. Dr. Lin’s desk was at the far corner near the front wall. In addition to the desktop computer and her personal belongings, her desktop was piled with all kinds of documents, paper, toys, candies, and stickers that she gave students as rewards. There were about twenty tables in the classroom, each table able to seat two students. There were quite a few spare chairs in the classroom. A lot of them were placed in front of the Smart Board. Many students liked to sit in those chairs when Dr. Lin played cartoons such as The Monkey King and Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf. The chairs were pushed to both sides when the space between the Smart Board and the first row of the tables was used as the “dancing floor.” When Dr. Lin played the dancing videos, many students, mainly girls, went to the front and danced with the demonstrators in the music videos.

4.2 A Day in Dr. Lin’s Classroom

[10:15 AM]

At ten fifteen, the children of Section 5D stood in line outside the door of the Chinese classroom waiting for Dr. Lin’s call for them to enter the classroom. Dr. Lin was busy with the end-of-the-class shuffle of her Section 4D students, watching them file away to their home classroom. This was made slow by the way Dr. Lin excused them – one by one after they each received a sticker from Dr. Lin. I later found that stickers were one of the favorite awards in the class.

Boy: Can I have a pink one? I like the butterfly.
Dr. Lin: No, you’re a boy, you can pick a blue or green one.
(Boy left and Dr. Lin moved to the next student.)
Dr. Lin: You did a good job today. You can choose a big one.
(The girl smiled.)
Girl: I want the red heart. No, I want the flower.
(Dr. Lin gave the flower sticker to the girl.)
Girl: Thank you.
(Girl left and the next student moved up to Dr. Lin.)
Dr. Lin: Do you want a green one?
Boy: OK. Can I also have one for my sister?
Dr. Lin: How old is your sister?
Boy: Two.
Dr. Lin: OK, I will give a princess to your sister.

[10:20 AM]
Dr. Lin let the fifth graders enter the classroom at 10:20. “Take your workbook and a pen before you’re seated,” Dr. Lin directed. The students took their own workbooks from the two stacks of workbooks on the table. One student approached Dr. Lin.

Student: Dr. Lin, I can’t find mine.
Dr. Lin: Did you look for it carefully? Did you write your name on it?
Student: Yes, but it is not on the table.
Dr. Lin: Did anyone take Emily’s workbook?
(Many students double-checked their workbooks, but no one responded to Dr. Lin.)
Dr. Lin: Okay, I’ll give you a new one, and you should not lose it this time. Student: (hesitating as if puzzled) … okay.

The girl looked genuinely puzzled at not being able to find her notebook. I wondered as this interchange occurred, if the girl was wondering how she could have lost the notebook if she had left it in the classroom.

[10:22 AM]
“Be quiet. Stop talking,” said Dr. Lin. Dr. Lin started a short lecture intended to calm the students and prepare them for their lesson.

Dr. Lin: Do you respect yourself? Do you respect me? David and Bill, stop talking. Holly, 你们不要讲话，你们要做其他学生的榜样⁴. (Holly, could you girls not talk? You should be the role model for the class.) In China, students always show their respect to their teachers by greeting the teachers actively before the teachers respond. But many of you are not like that. You need the teachers to greet you first. Stop talking. You are here to learn Chinese, but you talk too much. You should stay focused. Do you want to learn Chinese well and perform on the stage?
Students: (Choral answering) Yes/No. (Students had both positive and negative reactions.)
Dr. Lin: Then you should work hard. Your parents and teachers will be watching you playing on the stage. So, you need to learn the songs and practice them

⁴ Personally, as a native of Taiwan, when speaking and writing Chinese I use Traditional Chinese characters; however, Dr. Lin uses Simplified Chinese characters in her Mandarin Chinese class and I use these when describing the titles or terms that Dr. Lin used. Other Chinese titles for organizations and associations discussed in this paper are presented as they represent themselves.
hard. Who likes to perform? Who would like to perform in the Chinese New Year celebration?

Students: Me. Me. … (Most students raised their hands.)

Dr. Lin: Then you need to practice harder. Now we have a chance to perform for the kindergarteners in Ms. King’s classroom.

Students: Yeah/No. (Students had both positive and negative reactions.)

Dr. Lin: Do you want to go?

Students: Yes/No.

Dr. Lin: Okay, I will tell Ms. King that you’re going. I will check with her about the time that we can go.

Girl: I said “No.”

(Dr. Lin did not look at or respond to the girl. And the girl did not continue arguing.)

[10:27 AM]

Dr. Lin walked to her computer and started to play music videos on the Smart Board. Without any instruction, some students opened their workbooks and started to write. Some were not so interested in writing. Two boys were talking about the cartoon program they watched on TV last night. Two girls who sat in front of them warned them to be quiet or they would be in trouble. The two boys did not stop talking. They kept talking and laughing. The music was loud, only a few students were watching the music videos on the Smart Board. Some students sang with the music. When the music came to “春天在哪里 (Where is Spring?)”, three girls went to the front of the classroom and started to sing and dance with the Chinese children in the music video. More girls joined them as the song went along. Dr. Lin stood next to the first table of the first row near the door. She watched the girls sing and dance and she sang with them. The next song was “小伞花 (Little Umbrella Flowers)”. More girls went to the front of the classroom and joined the dancing group. The girls took the little umbrellas at the corner of the classroom and posed in the ready position right in front of the Smart Board while Dr. Lin paused the music. When the music started again, they opened and closed their umbrellas and sang and danced as the Chinese children in the video did. The colorful umbrellas were like flowers blooming among the happy little girls. When the girls were dancing with the songs, many other children who did not join the dance sang along with the songs and watched the group of girls dance. Some others seemed not to care much about singing or dancing. They either worked very hard on their workbook or chatted with their friends.
around. When the 小伞花 (Little Umbrella Flowers) song finished, the girls went back to their seats. Dr. Lin let the music video go on.

[10.35 AM]

Dr. Lin held a stack of scrap paper and a box of scissors. She passed them around to the students as she moved among the rows of the tables. She repeated herself several times telling the students not to talk in class whenever she saw them talking. Then Dr. Lin went back to the computer and turned the music videos off.

Dr. Lin: Go back to your seat! Be quiet! Be quiet! Are you here to make friends? Are you here to have fun?
Students: No…
Dr. Lin: Your parents send you here to learn at school. You are here to learn Chinese. Chinese has become a very important language. You may find a good job and make more money than your friends if you are fluent in Chinese. To learn Chinese well, you have to concentrate and listen to your teacher carefully. Stop talking. I don’t think you respect me, respect yourself.

When most students were quiet, Dr. Lin told a story about a good man and a bad man.

Dr. Lin: God gave two keys to a good man and a bad man. They used their keys to open two different doors they chose.
(Dr. Lin wrote “好人” and “坏人” on the whiteboard.)
Dr. Lin: 好 [hǎo] is good and 好人 [hǎo rén] means good man. You put 女 [nǚ] “woman” and 子 [zǐ] “child” together, then it comes with good, 好 [hǎo].
坏 [huài] is bad and 坏人 [huài rén] means bad man. You put 土 [tǔ] “dirt” and 不 [bù] “no” together, then it comes with bad 坏, [huài]. OK, 好, 好人 [hǎo, huái rén].
Students: 好，好人 [hái, huái rén] (Students repeated Dr. Lin automatically).
Dr. Lin: 坏，坏人 [huái, huái rén].
Students: 坏，坏人[huái, huái rén].
(Students drilled several times.)
Dr. Lin: Are you a 好人 or 坏人？ Do you want to be a 好人 or 坏人？
Students: (With enthusiasm) 好人(good man)!

[10.40 AM]

Dr. Lin asked the students to pick up the scissors and paper she just gave them and then demonstrated the step by step folding and cutting of the piece of paper. Dr. Lin told the students not to miss? any piece of paper they just cut. When finished, Dr. Lin
unfolded the paper to reveal its shape, a cross. Students gave an exclamation of surprise. Dr. Lin collected the paper pieces on the table and rearranged them to form the word “HELL.” The appearance of the word, “HELL,” seemed to surprise many of the students. Some of them seemed frightened when they heard the word, and whispered, “Oh, my God.” Dr. Lin continued the story.

Dr. Lin: So the cross was the key for the good man. The good man, 好人 [hǎo rén] used the key to open the door. He could go to the heaven. And the bad man, 坏人 [huài rén], got his key to open the door that went to hell. Do you want to be a 好人 or 坏人?

Only a couple of students responded with 好人 to Dr. Lin, the rest of the students were still working on the paper cutting. A few students successfully got the cross and rearranged the pieces of paper to form “HELL.” However, the majority of the class struggled at this task.

Student: Dr. Lin, I need help.
Dr. Lin: OK, I will help you. Look, you just cut this corner and …
Student: Dr. Lin, Dr. Lin, …
Dr. Lin: Betty, 怎么啦? (What’s wrong, Betty?)
Student: You were too fast.
Dr. Lin: 好，你剪到那儿了? (OK, which step were you at?)
Student: 我不知道。(I don’t know.)
Dr. Lin: 好，我再帮你剪一个。(That’s all right. I’ll make one for you.)

Dr. Lin moved around the classroom and helped students individually. While helping them, she also requested the students to say, 好人 [hǎo rén], and 坏人 [huài rén] and corrected their pronunciation as needed, giving them positive comments before she moved to the next student.

[10.55 AM]

By this time, most students had finished the project. Some finished early, even coloring the cross.

Dr. Lin: OK, you can clean the table and the floor and put the trash in the bin. If you finish cleaning your table, you can leave. Don’t forget to return your workbook. We’ll keep working on it the next time you come to class.

Dr. Lin looked around the classroom and she reminded the students to clean their tables and the floor.
Dr. Lin: Tom, you did not pick up your floor.
Tom: That’s not my job.
Dr. Lin: You need to clean your table and the floor.
(Tom went back to his desk and picked up one big piece of paper on the floor.
Then he walked toward the door again.)
Dr. Lin: There are more on your table and floor. I need you to pick them up.
(Tom did not respond to Dr. Lin nor did he did look at her. He seemed intent on
leaving the classroom.)
Dr. Lin: You go to the office. Go see Mr. Jackson in the office.
(Tom walked out of the door in a sullen, resentful silence – without looking at Dr.
Lin.)

Two girls took the trashcans and collected the paper pieces on the tables and floor
while the rest of the class lined up at the door to get the stickers from Dr. Lin before they
left the classroom. As with the previous class, Dr. Lin interacted with every fifth grader
in this class, saying goodbye and giving them stickers. The two girls who helped clean
the classroom also helped organize the stationary and the workbooks in the classroom.
Before they left the classroom, they went to Dr. Lin. She showed her appreciation for
their help with the cleaning job and gave them candies along with their stickers.

[11:00 AM]

All the students left the classroom and Dr. Lin put Section 5D’s workbooks back
in their place on the shelf and put a note that said “5D” on the top of the stack. Then Mr.
Jackson came in with the boy, Tom.

Mr. Jackson: Did you send him to my office?
Dr. Lin: Yes, because he was not willing to take the responsibility of cleaning his
table and floor.
Mr. Jackson: OK. I have talked with him and he wanted to apologize to you.
(Ms. Jackson looked at Tom and nodded for him to talk.)
Dr. Lin: Oh, that’s good. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.
(Dr. Lin looked at Mr. Jackson and then looked at Tom and waited for him to say
something.)
Tom: I am sorry. I will help you pick up the classroom.
Mr. Jackson: What did you do wrong?
Tom: I should clean my own table. That was my job.
Mr. Jackson: I am glad that you apologized to Dr. Lin and offered your help to
pick up the Chinese classroom. I am very proud of you.
Dr. Lin: Thank you, Tom. You are a good student. I know you can do very well if
you want to.
Mr. Jackson: OK, I’ll let him help you. (Mr. Jackson said to Dr. Lin.) And I’ll see you later.
Dr. Lin: Thank you very much!

Mr. Jackson left the classroom. Tom started to pick up the paper pieces on the floor. However, he did not have too much work to do because the two girls had done it pretty thoroughly. After about three minutes, Tom went to Dr. Lin and asked if he could leave. Dr. Lin said, “Yes, thank you, you did a good job.” Tom left the classroom with a smile on his face.

4.3 Dr. Lin’s Teaching Materials

For a program only a year in implementation, Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese teaching was little confined by the school district’s curriculum or the general guidelines of FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) or FLEX (Foreign Language Experience) program. In this section, based on my observations, the teaching content, materials, and the teaching strategies and styles that Dr. Lin used will be presented.

As Dr. Lin herself stated, singing and dancing were two of the major teaching strategies used in her Chinese language teaching. She also employed workbook, rapping, and paper-cutting in her daily activities. In terms of using technology to assist teaching, Dr. Lin consistently made use of internet resources. She purchased DVDs of Chinese language learning in the market or retrieved videos from online and included them in her lessons. She also found and collected images online and used them in activity sheets or presentation slides making her power point slides powerful illustrations of the concepts and ideas she needed to convey to her students.

4.3.1 Workbook

From the beginning, Dr. Lin did not order nor use a textbook as part of her curriculum or as resource for her Chinese classes. The District staff and the school principal encouraged her to pick textbooks from the samples that were provided by a publisher at the beginning of the first year. She told me that she quickly read through them and decided not to use any of them. She thought they were not suitable for her students’ language proficiency levels and they were too expensive. She believed those textbooks were designed for Chinese heritage children who were born in the United States. After deciding not to use a textbook, she created her own instructional guideline
based on learning materials and activities she deemed adequate for the students at Shady Prairie Elementary School.

A plain workbook was given to the third, fourth, and fifth graders at the beginning of the semester for their Chinese character writing practice. They did not use actual workbooks for this activity in the first year. The students wrote on pieces of paper with printed lines and square spaces. Completed pages were posted by Dr. Lin on the bulletin boards in the hallway to show parents and faculty. After listening to the parent and principal recommendations, Dr. Lin and the staff in the ESL/Bilingual Education Office in the District produced the yellow covered comb-bound workbooks. The material was copied from a Chinese children’s writing practice workbook, “汉字描红,” and featured popular animated characters throughout the exercises. When I asked Dr. Lin where she found this workbook and why she decided to use it, she explained that she found it in a bookstore in New York while visiting a friend. She thought that it was a great collection of basic Chinese words. She also intentionally included jokes and riddles in the workbook to increase her students’ vocabulary and understanding of cultural humor.

The first page of the workbook was the animation logo picture of “Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf (喜洋洋和灰太狼) the title of the writing practice series, “汉字描红,” and a chart of one hundred and sixty-five Chinese words (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Cover page—vocabulary summary and the commercial logo](image)

Vocabulary came four words to each page for writing practice with the components of the sounds of the words in Pinyin, word demonstrations, meaning-
matching images, stroke sequences, phrase examples, and square spaces for repeated practice) (see Figure 3). These things were located on the odd pages (see Figure 4) and the jokes and riddles with illustrated pictures were placed on the even pages (see Figure 5).

Figure 3. 三 (three)—an example of writing practice in the workbook

Figure 4. An example of the odd page—Four character writing practice
By the end of my observations, Dr. Lin had taught thirty words in the workbook, with ten of them carry over from the previous school year. She planned to continue using the workbook the coming spring semester. She told parents she had a goal of asking her students to learn two hundred words a year when she was questioned by parents at the Expectation Night. Later she told me that she knew she could never reach that goal, but she wanted to give the parents a positive impression. She had challenging goals and she wanted to be seen as working hard to reach them. It was actually hard for the parents to track their children’s Chinese learning in Dr. Lin class without a syllabus or a textbook to follow with.

I never heard any clear, direct instruction from Dr. Lin about how to write or how many pages the students should complete in the workbook in each session. Dr. Lin asked the students to take a new workbook when they entered the classroom at the first session of the semester. Without being told to write their names, some students, not all, wrote their names on the cover of their workbook. It appeared that most of them were already used to labeling their belongings at school. Dr. Lin collected their workbooks as the students left the classroom and put a sticky note on top of the stack with the class section name on it. When students returned for their second session, in almost every class section some students had difficulty finding their workbooks, either because they did not label their workbooks or their workbooks were placed in the wrong stacks.
I could see that most of the students were very interested in Chinese character writing. Many chose not to participate in other activities. The low participation in the lecture part of her lessons had been Dr. Lin’s major concern. When I suggested giving the workbooks to the students right before she wanted them to practice writing, she argued that, first, it wasted too much time to call each student and distribute the workbooks. Second, she could not pronounce everyone’s name correctly. She wanted to avoid being corrected or teased by the students. It appeared that she had not thought of using students to help distribute the workbooks. She also dismissed this idea when I suggested it.

Although the workbook contained information about the words (meanings, sounds, how to write it and how to use it and spaces for copies), Dr. Lin did not use these in her whole-group lessons. Instead of learning the rules of Pinyin, Dr. Lin’s students learned Chinese sounds by repeating and listening to her. Dr. Lin explained that learning Pinyin would confuse some of the younger children, especially the ones who just started learning the English alphabet. Even though Pinyin was not taught in her class, I found that many of the fifth grade students could pronounce the Chinese characters with the assistance of Pinyin. Of course, they looked at the Pinyin as if it was English, for example pronouncing “three” in Chinese correctly when they saw “sān 三” (three) in the workbook. However, students would say “he (the third person singular)” when they saw “[hé]禾 (meaning crops).” Few students pronounced “[hé]禾” in Chinese correctly, and only after they listened carefully to Dr. Lin’s pronunciation and practiced it the way it was correctly said. During my observation, Dr. Lin neither led the students stroke by stroke to write a character nor introduced the stroke order information in the workbook. Dr. Lin did not teach the phrases listed under the characters in the workbooks, either.

Dr. Lin sometimes checked with the students to observe their reading of the words one by one or within small group settings during class. During my observations, Dr. Lin did not pay much attention to correcting her students’ writing or if they made their characters in the center of the provided boxes. She did give enthusiastic and positive comments and stickers as rewards when she saw someone writing beautifully or to those who were writing more than others and or with more passion. I heard her comment on one of her student’s work, Dr. Lin said, “They write better than the children in China did.” However, throughout the entire length of my study, I did not see her check to see if the
students completed the workbook pages she assigned, although once I heard her threaten, “Finish page one to ten or you’ll get detention.”

The workbook print quality was very poor. Searching online, I was able to find the workbook in many online shopping websites. The original colored copy of that workbook was six RMB (equals to fifteen cents of USD), but the shipping from China to the United States might make the workbooks too expensive for the district to purchase. Dr. Lin said she wanted to save money for the district and the school. Saving money for the district and the school was an important ideal she seemed to adhere to whenever she made a curricular decision. With the copyright laws being important in U.S. schools, it was hard to understand why the director of ESL/Bilingual Education and the school principal would agree to reproduce the workbook in this manner, since to do so violated the intellectual property law.

4.3.2 Singing and dancing

During my observation, these two activities were dominant in Dr. Lin’s teaching. They took about one third of the daily time in her fifth grade class sessions. The students were already familiar with at least five popular Chinese children’s songs before my study started. Dr. Lin thought having them sing and dance using these songs was the most effective way of reviewing what they had learned. Many children, mostly girls and a few boys, went to the front of the classroom and positioned themselves in front of the Smart Board when they heard the music videos played by Dr. Lin. They sang and danced with the young Chinese demonstrators in the videos. Their faces seemed full of pride and excitement. Those who did not participate in the dancing usually just sang with the music videos. Many times students did not appear to care about the singing and dancing and chatted among themselves in their groups. When this happened Dr. Lin would warn them to stop or they would be given detention. I could see that the students were afraid of receiving detention. Dr. Lin used this to threaten them often. I never saw her giving detention to any girls. If girl students talked too much or too loudly, they were usually asked to go to the office. Most of the boys received a detention order if they had three or more warnings from Dr. Lin.

“Singing With A Smile (歌声与微笑)” was the only song that Dr. Lin taught the semester I observed. Instead of instructing the whole class, she gathered a small group of
female students to sit in a circle in front of the Smart Board. The group she worked with included all of the Chinese heritage students in the 5D Section and other hand-picked students who showed strong interest in singing and dancing. The rest of the class were told to work on their workbooks, while Dr. Lin taught the small singing group sentence-by-sentence, each student having a printed handout of the song. Dr. Lin read every line of the lyric asking the students to repeat what she read to them. Then she explained the meanings of what they had read, word by word. Next she sang the line with the melody and had the students repeat it as she demonstrated. I was curious about how the students could remember it later because none of them wrote down the sounds of words or took any notes on the handout. They just read and sang through all the lines over and over again with Dr. Lin. Dr. Lin expanded the song teaching to the whole class the next class session. It looked like a review for the group she had worked with in the last class session. After three class sessions, where the bulk of the lesson was memorization of the new song, most students could follow the Chinese students in the singing of the song. After everyone had learned to sing the song, Dr. Lin began teaching the body movements that accompanied the song. She made triangle handkerchiefs of various colored cloth for each student in all four fifth grade sections as a prop that was waved with the body movements during the singing of the song. Students were enthusiastic while waving the little prop and chose the color of the handkerchief they were to have – red, yellow, purple, white, or blue.

Dr. Lin wanted her students to dance when they sang. It was partly her way to keep the students occupied and motivated. Compared to the students in China, Dr. Lin thought American students were less shy and liked being in the limelight. They liked to perform and were willing to show their talents, so Dr. Lin used this strategy not only for motivation but to keep her students behaving well. Dr. Lin used this affinity toward performance that her students seemed endowed with to bridge understandings in lessons in her classroom and in the public performances for students and parents. This also served as a public relations device showing the public what the students were learning in her classes. Dr. Lin arranged several events for Shady Prairie in the first year where she used as many students as possible to perform on stage the songs they learned in her classes. She organized the Chinese New Year celebration and the International Night in
the semester before my study. Dr. Lin herself made hundreds of costumes and props for the events with some help from her colleagues. She worked on those things during the weekend during her part-time job as a weekend security patrol person. She spent ten minutes patrolling the building every hour and then she could do her own things, such as making phone calls, using computers, planning her lessons, or watching videos in the rest of the hour. She also purchased some low priced seasonal decorations after Halloween and Christmas holidays and outfits with grant money to use in these performances.

In February 2012, Shady Prairie Elementary School had their first Chinese New Year celebration. The school invited all the families in the school community to the extracurricular activity where they might enjoy the students’ Chinese singing, dancing, and drama performances. The programs included popular children’s songs in China (little rabbits open the door for me—小兔子乖乖, two tigers—两只老虎, …etc), traditional Chinese dances (dragon dance, lion dance and fan dance), and a Chinese play (Staying by a Stump Waiting for More Hares—守株待兔). At the Chinese New Year celebration, almost every student performed on the stage to show what s/he learned in the Chinese language class. Dr. Lin made the traditional Chinese dances the highlight of the event. The young female dancers dressed in Chinese traditional costumes and accessories turned the fans or waved the ribbons in traditional Chinese techniques so that they assumed qualities of “fairies from heaven.”

Dr. Lin believed the elegant traditional dance movements should only be performed by girl students. Dr. Lin purposely chose Chinese girls to perform in the special Chinese traditional dances because she thought they were more familiar with the traditional Chinese art culture than the other students. One of them learned those traditional dances in a private dancing class outside Shady Prairie. With Dr. Lin’s permission, the girl taught other girls, and Dr. Lin supervised them on the side during their practice. Dr. Lin assumed that the Chinese girls’ parents were more supportive and they were more appreciative of the value of traditional Chinese culture and observed that they had the financial resources to purchase costumes and accessories during their annual trips to China with their families. If other non-Chinese girls were talented enough to be picked to perform in those dances, Dr. Lin made them costumes copied from those brought back from China. Dr. Lin said she was pleased to see her students perform with
such high standards. More importantly, her American students and colleagues might see the real beauty of Chinese culture. According to the school staff and parents that I talked with, the Chinese New Year Celebration was a very successful event. Their gym was filled with people. Many of them said they had never seen anything so beautiful as the Chinese dances and that they had never seen their students so happy at school.

Dr. Lin did not organize any campus-wide event during my observations at Shady Prairie Elementary School, but she had planned several programs that her students could perform in the coming Chinese New Year celebration in February. “Singing With A Smile (歌声与微笑)” was one of the programs. Although there were no formal performing opportunities the semester I visited her classes, Dr. Lin still managed some practices for her students. She talked with the teachers close to her about having her students perform in those teachers’ classrooms. I once followed the fifth graders to a third grade classroom. The third graders were very excited to welcome the fifth graders. The fifth graders stood in a line in the front of the classroom facing the audience. Some of them were happy and excited but some were rather shy and quiet. When the music started, the fifth graders sang and danced happily. The more shy ones either sang without body movements or hid themselves in the corner of the classroom. Dr. Lin kept asking the Chinese students to sing loudly and became angry toward those who did not participate.

I witnessed a few times where Dr. Lin’s students were not excited when asked if they wanted to perform for other students. Sometimes I heard, “Ah~,” a sound of disappointment from the students when Dr. Lin announced that she had arranged with one or another teacher that they would perform for that teacher’s class. It appeared that not every student was as enthusiastic about performing the singing and dancing as Dr. Lin claimed. Several girl students who were active in the singing and dancing would leave their seats and dance in front of the Smart Board. Dr. Lin permitted and even encouraged them to do so and seemed proud of them when the students sang and danced as she coached them. Dr. Lin stated, “These students would not sit long, and they just love to perform. So, I let them sing and dance. Their Chinese class time is so short and they forget things easily. Singing is a fun way to repeat and remember the new language. The dance movements reinforce their memory. Singing and dancing are the most effective way that I have found to keep them focused.”
After Dr. Lin decided to resign from her Chinese language teaching position in January 2013, she continued to create plans for the upcoming Chinese New Year celebration. She conferred with Shady Prairie Elementary School’s magnet program coordinator and the principal to see if the two still wanted to support her efforts in organizing the event. Their response was positive, but friends, colleagues at Shady Prairie, and family of Dr. Lin, counseled her not to help with the event. They believed she was no longer obligated and the program would take a great amount of her time. However, she decided to continue working on the New Year Celebration program and coaching the students through their practice sessions even after formalizing the decision to leave her position in January, a month before the program would be performed. She reasoned, “I love my students. I don’t want them to feel they were abandoned by me. This might be their only chance to dress in traditional Chinese clothing, and perform the traditional dances and songs. This experience might greatly influence them. They might have wonderful memories associated with Chinese language learning. This is the right thing to do for my students.”

4.3.3 Paper cutting

Paper cutting was another activity that Dr. Lin often used in her Chinese class because Dr. Lin believed learning the words through this activity would reinforce the students’ memories of the words. The words she chose were all symmetrical, such as 王 (king), 土 (dirt), 口 (mouth), 日 (sun), 田 (farm field), and 喜 (luck) so she only printed half of the words, and then she had students fold the paper and cut. So they could get the words when they unfolded the paper. The words Dr. Lin let students work more frequently were 王 and 土. I was confused when I first saw the paper cutting work as I saw only English letters “E” and “F” on the paper (see Figure 6). She had given very simple instruction on the worksheet, “Fold the Paper and Cut,” although she did draw dotted lines on the left of the E and F. This seemed an effective way for the students to visualize the Chinese characters, 王 and 土. Using the English letters that the students already knew as the bridge in introducing the new Chinese characters helped the students see the correct shapes for the Chinese characters and remember them as graphemes they
already used in their own language. The image transfer, the E to 王 and the F to 土, created a strong connection between the students’ old knowledge and the new.

![Fold the Paper and Cut](image)

**Figure 6. Paper cut (F vs.土 & E vs. 王)**

Dr. Lin would copy the patterns four to a paper, and then would use a paper cutter to prepare the single copies for her students before class. When she handed these activities to her students, she did not always give instructions of how to complete them. I observed that she gave the same word to the same class section more than once. I also discovered that she gave several different words to the same class section at the same time. The students never questioned the paper-cutting work they were given, even when they did the same words repeatedly. Dr. Lin believed that her students were reviewing the words when they worked on the same words a number of times.

While the students were working on the paper-cut activity, Dr. Lin would usually move around the classroom, monitoring and coaching their work. No matter if she gave instructions or not, there were always some students who made mistakes and needed new worksheets. Dr. Lin was persistent in checking with students to make sure they knew the sounds of the words they were cutting. If someone was not cutting the characters correctly, she patiently walked them through the steps. Most students could complete the paper-cut activity quickly, often within minutes. When this occurred Dr. Lin asked them to color the words with crayons, giving her more time to do individual instruction with those students needing a little more help.
Dr. Lin also used other symmetrical fold-and-cut art creation worksheets, such as different shapes, Christmas trees and window decorations. I gave Dr. Lin some simple symmetrical artwork templates I found online for use in some of these activities. Some of these paper-cut art activities were not directly related to Chinese learning, however they seemed to help with Dr. Lin’s classroom management.

4.3.4 Videos

Dr. Lin played three major types of videos during my observation of her classes: (1) Music videos with Chinese songs and dances, (2) the origin of Chinese characters narrated in English, and (3) animated films of Ancient Chinese stories narrated in English. The music videos were discussed in the section 4.3.2 Singing and dancing. This following section will mainly focus on the description of the other two types of videos used by Dr. Lin.

Dr. Lin purchased a DVD that introduced the origin of Chinese characters. The video was approximately an hour long, so Dr. Lin played the first part in one class session and the last part in the following class session. The video mainly explained that Chinese characters found in the Chinese language were formed in six major ways: pictograms, simple indicatives, compound indicatives, phono-semantic compound characters, borrowed characters, and derived characters. Examples of pictograms are found in Figure 7. The images are retrieved online from http://netao.biz/kanji.html.

![Figure 7. Pictograms: 日 sun, 月 moon, 耳 ear, and 雨 rain](image)

It seemed that the part of the video most interesting to the students was the one on pictograms. Other parts of this video may have been too abstract for the students to grasp
but students seemed to understand most of the meanings that were visual illustrations of the things they represented. The students interacted with the video and answered the narrator’s questions on pictograms. Dr. Lin asked the students to repeat the narrator’s words on some of the key characters. I could see that the students were interested in the derivation of the Chinese characters as well as some of the evolution of Chinese civilization. The students were bored by other parts of the video, their eyes wandering away from the screen to other activities or quiet conversations with classmates. Some students put their heads on their tables. Dr. Lin kept warning the children who were talking, asking them to keep quiet, but I could see that it was difficult for them to stay focused on the complex explanations of other Chinese character formation.

Dr. Lin also played animations she found on the internet to the children. They were mostly ancient Chinese stories with the story characters speaking English, such as, The Monkey King and Mulan. The children seemed to enjoy these animated stories very much. When Dr. Lin played the story videos, a lot of the students moved their chairs closer to the Smart Board and most children stopped talking. They seemed to like those stories. Dr. Lin chose the English-speaking Chinese stories purposefully. She said, she was afraid that her students would not understand the stories in Chinese due to the language barrier. She thought videos in Chinese might cause the students to lose interest and become impatient.

Many foreign language teachers prepare lessons for their students, so they learn the target language by using phrases, sentences and even the cultural sensitivity that can be found in various videos. However, this was not the intention of Dr. Lin. She did teach something out of the animated video titled, “Mulan” (木兰). She introduced several words that were derived from 木 (mù, meaning tree or wood). For example, 禾 (hé, meaning crops), 林 (lín, meaning woods or a common Chinese last name), 森 (sēn, meaning full of trees or dark) and 森林 (sēn lín, meaning forest). Dr. Lin claimed that knowing the origins and the development of Chinese words should be taught prior to learning and using any Chinese language.

The amount of time that was used watching videos had been a great concern to Dr. Lin this semester. In addition to the Chinese character formation video, she played, “The Monkey King,” animation two or three times and about five to ten minutes each time.
These were all the videos that she played throughout my observations of her fifth grade class sessions. I did not know how much time the students watched videos in the Chinese class last year, but Dr. Lin was upset that in a meeting with the director of ESL/Bilingual Education, the school principal claimed that she played too many videos in class. The principal emphasized that the comment came mainly from the parents, and that the parents wanted their children to learn more words instead of “wasting time” watching videos in class. Dr. Lin defended the playing of these videos in her classes saying that “Mulan” was the only long movie that she had shown. It was a movie, so it took several class sessions to finish. She wanted her students to learn Chinese words from the story as well as some important traditional Chinese values embedded in the video.

It could be enjoyable and effective to learn a new language through repetitive audio and visual activities; however, I did not see much in Dr. Lin’s video teaching that focused on Chinese language acquisition. Children might know the overall idea of the stories because they spoke English, but not much Chinese language could be acquired through the animated videos without some directed discussions of the video content led by Dr. Lin. The parents said their children did not learn much by watching the videos in the Chinese class rather than spending time in direct instruction of actual Chinese words. Dr. Lin seemed extremely invested in the Chinese language program she created, telling me several times about how she hesitated to take any personal or illness absences because there was no substitute teachers that knew Mandarin Chinese. Substitute teachers could only play the videos when and if they were called in to teach her classes. Dr. Lin agreed that showing the animation videos was to entertain them and to fill time of some students as she worked with others.

In her first year at Shady Prairie Elementary School, Dr. Lin played a video that was not “G” rated for her students. This is a policy most teachers in schools across the United States are familiar with, but was unknown to Dr. Lin. In this incident, Dr. Lin was trying to get her grade reports finished before the deadline so she played what she believed to be a “funny” video. She put the movie on and asked the personal care giver who accompanied one of the students in the class, to monitor the class while she left the classroom and worked at finishing her grade reports. The next day, Dr. Lin received a message from the assistant principal saying that she showed an “R” rated movie to
students and there would be a formal investigation into this situation. Dr. Lin found that the personal care giver told the kindergarten class teacher about the video saying that she believed the content inappropriate for elementary students. Dr. Lin recalled, “I was totally frightened, and I did not know how to defend myself except I knew “Big Momma's House” was not an “R” rated movie.” She defended her choice by saying that she knew the movie was funny before playing it for the students, but she had no other legitimate social or cultural relevance to her curriculum supporting the playing of the movie. One of her friends helped her search for the movie’s rating online and found out it was a “PG-13” movie. Dr. Lin felt relieved about the rating being “PG-13, because she could stop the school administrators’ accusation of playing an “R” rated movie to young children. While relaying this experience to me, Dr. Lin was still visibly shaken. She said,

I really did not know it was illegal to play the movie to the young children. I would definitely not do it if I knew I was not supposed to do so. I did not know why the kindergarten teacher would not come to me privately. She made it a really big deal to the school administrator. I also had very limited time to get my report cards done. I only played it for five minutes, but I felt I had, like committed a crime of murder and that everyone was judging me. I learned a lesson from this event, to be very careful on visual material selection from that moment. But I guess, they did not care. They just assumed I knew everything. I wish I had known.

Dr. Lin had been challenged in her teaching while at Shady Prairie Elementary School. This event was an important example of the challenges she faced. In reporting grades, Dr. Lin had over five hundred report cards to complete. Most classroom teachers only had twenty to twenty five report cards. Yet all the teachers had the same timeline in which to complete their grading. When the district digitalized everything and had teachers access the reports online, the grade reporting became more complicated and time consuming for Dr. Lin. Dr. Lin said she wished she had known more effective ways she could use to complete her five hundred report cards. The secretary did give her some instructions about working on the report cards online, but they were rather complicated and she did not fully understand the directions.

Similar to the copyright concern, movie rating and the related child protection policies have been typically known in the U.S. schools. However, I did not see them reflected in Dr. Lin’s mindset. After talking with a few friends from different parts of
China, I realized that those policies were not implemented thoroughly yet in China and many Chinese teachers and parents were unfamiliar with acceptable versus unacceptable videos. To many Chinese people, educators among them, children should definitely not be shown pornography, but the tendency is to be less sensitive to violence. Most Chinese have grown up within a Kung Fu culture, and it permeates their stories, movies and TV programs. This culture has been widespread globally (Vijay, 2002). Many Asian parents even consider the martial arts as “must learn lessons” for their children, believing their children will become stronger and will be able to defend themselves. I observed that there was violence in The Monkey King video, but Dr. Lin seemed unconcerned and it did not seem to surprise many of the children who watched it.

4.3.5 Written and visual materials

Word and PowerPoint from Microsoft Office were the two most frequent programs that Dr. Lin used to compose and present her teaching materials. Most of her school documents and her teaching activities sheets were produced in the Word processing application. Vocabulary was presented via PowerPoint Slideshows. The slideshows were mostly used as flash cards. In fact, Dr. Lin did not know much about the operation of the PowerPoint program, so most of her presentations were constructed with help from students she had previously taught in the Chinese universities. After I started my study with her, I volunteered to help her with the technology related tasks. I created all the digital teaching materials she used that semester, such as the in-class practice activity sheets in Word format, word formation and vocabulary flash cards in PowerPoint presentations, and resources for Chinese language learning games and activities online. Usually, she sent me the content in a Word attachment and I organized them in either Word or PowerPoint files. My designs were usually to match the learning content with relevant images that were retrieved online. The animation features of image movement and sound effects increased the entertainment when watching the slides. With those, the slideshows became one of the most attention catching teaching materials in Dr. Lin’s Chinese language class. (See examples in Figure 8, 9, and 10.)
Figure 8. An example of a worksheet: cut and paste to match the words and picture

This activity sheet (Figure 8) was given to the students after the animal words from the workbook were taught. Students needed to cut the animal images on the second page and match them with the correct words in the chart on the first page. A lot of students referred to their workbook when they worked on this worksheet. I added the Pinyin in the sheet next to the vocabulary.

Figure 9. An example of vocabulary teaching presentation in PowerPoint slide

This presentation slide (Figure 9) was introduced when Dr. Lin taught food vocabulary. She gave me the word, “鸡肉” and I added the English meaning of the word, “chicken,” the related images, a picture of chicken and roast chicken, and the Pinyin [jī ròu] to the word.
Figure 10. An example of word formation

These word formation slides (Figure 10) were introduced to the students after Dr. Lin showed the Chinese character formation video. She gave me a list of morphemes of Chinese characters and their derivatives, such as 木 (wood) and 禾 (crop), and I created three slides in a row to demonstrate how the words were formed by adding parts to the morphemes. The animation added to the slides created some fun visual effects, and the students could feel the movement of the parts of the words. At the third slide of each group of word formation, the English meaning of the word, the Pinyin and the related image were added to give a more complete understanding of the character.

Dr. Lin explained that her students loved the activity sheets (Figure 8 and others) because almost every student focused on the activity sheets and they looked for the answers in the workbook, in the posters in the classroom, and they also helped each other or consulted with Dr. Lin when they had questions. The students were also highly interested when Dr. Lin demonstrated the vocabulary slides as I observed. They shouted the words out loud before the Pinyin came out. I created the animations to let the images of the vocabulary appear first, then the English and Chinese meanings of the vocabulary and then the Pinyin came last (Figure 9). Dr. Lin said, “They really enjoyed learning the (food) words with the PowerPoint slides and they remembered them quickly.”
I added the Pinyin without asking Dr. Lin’s permission. I put them in the smaller font size in relatively inconspicuous locations. I wanted to know if the students noticed the existence of Pinyin, if they used it to help their pronunciation, and how Pinyin influenced the students’ learning the new Chinese vocabulary. My observation showed that Pinyin was not just some random symbol to the children when they learn the Chinese language. They relied on the Pinyin to pronounce the new and learned words. The existence of Pinyin actually increased their confidence of saying the words in class. Unfortunately, without formal Pinyin lessons, the fifth grade students in Shady Prairie Elementary School used Pinyin but read it with English pronunciation although they did know Pinyin was the way the Chinese word sounded. I also found that they tried to learn the Pinyins that had different pronunciations from English, such as 禾 [hé] (crops) sounds like “Huh?” not “he” or 草 [cǎo] (grass) sounds like “tsao” not “cow”, by reciting the forms and the sounds learned from Dr. Lin. However, without enough class time and practice, students usually forgot them very easily.

4.3.6 Restaurant menu

Dr. Lin also distributed the menu of a Chinese restaurant in class after she obtained about five hundred copies from the restaurant. She visited that restaurant often and she bought gift cards of the restaurant as gifts for her friends or colleagues from time to time. She thought it was a good idea to teach “food names” by introducing the Chinese dishes found on the menu – this after she was asked by the IB program coordinator to add food as a topic to correspond with the general education classes in the IB program curriculum. In order to further motivate the students to experience the Chinese food in person, Dr. Lin wrote “林老师” (teacher Lin) on each copy of the menu and told the students that they would be given a discount of ten percent if they showed the menu with her signature when they paid for their food at the restaurant where the menus originated. The students were excited about learning Chinese food words. In the lesson after being told about the discounted restaurant food, many students shared the experiences of visiting the restaurant with their families and they talked about their favorite dishes with their friends in class.
4.3.7 Curriculum and lesson plans

During my study with Dr. Lin, I requested to view the curriculum for her Chinese program, and she rejected my requests whenever I mentioned it. The district was criticized by nearby university experts they had invited to observe the program, who thought that they should have a formal curriculum for the Chinese program. They stated that having a standardized curriculum would ensure that all the teachers could then follow the district guidelines more successfully. The district paid Dr. Lin to design a curriculum for the whole Mandarin Chinese program from kindergarten to fifth grade in summer of 2012. Dr. Lin spent several weeks that summer working on the curriculum project. Dr. Lin stated that the district was pleased with her accomplishment. Before the curriculum was designed, Dr. Lin taught from her own plans. She recalled her first year teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School, where the principal wanted to read her lesson plans, and so she wrote the lesson plans and gave a copy to the principal as she was requested to do those first few weeks. She stopped this after a few weeks because it was too time consuming to do it for every grade level. I requested to view her lesson plans. She said, it was fine for her to share those lesson plans with me, but she seemed always to forget to do so. Instead, she roughly and quickly described what she did in the classes.

The Chinese curriculum had an intriguing mythical status throughout my observations. Dr. Lin admitted that she was not willing to share the district curriculum with me. First, she did not follow the curriculum even though she designed it and she did not follow the schedule, either. She told me she did not want people to discover this because she was already overwhelmed with some negative comments. Second, like the vocabulary goal she gave to the parents on the Expectation Night, the curriculum scope was too much for her to keep up with. She expressed that within their current instruction time, forty minutes for the third, fourth and fifth grades and twenty-five minutes for the kindergarten, first and second grades, there was too little time for her to teach all the content in the curriculum that she had designed.

A couple of months after Dr. Lin left Shady Prairie Elementary School and taught in her new school, I interviewed Ms. Sanchez, the Director of ESL/Bilingual Education in the district and I requested her to share the Chinese curriculum with me. She thought
there would be no problem in sharing the curriculum file with me at the beginning. Then the next day she informed me by email that she had misspoken on this matter. From Dr. Lin’s reaction and Ms. Sanchez’s offer withdrawal, it was apparent that Dr. Lin designed a Chinese language curriculum that met the expectations of the district, the principal and in all probability, the parents. However, Dr. Lin and the director of ESL/Bilingual Education knew that the curriculum was not realistic in its scope and was not teachable in the context of Shady Prairie Elementary School.

A year after leaving Shady Prairie Elementary School, Dr. Lin finally agreed to share the curriculum with me. She created five units for each grade from kindergarten to the fifth grade. In each unit file, she had four sections: topics, targeted skills students will acquire, activities related to unit theme, and unit description. There were three major goals in the topic section for students to learn: new words, sentence structures, and writing Chinese characters. This curriculum mainly focused on speaking and writing skills development. The previous units were also designed to be reviewed as a spiral curriculum that considered revisiting of topics, subjects or themes throughout the course (Bruner, 1960; Harden, 1999). In this curriculum, each unit was designed to go for thirty to forty minutes per class and be completed within two hundred and forty minutes. I calculated, each unit should be finished within six to eight classes. Five units would take thirty to forty weeks to complete. It was not noted anywhere in the curriculum about if this was a semester or a year plan. Each section had about twenty-one classes in fall 2012 during my observation. It seemed this curriculum could be used for a year if the school had thirty minutes for each class every four days. Later, Dr. Lin responded to my concern that it was a year plan for the Chinese classes in Shady Prairie Elementary School. That curriculum was greatly different from her real teaching. In addition to the content, she had only two syllabi for the K-2 group or grade three to five students.

4.4 Teaching Strategies and Styles

4.4.1 Learning motivation is everything!

At year’s end, most children in Shady Prairie Elementary School had Chinese reading proficiency at the beginning level or a little bit more advanced. Dr. Lin said she primarily wanted them to like the Chinese language and culture and to particularly enjoy
their learning with her. She was not hurried to teach too much content at the beginning, but she greatly emphasized children’s learning motivation. In fact, how to motivate the students to learn became the most significant task throughout Dr. Lin’s teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School. She spent the first few weeks of her new teaching position studying her students’ backgrounds and their Chinese language levels. She knew at the start from her observations and the information shared by her colleagues that the majority of the students were from Black or Hispanic low-income families, that most of them had not taken any Chinese lessons before and that very possibly many of them were never exposed to the world and cultures outside their neighborhood. So, Dr. Lin knew that she had to add elements in her lessons that increased the interest of the students and that would engage them with ideas and activities in their lives.

Dr. Lin added singing, dancing and arts and crafts to her curriculum as I described in the teaching content section. She also skillfully used rhymes and added her target vocabulary mixing those words with English meanings and elaborations in the lines to let students “rap.” She believed that her students had some skill at rapping. That helped tie the two cultures together for better understanding of the Chinese language/culture content of her program. Figure 11 shows a partial example of the rap she created. “山石田土, 禾木花草, 牛马猪羊, 猫狗龟兔” was the target vocabulary that Dr. Lin selected from her workbook. She taught those words first in the workbook and then she put them in this rap as a review. Those words were typical, with meanings from known topics, such as nature and animals, and therefore were related to the students’ lives.
It was rather easy for the students to understand the meanings of those words because of the colorful illustrations following the Chinese characters. The English translations of the words were included and repeated to deepen the children’s memory of their meanings. As I observed, all the children were excited at seeing the colorful, fun and unconventional material and they started rapping immediately after the material was shown to them without needing any instruction or demonstration. Dr. Lin was very proud of them and thought they did it much better than she had imagined they would. She said, “They just pick it up right away, and they said it much better than I did.”

Dr. Lin said this rap idea was inspired by her exploration of Black history and culture introduced to the students. She composed the lines during her weekend job time and she asked help from her colleagues for suggestions and rap language improvement. The rap singing became one of the programs in their Chinese New Year celebration in 2013. The parents, school faculty and staff seemed to enjoy this cross-language and intercultural performance commenting on how successful the rap was in encouraging and assisting the students to acquire the second language and knowledge of the Chinese culture.

4.4.2 Stickers and candies

Dr. Lin was criticized by the principal who said that, giving stickers and candies was bribery to the students to get them to participate in her learning activities. She was
asked by the principal to stop giving stickers and candies as an award. However, Dr. Lin took the opposite perspective, saying that this award activity came from her professional training in Educational Psychology. She was convinced that encouragement and rewards given at the appropriate time would promote student learning motivation and possibly their performance. Dr. Lin did not confront the principal but continued her reward system in the way she believed worked. One day, she and I walked the hallway. She found a sticker sticking to the floor. She murmured and bent over to peel the sticker from the floor. She said,

I have to pick it up. Otherwise, the principal will criticize me again if she finds it. I don’t think rewards are bribery for students to learn and I am surprised that she did not know about those educational psychology theories as an educator in the American school.

Dr. Lin tried to avoid confrontations with the school authority. However, she persisted in doing what she felt was the right thing – those things that she should be doing to maintain quality in her teaching.

4.4.3 Freedom of using computers

Dr. Lin was aware that adding computer technology to assist teaching and learning met the expectations of the school administration, parents, and students. She also recognized that children today like to use computers for various purposes from her observations of her own sons as well as the children in their general education classrooms. Therefore, Dr. Lin used computer technology as the tool to present her teaching materials and to enrich the resources of her teaching, as I stated in the teaching content section.

In fact, “using the computer” also became one of the strategies that Dr. Lin utilized in her teaching. Six laptop computers were originally setup for the students’ use who participated in the after-school program. Then Dr. Lin found that the students discovered the laptops in the back of the classroom and they showed strong interest in using them. She told me that she would let students who performed well in class use the computers. She consulted with me about ways to implement this idea. I suggested grouping the students and setting up competition between the groups. So, the group members would help each other to learn and earn opportunities to use the computer
collaboratively. She did not take my suggestion. Instead, she selected students who actively responded to her instructions and inquiries. The first time she picked five boys in Section 5D. Four of them were of Asian heritage: Filipino, Taiwanese, Indian and Chinese, and the fifth one’s parents were from Peru. These five boys were considered smart and well behaved by Dr. Lin, which might be attributed to their all being students from the fifth grade gifted class. That day, Dr. Lin gave instructions about the words in the workbook, assigned a paper cutting activity, and then she let the five boys use the computer for about fifteen minutes until the class ended. Other students did not have a chance to use the computer in that class session although they all tried to participate more actively than they usually did.

After that class, Dr. Lin told me that she was amazed by the students’ attraction to using a computer. She stated, “Those who did not participate started to be quiet and listen to me.” She deeply believed the strong connection between the student learning motivation, behavior and the opportunity of using a computer in class and enjoyed the positive effect that eased her efforts at classroom management. After practicing this model for about two months, she concluded in mid November that, the students could not learn Chinese in the limited time of forty minutes per class. They learned very effectively with high motivation if they spent twenty-five minutes in Chinese learning and fifteen minutes in using the computers.

Dr. Lin was pleased about the students’ changes. However, she was also concerned about the issue of giving equal opportunity to every child. When we discussed how to manage the students’ use of computers, she claimed that she noticed her American colleagues let students take turns to use the computers in the classroom. She explained that there were about two or three computers in each general education classroom and those class teachers told the students that they would lose their opportunities to use the computer if they did not behave well. But basically, they tended to give equal opportunity to every student to use a computer. She thought that her colleagues’ ways and attitudes were effective, however it might not be applicable in her class, she said, as her class session was so short.

Those “good students” could use the computers but they were not instructed on the terms and limitations of using a computer and the internet. I confirmed if she wanted
them to use the computer only for the purpose of learning Chinese language and culture, she did not think it was necessary to set limitations. “Using a computer” seemed only like a reward of performing well in the Chinese language class. I observed the students playing online games, browsing websites, checking emails, and/or searching Youtube videos. These students usually played music videos or the other sounds without using the headphones. This is often considered a distraction to other class activities, but Dr. Lin did not set any restrictions where the sound was not allowed.

This freedom motivated most of the students. When Section 5D came in the next week, Dr. Lin said the one who could recite the first two paragraphs of the rap could use the computer. Chinese heritage students who came from the gifted class recited first. Then some diligent students recited and so went near the computers to await their turn. Some other students tried very hard but they could not remember the entire two paragraphs. They kept working until the end of the class session, but there was no time for them to use the computer. Some students gave up from the very beginning and wandered around to the computers and watched what the award winning students were doing as they took their turns on the computer. Later, I realized that Dr. Lin wanted the students to perform this rap as a program in the coming Chinese New Year celebration, so using computer time was her strategy to motivate the students to recite the rap.

4.4.4 Use of students’ existing knowledge

Dr. Lin seemed skilled at using students’ existing knowledge as the bridge to connect the students with the new language. She used the shapes and sounds of English, the students’ native language, to assist the students’ Chinese language learning. For example, the symmetrical paper cutting of E and F were in used in relation to the Chinese character 王 and 土. Dr. Lin also used English sounds to assist some Chinese pronunciations and reinforced the students’ memorization. For instance, 狗 (gǒu, meaning dog) sounded like “go” in English, and 兔 (tù, meaning rabbit) sounded exactly the same as number “two” in English. I found this was an effective way for her students to learn as they all pronounced and remembered the words well when they just learned them and when they came back for the later sessions. They also seemed excited to learn the connection of the two languages.
In addition, Dr. Lin taught the retroflex consonants, “zh”, “ch”, and “sh”, with their pairings “z”, “c”, and “s.” She started by putting her index finger in the middle of her lips and made the “sh” sound as if to ask people to be quiet and then added the sound “an” to say “shan” (山, shān, meaning mountain). In comparison, she made the “s” sound like the snake hissing and again the sound “an” was followed to say “san” (三, sān, meaning three). These two illustrations were broken into parts and demonstrated to the students step by step. As I observed, Dr. Lin’s instruction was easy to follow and the vivid demonstration caught all of the students’ attention as they found these particular foreign words not so difficult to pronounce and the Chinese language not so completely alien to their language.

4.4.5 Encouraging observations

When Dr. Lin discovered the students’ strengths, she usually encouraged them to develop and explore further. One day, Dr. Lin was teaching “鸟” (niǎo, meaning bird), and a girl raised her hand and said, “it looks like ‘horse’.” Dr. Lin seemed very pleased with her finding and gave her positive comments. Then Dr. Lin continued her instruction of “鸟” and expanded the discussion to the similarities of the words. She wrote “马” (mǎ, meaning horse) and “鸟” (niǎo, meaning bird) together on the whiteboard. Dr. Lin encouraged the students to identify how the two words were similar or different. Many students raised their index fingers in the air to trace the similar parts of the two words. Some others seemed to quickly understand this lesson saying, that “bird” has an extra dot. Dr. Lin was pleased with their discovery. She asked the students to use their imagination to guess what that could be. Some students said it looked like the eye of the bird. Dr. Lin confirmed and praised their correct answer. Figure 12 is the analysis of the character 鸟 (bird) (You, n.d.).
Dr. Lin further encouraged the students to find more words that contain 鸟 as a part. Then students became very active. Most of the students looked in the workbook and raised their hands to report their findings very quickly: 鸡 (jī, chicken), 鸭 (yā, duck), 鹅 (é, goose), … etc. Other students used the charts on the back bulletin board in similar ways to find the similarities in the Chinese characters. I could see that the students enjoyed learning through the search for the relationships between the Chinese words. In this “bird part” searching activity, the students built their understanding about the structure of Chinese characters and the rationale of word formation. I believe most students learned the idea that the poultry and birds shared the part “鸟” together.

4.5 Little Focus or Missing Components in Dr. Lin’s Teaching

After reading through my teaching content section, I found that some important language learning elements were missing in Dr. Lin teaching. She focused greatly on speaking and writing skills by arranging the students to sing many Chinese children’s songs and to write on the workbook and activity sheets. She also focused on learning new words that increased the students’ vocabulary. However, she missed some other things that I considered important in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

4.5.1 Little focus on reading, listening and sentence structure

I asked Dr. Lin if she was going to teach sentence structure, so the students could use the words they acquired. She explained that she did not have enough time, so she
would teach the words in the workbook first. This answer and my observations of her classroom activities convinced me that what she was doing would not stand as language teaching. I did not see any students use Chinese language during my entire study, even though they learned some words that they could use in their daily life, such as food, nature, numbers, and animal names. The principal was pleased that the students could say 你好 (nǐ hǎo, meaning hello) and 再见 (zài jiàn, meaning goodbye) when she met them at the gate at their arrival to school in the morning and when they left school in the afternoon. However, those were the only greetings and “sentences” that most of the students used that I observed. Although Dr. Lin introduced an entire sentence “我喜欢吃… (wǒ xǐ huān chī, meaning I like to eat …)” when Mr. Jackson, the assistant principal, sat in the classroom to evaluate her teaching. The sentence structure was not taught or reviewed later.

Dr. Lin claimed that her students learned a lot of words from the songs that they learned, but the students could not recognize most of them when they heard or saw those words without the song as support as I discovered throughout my observation. Dr. Lin had to sing the lyric with the melody to bring memory of the words back. I doubted if the students’ listening skills and vocabulary were built through singing the songs. The lyrics of the songs that Dr. Lin introduced to the students were not associated with the words that she taught in the workbook. Nor were the paper cutting words in the workbook. In other words, they learned how to read and write some words from the workbook, learned the meanings and sounds of some words from the songs, and learned the shapes of some other words in the paper cutting activities, none of which were significantly connected to each other. Without a systematic learning process and adopting sentence structures to put the vocabulary in the right context, the students’ application of Chinese was not completed. They could hardly apply the words in a day and forgot what they had been taught in a very short time. Dr. Lin said, “We have to keep reviewing because they forget quickly. Most of them did not remember what we learned last year, last semester or even last week.”
4.5.2 No focus on Pinyin and stroke order

Chinese phonics was the very first thing that Chinese children learn before they learn to read and write in the elementary schools, and stroke order was the essential detail that every teacher would emphasize when teaching a new Chinese character.

Students in Mainland China learn Pinyin (汉语拼音) and students in Taiwan learn Zhuyin (注音). They both are the phonetic systems of Chinese words to assist pronunciation. As a Chinese native speaker, learning the phonetic symbols helped me fundamentally to learn new Chinese words in the elementary school. For instance, I learned new words and phrases through their sounds and then learned further when I read them in text. I could also look up the meanings of a word by its sound in the dictionary. The most important thing is that I could identify the minor differences between the sounds of the words through the way they sounded—through their phonetic symbols. Then I could correct any incorrect pronunciations of words myself. Nowadays, people look for information online. Inputting by the phonetic value of characters is one of the most popular input methods for users in typing Chinese (Huang, 1985). As I stated, Dr. Lin’s fifth grade students noticed and relied on the Pinyin writing of the words, although they pronounced them with English rules. Students could remember the sounds of the words that Dr. Lin taught for a short time by reciting them. However, the quantity of these unfamiliar words was limited and they would forget them easily in a short time period. In existing research, Chinese readers who read with Pinyin scripts demonstrated phonological awareness (Perfetti & Zhang, 1991; Read, Zhang, Nie, & Ding, 1986). In Bialystok’s (1997) study about how print refers to language, Pinyin, the phonetic symbols, seems to be the key to learn new words for bilingual children of Chinese and English and to acquire more Chinese language.

I asked several children in Dr. Lin’s classroom about how they wrote the Chinese characters. Most of them said, “Just copy the shapes, like drawing.” Dr. Lin also said, she found her students wrote the Chinese characters as if they were drawing. With this superficial understanding, one can hardly write a real Chinese character as in Chinese handwriting the different strokes have to be performed in a strict order (Teo, Burdet, & Lim, 2002). A Chinese character should be in the center of a three by three squared style box (see an example in Figure 13). Each stoke should be placed appropriately to balance
the structure of the word. The stroke sequence should start from the top and then go down, from left to right, and from outward to inward (Giovanni, 1994). Dr. Lin did not request her students to learn the stroke orders and never mentioned the significance of the stroke order in the workbook. She believed that the “American” kids would be overwhelmed if they were forced to learn the stroke orders. I discovered that many of Dr. Lin’s students practiced a lot and they copied the Chinese characters very carefully, but without knowing the tips of writing and following the stroke orders, it was almost impossible for them to write the characters correctly and to understand the structure and integrity of Chinese words. Jed, the fourth grade boy I interviewed, recognized the function of stroke order in the workbook. He knew that, “These (demonstrates strokes in sequence) (see Figure 3) are like how you make the word.” Two students in Section 5C were found following the sequence of writing. They told me that they saw them as instructions for how to write the words. One of them elaborated that, “It was easier to write. I wouldn’t worry about missing any stroke if I followed the sequence.”

![Figure 13. 永 in the three by three squared style box](image)

4.6 The After-School Program

The after-school program was given the name, “Traditional Chinese Culture.” It was scheduled on Wednesday afternoons at three o’clock in the Chinese language classroom. It was designed to run for one academic year. Dr. Lin as the instructor was paid thirty dollars per hour, but there was no charge for the children who joined the program. This was made possible by the magnet school funding that the school acquired from the district. Some children who attended in the Traditional Chinese Culture after-
school program told me that they actually also joined other programs from Monday to Friday because they could not go home when regular school ended as their parents were still at work. However, some students expressed that they genuinely enjoyed learning Chinese language and culture.

4.6.1 Organization

There were twenty-one students on the participant list given to Dr. Lin by the school secretary—six boys and fifteen girls. They were from second to fifth grades—eleven from the second grade, three from the third grade, two from the fourth grade and five from the fifth grade. Thirteen of the twenty-one students were from the gifted class and nine of them were of Chinese Heritage. Throughout the semester, there were only four boys and about twelve girls that appeared regularly in the after-school program. It was difficult for me to track their attendance and what might be experienced by those students in the after-school program because of the sporadic attendance. If they came, they never worked on an activity together. Some students showed up only one or two times during the semester. Some students entered the classroom, but they did not participate in any activity. They just came in to use the computer. Dr. Lin seemed not too upset about having no control of students’ use of the computer or of their lack of participation in the activities. She thought the after-school program was not part of the regular schooling, so she allowed a more relaxed atmosphere.

4.6.2 Learning focus

Dr. Lin thought the workload in her second year was more manageable than in the first year and she believed she had an assistant in me, and so with me to help during my observations, she decided to offer the after-school program. She said, it had been the parents’ and the principal’s request to offer an after-school program and they wanted it to focus on exposure to traditional Chinese culture and this would distinguish it from the Chinese language classes. While I was observing, the real practice of the program had very little traditional Chinese culture introduced and the Chinese fan dancing that the girls engaged in, was the only activity that was relevant to traditional Chinese culture. I discovered that the after-school program was actually an extension of the girls’ traditional Chinese dancing practice. The girls came to the Chinese classroom to take their fans, and
then they practiced their movements in the hallway for the Chinese New Year celebration program. Dr. Lin’s role was more of a consultant than a coach of this fan dance. The real coach who taught the girls was a fifth grade girl. She learned the traditional Chinese dance in a private dancing class.

The computers were set up specifically for the after-school program activities. Dr. Lin hoped that the boys could learn Chinese language with the interactive computer games while the girls practiced the fan dance in the hallway. Dr. Lin asked me to look for some fun online games or computer programs that could be customized for their learning content. Most of the activities of that kind that I knew of were for performance assessment, so the activity designers could upload the content that the players learned. Then the program would generate questions to test the players. I did not have many of these resources and the boys were tired of playing with the activities I found for them quickly. After three native Chinese college student volunteers joined us, we started to teach Pinyin rules to the boys and practice with them. My role was as a participant in the after-school program. However, my observation of the interactions between Dr. Lin and the students and their parents in this after-school program helped me understand more about Dr. Lin and her Chinese language teaching.

4.6.3 Higher expectations from the Chinese parents

Some parents often talked with Dr. Lin when they picked up their children. They were concerned about what Dr. Lin taught during the after-school program. Dr. Lin told them she would reinforce their Chinese language ability by increasing the quantity and the depth of the learning content. She made copies from a book that she used when she taught the Chinese heritage children at another school. I only saw two children learning that material with her. Little Elsa was in the second grade. She seemed smart, but she was not an active Chinese language learner. Her mother, Ms. Wu, checked what she learned with Dr. Lin whenever they met, so she could help Elsa review at home. Ted was the oldest boy in the after-school program. He came to the United States with his parents when he was eight years old. His Chinese proficiency was much higher than any other child in the after-school program. He was not interested in interacting with the volunteers or me. He liked to use a computer to play games, to check his email, or to interact with his friends on Facebook. Dr. Lin taught these two students separately for about five
minutes each week. Dr. Lin said they learned fast and she wished she could spend more time with them. She also said she liked to teach the lessons in that book to all the children after the girls were familiar with their dance movements.

I witnessed several Chinese parents who attended the Expectation Night who expressed to Dr. Lin that their children should be gathered in an advanced Chinese class. They wished their children to learn more and faster and be engaged with more reading and writing practices. Dr. Lin responded that she agreed with the parents and she wished the school could arrange the students that way. Dr. Lin said, it was easier for her to teach in that arrangement. Ms. Suiter, the instructional coach, explained the reasons that they could not put all the Chinese students together. First, there were not enough Chinese students to form a class in each grade. Second, Chinese students could have good impact to the Chinese language learning in terms of classroom management. The non-Chinese children could also benefit from being helped and learning with the Chinese students.

4.7 Dr. Lin’s Other Duties

In addition to teaching Chinese and the after-school program and arranging celebration events, Dr. Lin was also had other duties, such as lunch duty, bus duty and help develop the International Baccalaureate school curricula. She generally did not like those duties because she wanted her time to be devoted on her teaching and preparation.

4.7.1 Lunch duty

Serving lunch duty was part of Dr. Lin’s daily job. The special teachers were paired up to facilitate children’s lunch in the cafeteria during the one and a half hour lunchtime. The music and art teachers helped in the first forty-five minutes and Dr. Lin and the PE teacher worked in the second forty-five minutes. I went to the lunch duty with Dr. Lin several times. Dr. Lin always entered the cafeteria after the music and art teachers left. During lunch duty, Dr. Lin helped students if they requested. Otherwise, she was standing at the corner by herself most of the time. She sometimes chatted with the PE teacher. When I went, she talked with me. Although some class teachers were there with the younger students, Dr. Lin did not talk much with them. After children finished lunch, Dr. Lin, the PE teacher and a janitor cleaned the tables and floor for the next group of students. Dr. Lin mentioned several times that the two social workers should be on the
lunch duty as well, but they never showed up. I asked if she needed to collaborate with them in other duties. Dr. Lin said they should also serve bus duty. Dr. Lin also said that she tried to greet them before, but they hardly responded. She then treated them as strangers.

4.7.2 Bus duty

Dr. Lin served on bus duty two times per day at the front gate of the school, no matter cold or warm, shine or rain. She stood there and opened the doors for the students when they left or arrived. I observed Dr. Lin serving bus duty a couple of times and served the duty for her two times. I found that she loved to interact with children who greeted her with “Nǐ Hǎo” (hello) and “Zài Jiàn” (goodbye). She felt frustrated if the students did not respond to her greetings. She said she was embarrassed to hi-five with the students when they ignored her. Then she rather kept her hands in her pockets. Dr. Lin called one bus “friendly bus” because all of the children who got on/off the bus greeted her and hugged her happily. Dr. Lin said it was fun to practice Chinese and socialize with the students; however, she disliked this duty. The art teacher was in the bus duty with her, but Dr. Lin said she was always late in the morning. She used all kinds of excuses to make Dr. Lin stay outside of the building, so she could stand inside. Dr. Lin told me that she thought the art teacher was lazy and she was so young and she did not know how to respect people and her job.

From my observation of Dr. Lin and my own experience working on this duty, I found the staff members at Shady Prairie Elementary School were distant to each other. Most of the staff members were very friendly to the children, parents and guests, although they did not have much eye contact, no facial expressions and no greetings to their colleagues when they served the bus duty. When I was there to serve the duty for Dr. Lin, none of the staff members, including the principal and the assistant principal, talked to me. It seemed no one was curious about who I was or why I was there. Dr. Lin commented about her service of this bus duty was wasting her time and the district’s money. She said, “They could have spent much less money hiring someone to keep children safe getting on/off the bus. They could also have a smarter way to keep the door open and shut.” I asked Dr. Lin if she had suggested to the principal about what she
thought about this duty. She responded, “No, I don’t think she would care. I would just do what I was told to do.”

4.7.3 IB curriculum facilitation

Dr. Lin needed to meet with the class teachers to discuss about the International Baccalaureate curricula once a month. The IB program coordinator, Ms. Mason, initiated the meetings, arranged the schedules and invited the teachers who should be involved. Dr. Lin attended the meetings because Ms. Mason hoped her Chinese teaching content could be connected with other curriculum. For example, Dr. Lin was invited to sit in the first grade IB curriculum discussion for the theme food. They wanted all the subjects to be related to food but to address different aspects. Ms. Mason told me that they hoped Dr. Lin could present the richness of food culture in China. For instance, how was food grown, produced, processed, and cooked? What did people eat in China? and how was Chinese food different from American food? They developed the IB curriculum from the district curriculum. So the students in Shady Prairie Elementary School learned the same topics as other students in the district.

When I asked Dr. Lin how she was going to design her food lessons and present this topic, she replied, “I don’t understand those. They made things too complicated.” Dr. Lin mentioned several times that a lot of her colleagues also disliked this IB curriculum. Dr. Lin described their thoughts, “The IB curriculum is nothing new. We have already taught those ideas. But this IB theme burdened us with a lot of meeting time and paper work.” I did not find Dr. Lin carried out the expectations or suggestions of the IB coordinator about the food topic. She taught merely vocabulary about food, such as 鸡肉 (chicken), 猪肉 (pork), 牛肉 (beef), 鱼 (fish), 虾 (shrimp),…etc. I suggested to her that she introduce how rice was planted in the water farm in China. She did not take my suggestion. She thought she should not present the backward images of China to Western people.

4.8 Good Students, Bad Students and Chinese Students

Dr. Lin categorized her students into good students and bad students. Dr. Lin considered almost all of the Chinese heritage students at Shady Prairie Elementary School as good students, especially as all of them were in the gifted program, but she
treated them very differently from other good students as I discovered. Dr. Lin labeled
the students good or bad based on the students’ academic performances and their
behavior in class. Actually, Dr. Lin’s expectations were not consistent and showed
different requirements and expectations for different students.

“Good students” were the ones who seemed to support Dr. Lin’s teaching and she
called them good students all the time when she mentioned them to me. She was happy to
interact with those good students in and out of her classes. Dr. Lin described them as
motivated to learn with great attitude and they showed her respect. She thought they were
smart and their learning attitude and character writing were as good as the Chinese
children’s in China. Dr. Lin often said some of them changed the stereotypes she held
toward some ethnic groups. I also found that she spent more time with the students she
saw as “good students,” checking their work and to correcting their pronunciation in
class. The good students were of course the main performers in her celebration programs.

Bad students were “troublemakers” in Dr. Lin’s Chinese classes. Dr. Lin saw
them as the major factor postponing her teaching progress and disturbing the rhythm of
her classroom teaching, she saw them not learning and not caring about learning. I was
surprised to find that she intervened in behavioral problems, like when students talked
and played without paying attention to her instruction, but she ignored or tolerated more
disturbing acts, such as, bullying and students chasing each other during her instruction.
Dr. Lin’s thought here was that it was useless to discipline their behavior because their
behavior problems were caused by their “illnesses.” She was told that many of those
children were in the special education program and they could not control their behaviors.
Dr. Lin chose to ignore them as long as they did not disturb her teaching too badly.

Dr. Lin seemed to discriminate against children who had behavior problems and
low learning achievement. She rejected their requests of going to the bathroom by saying
“later after someone comes back,” or ignored their questions even when they raised their
hands high. I observed Dr. Lin ignoring a boy as he raised his hand and said, “I need
help.” She did not give workbooks to those students because she assumed they would not
write and they were not interested in learning Chinese. She preferred saving more new
copies for the students who lost their workbooks and whom she deemed as worthy of
receiving replacement copies.
Chinese heritage students were good students in Dr. Lin’s mind. They were disciplined and there was no language barrier for Dr. Lin in communicating with their parents. Dr. Lin thought she understood their expectations toward their children’s Chinese language learning better. When some Chinese students talked in class, Dr. Lin asked them to keep quiet in Mandarin Chinese and told them to be the role models for other students in class. I saw that she wanted the Chinese heritage students to be tutors helping other children to learn. When Dr. Lin moved around the classroom, she spent more time with the Chinese heritage children and she always spoke Mandarin Chinese to them. When she asked more challenging questions during lessons, she expected those Chinese children to respond. Dr. Lin assumed that the Chinese heritage students had high Chinese language proficiency because they could practice Chinese speaking and listening with their families at home and some of them probably went to extra Chinese language classes after school. Dr. Lin always included Chinese children as essential participants in her new activities or to perform special tasks, such as dancing the traditional Chinese dances, or in giving campus wide speeches in Mandarin Chinese.

Dr. Lin encouraged all the Chinese heritage students to join the after-school program and she pushed them to submit their application forms. She wanted to use that period of time to give those Chinese students some more advanced language lessons. She felt pressured by some of their parents because they expected their children to learn more reading and writing than what they did at home. Dr. Lin prepared extra materials for the Chinese children in the after-school program, although she did not really have a chance to teach them.

4.9 Conflicts with Students

There were some conflicts between Dr. Lin and her students during her year and a half as a teacher at Shady Prairie Elementary School. In this section, some major events and other aspects of the program I discovered during my study are presented.

4.9.1 No physical touch

One of the biggest challenges that frustrated Dr. Lin during her teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School was a conflict between herself and a third-grade girl. Dr. Lin dragged her by her sleeve in order to discipline her and made the girl sit in a chair
because the girl was playing with other students during Dr. Lin’s instruction. The girl yelled at Dr. Lin, “Don't touch me! I’ll tell my mom.” Dr. Lin then asked the girl to leave her class and go to the office. The assistant principal went to her classroom twice on that day to look for the “witnesses” for further investigation. The next morning, the girl’s mother came to school and wanted to talk with Dr. Lin about what her daughter told her about what happened in the Chinese class. Dr. Lin refused to talk with her when she appeared at the gate of school. Her reason was that her classes would start in a few minutes. The next day, February 16, 2012, Dr. Lin emailed the principal about this situation. In the email, Dr. Lin described her feelings that she had never been so embarrassed as in this incident.

Dr. Lin reflected that the girl’s emotion was temporary, and she became close to her again not long after the event happened. However, she felt she was humiliated during the process of the investigation and the handling of the event because she was not trusted and supported by the school administrators. The assistant principal collected the student witnesses’ descriptions about how the girl was treated by Dr. Lin. According to Dr. Lin, the assistant principal only listened to the girl’s friends as witnesses, some of whom she felt were also not well-behaved students. Dr. Lin wanted to defend herself, so she requested some Chinese students to write down what happened in class that day. Dr. Lin was pleased that they all gave evidence that Dr. Lin did not touch her inappropriately. However, the assistant principal took their statements and told Dr. Lin that she did not have the right to investigate this.

Dr. Lin requested help from the teacher union. Dr. Lin said they did not help much and she thought the people in the union were on the same side with the school administrators, the principal and assistant principal. In the conference with the girl’s mother, the administrators did not give Dr. Lin any opportunity to explain. They asked her to leave after the mother expressed her understanding about the event and her expectations about how she wanted her daughter to be treated. Dr. Lin felt that she was treated terribly and the dignity of the teaching profession was trampled. Dr. Lin insisted she would not apologize even when the principal kept asking her to apologize to the girl’s mother and to the child. Dr. Lin stated, “Teachers never apologize to students in China. It’s been the fact for thousands of years. Besides, I did not do anything wrong.” At the
end, no one sent an apology to anyone, but this was a miserable experience for Dr. Lin. She said, she was very disappointed at the way the administrators handled the communication and mediated the issues between her, the parent, and the students.

4.9.2 “Go back to China and never come back!”

Richie was in Section 5C. He seldom participated in the Chinese class activities. Whenever he responded to Dr. Lin’s questions, she would encourage and praise his efforts. I could see that Dr. Lin was patient with Richie and sometimes ignored his misbehaviors. When I visited the school site just before the Thanksgiving holiday began, Dr. Lin described to me angrily about an incident with Richie that day, “He suddenly opened the door and made a rude gesture to my students. I did not see it, but the boys in class did.” Dr. Lin explained that she went to Richie’s classroom and asked him his reason for what he had done. He denied doing anything.

When he returned to the next Chinese session, Dr. Lin tried giving him a lesson about respecting himself and respecting others. Richie then yelled at Dr. Lin, “You are barking! You should go back to China and never come back again.” Dr. Lin was completely hurt by his words and reported this incident to the assistant principal. Richie’s mother was asked to attend a conference with Dr. Lin and the school administrators. Dr. Lin was calmer this time, but she had lost her confidence in the school administrators from former incidents and did not know how they would handle this situation or if they would support her in this instance. She believed that she had done nothing wrong to this boy. After meeting with Richie’s mother, Dr. Lin told me that she was glad that the mother did not scold her, although the mother did not apologize for her son’s behavior either. She simply said that she wished she had been informed earlier about Richie’s behavior in Chinese class.

4.9.3 “I am the boss of the classroom.”

The traditional Chinese concept of respect for the teaching profession was ingrained in Dr. Lin’s mind. She became angry when her teaching authority was challenged. When I inquired about Dr. Lin’s overall thoughts about her students when we first met, Dr. Lin shared with me that she was proud of herself as she tried to alter many students’ impolite attitudes and make them learn to respect teachers. Dr. Lin stated often
to the students, her colleagues, and the school administrators that the teachers were respected highly in Chinese society. When she taught students greetings, “你好” (nǐ hǎo, meaning hello) and “再见” (zài jiàn, meaning goodbye), she emphasized that students in China greeted teachers first and that was one of the ways that Chinese students showed their respect to their teachers. Dr. Lin was glad that many of the students in Shady Prairie Elementary School had learned her lessons, as more and more students greeted her before she said hello and goodbye to them at the gate when they got on and off their buses.

This concept of respecting the teaching profession also seemed to greatly affect Dr. Lin’s attitude towards students’ comments to her. She liked most of the students in Shady Prairie Elementary, however she was hurt and felt the children picked on her pointing out her mistakes in English pronunciation and grammar. One morning, as the students of Section 5C entered the classroom, a student commented in a haughty way that she felt hungry when she saw Dr. Lin eating her breakfast implying Dr. Lin should not be seen eating in the classroom. Dr. Lin reflected that some students were unfriendly and mean to her, so she had to be careful about her conduct.

Dr. Lin not only wanted her students to be obedient, she seemed also to want her classroom to be completely quiet when she taught and directed activities. She kept telling students to stop talking or gave them punishments if they offended her or her instruction as I have previously described in the teaching strategy section. Dr. Lin was heard several times telling the students, “I am the teacher. I am the boss of the classroom. You need to follow the rules in my class.” The authoritative threats and punishments disciplined the students’ behavior for a short while as I discovered. However, it also resulted in some aggressive behavior, like Richie’s rude gesture and disrespectful language and some other students’ hidden anger over her punitive authority.

At the end of my observations, Dr. Lin shared with me why she saw the students holding rebellious attitudes toward her in her class. One time, she tried again to stop some girls off-task talking and one of the girls aggressively and angrily retorted, “Why are you always picking on us? Do you know why we dislike your class?” She then gave Dr. Lin three reasons for the students’ disrespect of the class and teacher. First, they were the group to be corrected most often, even when many other students were also talking in
class. Second, the Chinese girls were the only ones that could practice for the traditional Chinese fan dancing program in the hallway. They wanted to join the dancing group as well. Third, they preferred the toy money more than the stickers and candies for their rewards. Many times during my observations, Dr. Lin seemed to be happy about understanding her students better. However, this interaction seemed to her more like ordinary complaints and she did not plan to make any changes because of them.

4.10 Administrators and Staff at School and in the District

Some administrators and staff at Shady Prairie Elementary School and in the district played important roles in Dr. Lin’s Chinese teaching experience. A lot of them were friendly to Dr. Lin and supported her as she needed. However, some of them did not quite accept Dr. Lin as a team member and treated her as an outsider. In this section, I will introduce the people that Dr. Lin mentioned most often during my study. I consider them as more influential figures in Dr. Lin’s professional life.

4.10.1 Senior staff at Shady Prairie Elementary School

Dr. Lin had some close friends at Shady Prairie Elementary School, such as the librarian, Ms. Martin and the third grade teacher, Ms. Jones. She always said that they were all around fifty years old and they shared a lot in common. She admitted that there were gaps with the younger staff. Dr. Lin stated that most of the staff welcomed her warmly when she entered the school the first year, but only the more senior staff approached her and shared their working experiences and tips, such as pertinent information on the students and parents, school administrators, community, school, and district cultures. Dr. Lin thought the sharing of these experiences saved her a great amount of time and she always sought these faculty friends whenever she had questions or needed help. Dr. Lin’s colleagues gave her support when she had issues with her

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5 Every time the Chinese girls came in to the classroom to take their fans, and then they could go out to practice in the hallway. Dr. Lin usually asked them to participate in the new content that she had never taught before. I think many students envied their opportunities to perform different Chinese art as well as the freedom of participating in the Chinese class.

6 Dr. Lin gave the students toy money as rewards, mostly one-dollar bills so they could buy presents from her when they collected ten dollars. Dr. Lin stopped distributing the toy money because she found the students came with five or ten dollar bills. She doubted that the students printed the toy moneys on their own.
students, students’ parents, and other school staff and administrators. Dr. Lin and her colleague-friends also developed personal connections outside the school by visiting with each other after school hours or during the weekend. They shared various topics, such as students, school business, and their private lives. Dr. Lin said their friendships were true and she felt that some of them treated her like they would treat their family.

4.10.2 Director of ESL/Bilingual Education

Ms. Sanchez, the Director of ESL/Bilingual Education in the district, was another person considered as an important friend by Dr. Lin during her teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School. Dr. Lin recalled that Ms. Sanchez constantly gave her positive comments about what she did in the Mandarin Chinese program and never questioned her expenses for teaching and learning materials or the props for the students’ performances. According to Dr. Lin, Ms. Sanchez showed full support of her teaching and organization of the celebration programs. Dr. Lin appreciated Ms. Sanchez’s help not only for herself but also other world language teachers at other schools in the district. She thought Ms. Sanchez’s instruction and encouragement eased their anxiety at work and guided them in the directions that the district’s curriculums designated. Ms. Sanchez arranged for Dr. Lin to design the Chinese language curricula for kindergarten through fifth grades in Shady Prairie Elementary School. Ms. Sanchez also tried to mediate the antagonism between Dr. Lin and the principal when the principal insisted that Dr. Lin showed too many videos in her class. Dr. Lin said she had a harmonious personal relationship with Ms. Sanchez in and out of work.

4.10.3 The principal

Ms. Oliver, White American, at about 50 years old, had been the principal of Shady Prairie Elementary School for more than ten years. I mostly saw her at the bus duty when I studied at her school. Later, she left her position in 2013.

My first impression about Ms. Oliver was that she tried to protect the Chinese program and Dr. Lin carefully. Ms. Oliver did not respond to my emails, phone calls and personal visit when I tried to reach her several times about my intent to study with Dr. Lin at her school. One day, she finally invited me to talk briefly in her office. She asked about my purposes of study and she questioned if I was going to evaluate the teaching
effectiveness and assess the students’ learning achievement. I explained to her that those topics were not included in my plan at all. Then Ms. Oliver said readily, “Okay, you’re welcome to do your study with us and please let us know if you need anything.” It was five months after I first contacted her.

Dr. Lin told me that when the Mandarin Chinese program just started, some foreign language learning experts from the university nearby visited Dr. Lin’s class. After watching Dr. Lin’s teaching, one of them commented that her teaching was fine, but that Chinese was a difficult language that should not be offered to the children in Shady Prairie Elementary School. He also suggested not to spend so much money hiring Dr. Lin, as her salary rate (with a doctoral degree) was at the top level.

I understood Ms. Oliver’s concerns after I found the negative comments given by the university expert. Ms. Oliver wanted to protect her Mandarin Chinese program and her Chinese teacher as the program was new and it was a necessary component for her International Baccalaureate school.

Dr. Lin told me that Ms. Oliver was supportive of her work. Ms. Oliver relied on her heavily to establish the Mandarin Chinese program and she trusted her on most of her decisions, such as performance and celebration organization, expenditure of teaching materials and props for performances, and her flexible teaching content and progress. Dr. Lin also liked Ms. Oliver to help her discipline the children. Ms. Oliver told some naughty students that, “Dr. Lin is my good friend. I invited her to teach Chinese at our school. You need to be nice to her.” Dr. Lin also appreciated that Ms. Oliver did not require her participation in some staff meetings that were not directly related to her job, so that gave her more time to prepare for her teaching.

However, Dr. Lin also had some complaints about Ms. Oliver and the assistant principal, Mr. Jackson. When she had the issue with the parent that complained that Dr. Lin “touched” her child, Dr. Lin thought the principal and the assistant principal should be on her side. They ended up asking Dr. Lin to apologize to the parent and the child. Also, Ms. Oliver criticized Dr. Lin on playing too much video in class in the Chinese curriculum meeting with Ms. Sanchez. Dr. Lin told me that Ms. Oliver did not really find out how much videos she played to the students by visiting her class. Her comment was merely based on a few parents or staff’s reflections. Dr. Lin said she respected Ms. Oliver.
as her “领导” (Lǐng Dǎo⁷, supervisor or leader of a group). She said she was afraid of her too because Ms. Oliver evaluated her teaching and decided her contract renewal.

4.10.4 The assistant principal

Like Ms. Oliver did, the assistant principal, Mr. Jackson also helped Dr. Lin disciplined her Chinese class. Dr. Lin said she liked that Mr. Jackson taught the children to respect her Chinese class, other students, and her as the Chinese teacher. However, Dr. Lin said he was too rude to her when he dealt with the incident that the student claimed Dr. Lin touched her inappropriately. Dr. Lin said, “He just grabbed the testimonies the students wrote for me and told me I am not allow to investigate into this.” Actually, Dr. Lin said some teachers thought Mr. Jackson was snobbish to the staff. He only respected Ms. Oliver. One time, I went to the office with Dr. Lin and a student. Mr. Jackson asked Dr. Lin what the child did wrong in class. He interrupted Dr. Lin several times. He was not patient to listen to her description. He also did not have much eye contact with Dr. Lin.

Dr. Lin was evaluated by Mr. Jackson in mid October during my study. He checked with Dr. Lin about the section, time and date that Dr. Lin preferred to be observed beforehand. Mr. Jackson came to a fourth grade section that Dr. Lin selected. In that class, Dr. Lin taught sentence “我喜欢…” (I like…) with food vocabulary that they had learned. Dr. Lin said that the students were active and well behaved and they learned well in that class. Mr. Jackson also engaged himself to learn and create a sentence while he was there. He said, “我喜欢猪肉。（I like pork.）” Dr. Lin said she was satisfied with her own teaching and the students’ performance in that class.

About three weeks later, Dr. Lin received the feedback of the evaluation. Mr. Jackson commented that Dr. Lin successfully engaged the students in the class activities. Her teaching was student centered with good classroom management. However, he noted in the section of professional communication, “Her English has a Chinese accent,”

⁷ “领导” (Lǐng Dǎo) means the leader of the group. The term “领导” is generally used on various level of leadership in China from the president of the country, the leader of a company or group or even the parents of a family. Obeying and following the instructions of “Lǐng Dǎo” is a critical principle in Chinese society (McGregor, 2007). For Dr. Lin and her generation of people who had experienced the Cultural Revolution, the concept of following through the instructions of Ling Dao is an unshakable faith.
although he checked that Dr. Lin could use grammatically correct English in all verbal and written communications. Dr. Lin told me she felt humiliated. Then Dr. Lin went to Mr. Jackson and told him the story of how she learned English at 1980s. I think she hoped the negative comment could be eliminated and Mr. Jackson or other colleagues who undervalued her because of her English ability could understand the situation and stop being biased toward her teaching.

4.10.5 The music teacher

The music teacher, Ms. Santos, was a relatively young staff member in her early thirties. She came in a year before Dr. Lin and she was the only music teacher in Shady Prairie Elementary School. Music, art, Physical Education (PE) and Chinese were special courses and they were always arranged at the same time. The four subjects rotated, so the students went to them every four days. The four teachers of these four subjects were put in the same team. I found Dr. Lin kept her distance from the music and art teachers. Dr. Lin thought they were friendly to her when she started her job. They had more and more disagreements later as they worked longer. Dr. Lin said that all the staff members knew that Ms. Santos was close to the principal and the administrative secretaries. Ms. Oliver deemed highly her opinions on many decisions.

Ms. Santos also offered a guitar class as one of the after-school programs. She organized her students to play guitars during the International Night, another evening event after the Chinese New Year celebration. Dr. Lin told me she was excited to plan the students’ Chinese singing programs for the International Night. After negotiating with Ms. Santos, only two Chinese programs were allowed and each program had to be shorter than five minutes. Dr. Lin reported what Ms. Santos said, “Chinese was only one of the eleven languages that the students in Shady Prairie Elementary School spoke.” Dr. Lin said it was true that the students in Shady Prairie Elementary School spoke about eleven languages. However, it was also true that Chinese was the only foreign language that all the students learned. It was not fair to let only a small group of students show their learning achievement. Dr. Lin also thought it was ridiculous to invite a graduate student from the university nearby to sing a Chinese rap in the International Night. Dr. Lin said, only some Chinese parents and her understood what the man sang. She thought their students should be the main performers in the event, not someone who was not related to
the program or the community. Dr. Lin insisted on having as many students perform on the stage as possible on all the events in which she was engaged.

Dr. Lin said there was more competition between Ms. Santos and herself in the second year. Ms. Santos proposed to celebrate the Black History Month in the coming February, the time for Chinese New Year. Dr. Lin complained to me that she thought Ms. Santos wanted to occupy the opportunity, so her Chinese New Year celebration would have to be canceled. She said she liked the idea to celebrate the Black History Month and to teach the students about the Black history and culture and respect them. Ms. Santos could have an alternative way to celebrate the Black History Month by exhibiting posters and pictures or playing movies in the month of February rather than having students perform on the stage. When the principal asked Ms. Santos how long her students’ evening performances for the Black History Month celebration would be, she responded, “One hour, same as the Chinese New Year celebration.” Dr. Lin interpreted Ms. Santos’s response as a competition between them as she tried to prove that she could do the same or even better job to organize school-wide student activities as Dr. Lin did.

Dr. Lin also felt neglected by the music and art teachers as she was often excluded in the special teachers’ communications. At the beginning of the fall 2012 semester, the special teachers were told to explain the code of conduct to the students in their first special class. The music, art and PE teachers completed the job. Dr. Lin said she waited and thought they might ask her to do something. She did nothing at that class but just stood there and watched the other teachers and the students. Dr. Lin said she was upset and she wondered if they had arranged what to do in an email or meeting beforehand. It seemed that they had arranged their parts without overlaps. Dr. Lin told me that she could definitely handle her part well if she was assigned one. She did not like to be excluded in a team intentionally.

Dr. Lin mentioned several times to me that Ms. Santos and some younger staff did not have interactions with the senior teachers at staff meetings. She said they did not talk or greet each other when they met in the hallway and they did not make any eye contact. Dr. Lin said she wondered if that was a discrimination against senior staff in terms of their working ability or mobility, or even a racial discrimination against her because she was international and English was not her first language. Dr. Lin told me that she had
been fretting about the dissonances during her teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School. She said that the disharmonious colleague relationship between her and the music teacher tormented her.

4.11 Dr. Lin’s Collaboration with the Study and the Researcher

In this section, I would like to share my findings about some of Dr. Lin’s changes throughout my study. I think these might be influenced by my study.

4.11.1 Better use of computer technology and online resources

Dr. Lin had limited use of the computer technology in her classroom. She actually considered herself quite advanced for her generation. She stated, “People in my generation do not use computers. We did not have a chance to learn it.” She was proud of herself for frequently using power point slides to teach English language and literacy to her university students in China. She recalled, “Most of my colleagues used chalk and blackboard in class. That was messy and time consuming. So, I shared my PowerPoint files with them.” Dr. Lin told me that she did not actually know too much about the power point program, but her students in China always helped her kindly. She commented that they were young and tech savvy, so using a computer was easy for them. They not only presented the teaching content nicely, they also knew how to add animations and sound effects to make the slides more attractive and interesting to the audience. Dr. Lin still used their help after she moved back to the U.S. and taught Mandarin Chinese in her first year at Shady Prairie Elementary School. She found her students in Shady Prairie loved them and were motivated by the colorful design and the multimedia effects.

When I first approached Dr. Lin, I wanted her to participate in my study eagerly, so I offered assistance with computer technology and online resources that could tie in with her teaching content. She was pleased to accept the offer and she requested my help to create power point slides for some topics, such as food, word transformation and animals. I also created some activity sheets spontaneously for her, so the students could review what they had learned. To extend the symmetrical paper cutting activities, I collected some art and craft templates for her, such as囍 (xī, double happiness), monkey, gold fish, … etc (see figure14). I did not mean to disturb Dr. Lin’s curriculum or to
highlight her incompetence in utilizing instructional technology. Instead, I was empathetic about her lack of ability to manage the classroom, so I thought adding the variety of class activities might help. Evidence showed, the students liked the PowerPoint slides that I created and most of them concentrated on the activity sheets that I designed. They also stayed focused when they worked on the monkey face paper cutting when I observed. Actually, my activity sheets created more Chinese language and culture teaching and learning opportunities than I expected.

![Figure 14. Three symmetrical paper cutting templates](image)

Deriving from my designs, Dr. Lin also created some activity sheets for her kindergarten, first and second grade students. She said she was inspired by my designs and she borrowed the images that I downloaded online. I actually created a bank of images for her teaching content. When the students worked on the activity sheets, there were fewer behavior problems as I observed. They either worked individually or worked together with their friends to figure out the answers to the questions. The exercises in the activity sheets allowed the students to revisit their learning materials and the resources in the classroom. They also created more interactions between the teacher and the students. Dr. Lin not only directed them to the correct answers, she also tried to enhance the students’ reading and speaking skills during their interactions.

It was only out of my curiosity that I added the Pinyin of the words in the PowerPoint slides. I was not convinced by Dr. Lin’s reasoning that that the students would be confused if they learned the Chinese pronunciations with Pinyin. My experiment told me that the students noticed the Pinyin on the PowerPoint slides and they relied on the Pinyin to read the vocabulary aloud. My findings about the role of Pinyin in the elementary school students’ Chinese language learning were, (1) Pinyin scaffolded
the students’ Chinese pronunciation, (2) without teaching the rules of Pinyin, the American children saw them as special notes and read and spoke them in the English language. Dr. Lin was satisfied with the PowerPoint slides that I created. She told me that the fourth and third grade students shouted out loud when they saw the images of the food. Some of them even expressed that the animals (the related images) were very cute, people should not eat them. Figure 15 below tells the order of the information that was presented to the students. As Pinyin came last, I could tell who had learned to say the words when they saw only the related images or Chinese and English meanings, and who had to use the help of Pinyin to pronounce the words.

![Figure 15. Sequence of the information appeared in the PowerPoint slide show](image)

Even though I did not request Dr. Lin’s permission to add Pinyin in the PowerPoint slides, she did not seem to be offended by my act. She actually found that Pinyin motivated them to read out loud and help children who were afraid to make mistakes. However, she still did not teach Pinyin until the end of my study with her.

4.11.2 More sympathy to the “bad students”

I had some understanding about the classroom, school, and neighborhood before I started my study. I knew more about my participants and school site after I went there in person and talked with them. However, my deeper understanding about the students at Shady Prairie Elementary School was from my interviews with other school staff. They shared a lot of their teaching experiences at this school with me. Ms. Bruce, the second grade teacher, stated that her students fought in class almost every day and she could not turn her back on them longer than three minutes. She did not even have time to check emails when the children were at school. Ms. Suiter, the instructional coach, expressed that there were many factors behind their students’ behavior problems. For example,
some students traveled back and forth daily from the shelter an hour away, some were suffering from home violence and sexual abuse, or some children lived with a parent who stayed up late and could not prepare breakfast for them. The teachers and staff thought that without a regular living schedule, enough food and sleep, a safe living environment and love and care from their parents, children would easily have problematic behaviors and less satisfactory learning performance at school.

I doubted if Dr. Lin was aware of these factors. She mentioned several times that her colleagues who worked in this neighborhood for a long time told her that many children had big families with many siblings and complicated relationships among the adults. Before my formal interviews with Dr. Lin, I roughly knew that her mother was a doctor and her father worked in the army, so that her family was in the upper social class in China. It is possible that it was hard for her to imagine some circumstances in some of her students’ families. I shared what I found out from other teachers with her during our informal conversations without telling her where the stories were from. She was not very surprised when she heard the stories; however, I found some changes in her, basically her attitude toward the “bad students”. She used fewer negative words to comment on the children’s problematic behavior. She had some preconceptions about some children based on her teaching experience in the first year. Later, she shared with me that she found some children who were troublemakers last year became very good and she found some children were actually very cute and they were nice to her. I had no direct evidence to substantiate her change; however, I felt her sympathy to the children greatly increased, her perspectives changed, and she seemed to be happier teaching there.

4.11.3 Suspension of the study

Because of the workload from her teaching, the inharmonious interactions with some of the school staff, and the exhaustion from taking care of her family, Dr. Lin decided to withdraw from my study in late September, about five weeks after I started my classroom observation. She expressed that she had not liked being audio recorded in class from the very beginning. She wanted to help me with my study, but she did not want to be interpreted out of context. She did not want to be interviewed, either. Dr. Lin said, “I have to be responsible for every word I said. My sons and my family need my support, so I could not lose my job.” After communicating with her, I understood that she was
stressed out. She was going to be evaluated by the assistant principal in mid-October. She wanted to prepare herself well because she thought the assistant principal never liked her. She also needed to help her older son with his school assignments and exams during that time. She was worried that he did not study hard enough as a college freshman, so he could not get good grades to transfer to a good university in his junior year. I believe her main stress was from her fear of revealing anything negative about the Mandarin Chinese program and which could be found by the school or district administrators and causing her to lose her job.

I understood she had the right to stop working with me anytime she wanted, but I still hoped to ease her concern by explaining the confidentiality principles covered by the law of human subject protection. My advisor and I also helped her understand how her identity would be disguised in my dissertation and other publications. Then, I took three weeks off from my classroom observation. When I went back, I only took notes in class without audio recording in the classroom. Dr. Lin looked happy and carefree by then. She was relaxed about my presence in her classroom and she also changed her mind to accept my interviews to share her life experiences and stories. She even said audio recording was fine for her during the interviews.

There might be two major factors that changed Dr. Lin’s mind and made her decide to work with me again. First, the request and guarantee from a professor in a prestigious university. Dr. Lin had a doctoral degree and she was proud of her completion of it. She respected people who also had the doctoral degree and experience. Chinese society respects the teaching profession especially. University professors are the most honorable group of people in China. Thus, when she received the request from my advisor, she felt she was respected. She also mentioned to me that my advisor must feel bad about Chinese people if she went back on her word. I believe Dr. Lin agreed to work with me again to save her “face.” Second, I wrote her an email to explain how my original data would be organized, to guarantee her protection of her identity and personal information, and to ask her continued help because “Chinese could only rely on Chinese.” Dr. Lin’s temporary withdrawal of my study showed her concerns about the risks and consequences that my study could bring her and it was consistent with my other findings.
on this topic. This episode also gave me insight into some aspects of her identities that benefited my analysis in this study.

4.12 Conclusion

Chapter four presented the findings that I discovered from my data collection. I started with the descriptions of the Chinese classroom settings and the surrounding environment at Shady Prairie Elementary School. Dr. Lin had Chinese theme design in her classroom and on the bulletin boards outside her classroom. As Dr. Lin seldom referred to the posters and word charts in the classroom, they were more like decorations rather than learning resources. The Chinese classroom was well equipped with technology, however, Dr. Lin did not use much of it as she lacked support and instruction of the application. She used the Smart Board most often as the projection screen to demonstrate her teaching materials. There were enough laptops for her students to use in each regular class section, but Dr. Lin took out only six of them for the students who performed well to use. She did not limit their use of computer to only Chinese language and culture learning purposes.

A vignette named “A day in Dr. Lin’s classroom” was presented to show some ordinary activities extracted from Dr. Lin’s class. The time noted from 10.20 to 11 in the morning as Dr. Lin’s regular fifth grade session proceeded. The episode described how Dr. Lin taught her Chinese class and how her students interacted with her. Some important theme issues were embedded for further discussion and analysis.

Dr. Lin’s teaching materials were discussed to help my readers understand how her Mandarin Chinese lessons were implemented. She used various materials, such as workbook, singing and dancing, paper cutting, videos, written and visual materials, and restaurant menu to teach. Workbook was the main source for her vocabulary teaching and she used computer programs, Word and Power Point, to create her written and visual materials to attract her students’ attention. Singing and dancing were the main activities for Dr. Lin to motivate her students to learn as they could sing in Chinese and dance on the stage for the celebration events. Dr. Lin used the videos to teach the origins of Chinese words and Chinese songs. Other videos she introduced were mostly for entertainment. The appropriateness of the videos had been an issue in her class. Dr. Lin
Dr. Lin designed a Chinese curriculum as the district requested. However, Dr. Lin admitted that it was not a workable plan for her teaching context in Shady Prairie Elementary School.

Dr. Lin’s teaching strategies and styles focused on promoting students’ learning motivations. She added many components she believed effective to attract her students to learn in her class, such as singing and dancing. She gave students stickers and candies as rewards. She also allowed students who completed tasks to use the computers first without limitations on viewing the types of resources online. Dr. Lin was good at relating student existing knowledge to her teaching content. For example, in the paper cutting activity, she taught “王” and “土” in Chinese out of “E” and “F” in English. The idea of symmetrical design was widely used in her paper cutting activities. Dr. Lin also used sounds in English to help students learn Chinese sounds, such as “two” for “兔” (rabbit) and “go” for “狗” (dog). When Dr. Lin found some students could identify the similarities of the characters she taught, she encouraged them to develop that. She helped students figure out the differences of “鸟” and “马” and she requested students to find more words that contained “鸟” as a part.

Dr. Lin’s teaching hardly focused on reading, listening, and sentence structure. Without reading and listening skills, students could not learn Chinese after classes if they did not have any support at home. Without learning any sentence structure, students could not use the vocabulary in the contexts. In other words, they could not use the target language in their daily lives. Dr. Lin also did not want to teach Pinyin and stroke order. She thought the kindergarten and first grade students could be confused with the English and Chinese sounds and that might interfere with their development in English reading. She did not think it was necessary to teach stroke order in character writing as long as the students could copy the words.

With the support of the magnet school funding, Dr. Lin started to offer the traditional Chinese culture after-school program in fall 2012. She accepted the students from grade two to five. Actually most of the Chinese heritage students were invited and joined. Dr. Lin used this after-school program as the extension of her regular class. She let the girls practice the fan dance, which was the only Chinese culture introduced. I was assigned to work with the boys on learning Chinese with computer games. They lost
interest in those review games quickly. Later, three native Chinese college volunteers came help, and we started to teach them Pinyin. The Chinese parents expected their children to learn more in the after-school program. Dr. Lin tutored two Chinese children by offering each of them a five-minute reading lesson several times.

In addition to the daily Chinese teaching, Dr. Lin also needed to take lunch duty and bus duty every day and to facilitate the design and implementation of the IB curriculum. She disliked all of these duties. She thought the lunch and bus duties took her too much time. Her time was valuable and should be saved for course preparation or other work that needed intelligence and professional knowledge. IB curriculum meetings took too much time too. Dr. Lin said most of her colleagues did not like the IB curriculum as it gave them extra work and burden.

Dr. Lin usually categorized good and bad students by their class participation. Students who followed her instructions and behaved well were good students. Otherwise, they were bad students. Chinese heritage students were considered special because Dr. Lin liked the facts that they learned Chinese faster than other children and they rarely had any behavior problem. Dr. Lin spoke to them in Chinese in class and she paid more attention to their questions. Dr. Lin had classroom management problems with students who could not follow her discipline. Three examples about the conflicts with students were given to demonstrate the confrontations, students, parents, and school administrators’ reactions, and how Dr. Lin interacted with the participants in those incidents. The conflicts with students frustrated Dr. Lin. However, she learned to deal with the students, parents and school administrators through those experiences. She realized that she had to control the students before she could teach. She told her students “I am the boss of the classroom,” and demanded them to be quiet and behave themselves in class.

Dr. Lin had some friends at work. Her colleague friends were mostly at about her age and they supported each other. Ms. Sanchez, the Director of ESL/Bilingual Education, was another important support for Dr. Lin’s teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School. Dr. Lin felt that Ms. Sanchez’s kindness and consideration toward her situation and needs promoted her confidence and eased her anxiety at work. Dr. Lin kept distance to the principal, Ms. Oliver and the assistant principal, Mr. Jackson as they were not always
supportive to Dr. Lin. They helped Dr. Lin when her students had behavioral problems. However, they chose to be on the side with students and parents several times when Dr. Lin had conflicts with them although she did not think she did anything wrong. Dr. Lin thought Ms. Santos, the music teacher, tried to compete with her by showing her ability of organizing the celebration events. Dr. Lin did not feel comfortable working with her especially when she found out that she was sometimes excluded by other special teachers.

At the end of this chapter, the collaboration between Dr. Lin and me, the researcher was disclosed. Some of Dr. Lin’s changes might be influenced by this study or the researcher. First, Dr. Lin used the technology resources I found for her to create more learning materials for her younger group of students (K-2). Dr. Lin was not too tech savvy, but she demonstrated the abilities to engage the existing information and to reproduce more teaching materials for her students. Second, Dr. Lin had some stereotyped ideas against “bad students.” She actually considered them as troublemakers that hindered her teaching progress. After I shared with her about what I found out about the students in the community from other teachers, she started to use a friendlier attitude and wordings when she mentioned those “bad students.” Due to the stress from work and home and the concern about the risks of participating in this research, Dr. Lin temporarily withdrew from my study. This experience allowed me opportunities to discover more of her personal and professional identities. I could also prove my speculation about her insecurity of her teaching position in Shady Prairie Elementary School.
CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS

In Chapter Four, I used sociocultural and post-colonial perspectives to analyze and interpret how Dr. Lin’s teacher and personal identities were constructed and/or shaped. I gave a brief explanation of sociocultural theory in Chapter Two and in this chapter I will give a short summary of post-colonial theory in order to use these two theories to structure my analysis of Dr. Lin’s identities and some of the social, cultural, and other challenges Dr. Lin faced in teaching the Mandarin Chinese program at Shady Prairie Elementary School and in living in the United States.

I will also discuss factors and experiences that impacted Dr. Lin’s identities and that influenced her pedagogical and other decisions concerning her position at the school. Two strong forces shaped her identities: (1) traditional Chinese philosophy and cultures, and (2) the educational and cultural perspectives she learned in the United States. The phenomena of knowledge transformation in Dr. Lin’s teaching will be discussed to help in gaining insight into Dr. Lin’s teaching. As she taught the Mandarin Chinese language, the power of culture and tacit knowledge she transmitted during her teaching was significant. Dr. Lin’s use of technology in her classroom was analyzed and will be discussed. The reasons for her insufficient utilization of the available technology resources will also be interpreted. The final section of this chapter presents the influence that Dr. Lin and her Mandarin Chinese program may have had on the students, staff, and parents at Shady Prairie Elementary School and its community.

5.1 Dr. Lin’s Evolving Identities

Identities are influenced and evolve through personal lived experiences and the environments in which people exist. In this study, I uncovered several of Dr. Lin’s identities at different stages throughout her life. These identities are summarized based on major activities, events, and recounted experiences in different stages of Dr. Lin’s life.

A. English learner and young scholar (before 1987)

To be more competitive in the globalized economic and cultural world, a common viewpoint of people from non-dominant, marginalized, and or minority groups is that individuals need to be fluent in two or three languages in order to have any economic
success and/or a higher standard of living (Roman, 2011). In this respect, and also due to the influences of cultural imperialism and globalization, learning to use English proficiently is one of the more important goals for most students in East Asia and around the world. Many people believe that high English proficiency will bring more job opportunities to them. English has become the most powerful language and skill for most young people worldwide. Engaging in that environment, many English learners concentrate on the culture, customs, and living styles of the United States, while some study hard to achieve high scores on English proficiency tests.

Dr. Lin began learning English in her early twenties. Since then, she has been an English language learner, in both China and the United States. Due to a special political situation in China, Dr. Lin recalled that her English learning started while she prepared for the College Entrance Exam in China around 1977, and ended before she attended a university graduate program in the U.S. in 1987. She did not believe that she continued learning English in her doctoral program, nor after she began her teaching job in American elementary schools and Chinese universities. However, for the broader sense of language learning, I believe she continued learning the language, its social and cultural nuances, in the United States from the communities she lived and worked within, although she did not purposefully memorize vocabulary or grammar rules as she did in her formal English language studies. This continuous language learning follows from socio-cultural perspectives and might be an explanation for how many English language learners acquire English language without formal studies (Vygotsky, 1986). This may also account for how native English speakers see a foreign language learner – using the language they learned clinically and adjusting their use with what they may correctly or incorrectly learn while interacting with native English speakers in their various cultures (Terui, 2012).

Through formal and informal conversations with Dr. Lin, I concluded that she did not consider herself an English language learner after she entered her doctoral program. She was confident in her English language abilities and she did not think that she needed to spend any effort learning English after migrating to the United States. She believed that she could fully handle her studies and life in the United States. She actually commented in one of the interviews that she did not have any problems adapting to the
climate, food, or the social-cultural atmosphere of her new home, and her doctoral studies came easily to her.

Dr. Lin worked on a few research projects and published several articles in academic journals after graduating from her master’s program in China. Those qualifications and experiences made her a young scholar who had a fundamental knowledge of educational research when she entered a university in the United States.

In China, after the Cultural Revolution, Chinese leaders decided to adopt reform and an open door policy in 1978, and established diplomatic relations with the United States. Chinese students were allowed to study in the United States and the number of Chinese students in the United States reached more than fifty thousand by 1989 (Zhang, 2011). Because of the late Chinese-American educational exchange, most Chinese had limited knowledge of English language and of Western societies. In the late 1980’s they knew by hearsay, the stereotype of “America” as a rich and very civilized country. It was considered a great success for someone like Dr. Lin to be awarded a scholarship and admitted to a university’s doctoral program in the United States. This achievement made Dr. Lin a bright star in the eyes of her family, relatives, and friends. I believe Dr. Lin was very proud of herself and purposefully planned her life and future to follow this track. When we talked of how she began learning English in the interview, Dr. Lin said, “Not many people knew English at that time, but we somehow knew that English was a powerful language. So, I thought I should focus on English in my College Entrance Exam because I was good at recitation.” As English became the leading language in the world and U.S. culture became popular in China, Dr. Lin made the most appealing choice for that time. Even today many of the present generation pursue this same goal. Overall, Dr. Lin appeared to be a confident and successful English language learner.

After living in an English language culture, I believe Dr. Lin thought and acted differently from other local Chinese native speakers who make little contact with the English language and culture. I can relate Dr. Lin to many other English learners in similar situations who possess some shared identity elements, such as valuing American language and culture and recognizing proficient English skills as valuable to secure future jobs and enrich their standard of living. Some proficient English learners have higher social status than those who do not choose to learn or to use English, because their
finances allow them to afford better English learning resources as a powerful tool to expand their wealth (Li, 2011).

**B. U.S. naturalized citizen with a doctoral degree from an American university (approximately 1995 to present)**

Dr. Lin and her husband acquired their U.S. permanent residency status in 1993 with the passing of the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992. The Act politically protected the Chinese students, visiting scholars, and other Chinese who stayed in the United States between June 5th, 1989, and April 11th, 1990. This policy evolved from the Chinese government’s suppression of students and intellectuals who were involved in the political and social movement in Tiananmen Square on June 4th, 1989 (Zhang, 2011). In the same year, Dr. Lin was awarded her doctoral degree from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois. Later she acquired her U.S. citizenship. United States citizenship resolved many legal issues that an immigrant might face, so Dr. Lin was grateful that she and her husband could live and work lawfully in the United States, entering the country and traveling to many places freely with their new U.S. identities. Attaining her doctorate also made it possible to compete in the U.S. as well as the Chinese job markets. Dr. Lin was already an American Dream Achiever by the time she completed her doctoral studies.

However, obtaining U.S. citizenship and her doctoral degree did not change much in Dr. Lin’s personal life. She still traveled back to China almost every summer and maintained regular relationships with her family and friends in China. From my observations, Dr. Lin and her husband were Chinese immigrants who lived physically in the United States but their minds and thoughts were tied to developments and changes in their heritage country, China. They utilized their resources in American society to keep their American identities, but they changed very little in their original Chinese life style. They preferred Chinese cooking, lived frugally in order to accumulate savings and invest in real estate. They also helped many of their family and relatives to attain the “American Dream.” They were patriots faithful to and fearful of their mother country, China. They felt they should only present the positive aspects of China to their American students, colleagues, and friends. This was found in the pictures and teaching content that Dr. Lin used in class and in the classroom and hallway decorations. However, with the influence
of the Cultural Revolution, they were afraid of being politically persecuted by the Chinese government if they were involved in anti-communist conversations. Dr. Lin enjoyed shows of Shen Yun performing arts, a company that was established by Falun Dafa practitioners in 2006 (Shen Yun Performing Arts, 2014). She mentioned that the performances of Shen Yun were part of the resources that inspired her creativity of her students’ celebration performances organization. However, she clarified, “I enjoyed their music and dance. I think they delicately present the beauty of traditional Chinese fine arts. But I do not have anything to do with Falunggong⁸ (the organization of Falung Dafa practitioners) or the promotion of their anti-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda.”

Research on teacher identity construction has identified teaching as a complex process of socialization (Carrington, Deppeler, & Moss, 2010; Wenger, 1998). Many learners might have imagined being teachers when they were young. They pre-define ‘good teachers’ and ‘good teaching’ from past learning experiences or from the inspiration of their teacher role models. In this study, Dr. Lin’s first impression about the teaching profession was probably formed during China’s Cultural Revolution. Dr. Lin recalled, “We learned how to sing and dance and many skills with a ‘big brother.’ We did not call him teacher, but he was like a teacher to us. He was much older than us and he was just nice and patient.” I think this learning experience was significant to Dr. Lin’s teacher (professional) identity formation. Nias (1989) explained that the teacher’s professional identity is influenced by the experiences that the teacher has had in school. In fact, personal values (Day, 2002), teaching norms and values, school environment and school culture (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000) will also impact the teacher’s identity and how the teacher will perceive his/her professional identities.

C. Chinese teacher in the US elementary school

⁸ Shen Yun Performing Arts, a company founded in New York in 2006 by the practitioner of Falung Dafa. They embed the stories of Falung Dafa practitioners in and outside China being abused and prosecuted by the Chinese Communist Party in their traditional Chinese music and dance performances. In their website, they clearly stated their purposes of establishing this company that were to expose the abominable crimes that the CCP has committed to the practitioners of Falung Dafa and to urge the freedom and respect that the Falung Dafa practitioners should gain in China and the international societies (Shen Yun Performing Arts, 2014).
While working on her doctoral degree at a U.S. university, Dr. Lin taught Chinese language in an area elementary school as her assistantship assignment. Dr. Lin was not interested in further research after she graduated with her doctorate, so she continued her teaching job in the Chinese program and acquired state teaching certification becoming a regular staff member in that school. While the Chinese language program was federally funded, Dr. Lin’s students in the Chinese program were mainly children of Chinese graduate students and visiting short-time scholars from nearby universities. Dr. Lin’s job was to support her students in Chinese language learning and in mathematics so they remained comparable with their peers in China. Dr. Lin expressed her love of that first teaching assignment, “It was a great school. The principal was very supportive and the colleagues were very nice to me. My students did not have any behavioral problems and they learned fast.” Later in 2003, she left the job in order to go back to China with her two sons to take care of her ill mother. She was a dutiful daughter. “I wish I had spent more time with my parents. They endured hardship throughout their lives,” said Dr. Lin. When she came back again in 2011, she was hired to teach in the Chinese language program at Shady Prairie Elementary School.

Dr. Lin was called “林老师” (lín lǎo shī, teacher Lin) among the Chinese circle in the small town where she lived. I heard her being called this by several Chinese immigrants several times when dining with Dr. Lin during the time of my study. Following the Chinese tradition, a teacher still holds a place of respect for Chinese immigrants, no matter what level of education the teacher is working, higher education or elementary school.

Dr. Lin was found to have various attitudes toward the parents and students at the study site. She communicated with the non-Chinese parents mostly through the school administrators or in the parent-teacher conferences. The Chinese parents usually came to her directly to express their concerns, suggestions and expectations. She could have, therefore, felt more pressure from the Chinese parents than the non-Chinese parents and it may have caused her to pay more attention to the Chinese students in her classroom. Dr. Lin said she enjoyed her teaching much better in her first school situation. There were many reasons she might have enjoyed her first position more, however, the higher respect
from the people she interacted with and the better communications with the students and parents might be the most compelling.

The Mandarin Chinese program in Shady Prairie Elementary School was one of the special courses, like music, art and physical education, at the school. Dr. Lin worked hard to make it a good program. However, she did not think that most students, parents and even school staff took her Mandarin Chinese class seriously enough, although everyone at work called her “Dr. Lin.” During my year and a half observations, I constantly saw situations in which Dr. Lin fought to gain more attention and respect from the students, parents, and school staff. She did this by improving her teaching and presenting her students’ learning achievements to the public. She stated many times how she loved the challenge involved with her teaching and wanted to create a stronger sense of achievement at work. She could take a better job in a higher social class with her doctoral degree, but she expressed that teaching Chinese language in the elementary school provided a quality of living she felt was important in the United States.

Dr. Lin was also seeking more recognition and acceptance from her students, parents and colleagues at school in the U.S. She felt that her treatment by certain administrators, staff members, parents, and students were racially biased, and continuously felt embarrassed and offended by their teasing her or correcting her English accent, or by excluding her from some of the school group activities. At moments like these, she felt she was a voiceless minority and an outsider to the school and district staff. She appreciated the friendship and regard from her colleagues who were about her age at Shady Prairie Elementary School, but she expected as much support and equal respect as given to white faculty members and more collaborative and harmonious working relationships with the younger faculty.

D. English language and literacy professor in the Chinese universities

Dr. Lin taught English language and literacy in the Chinese universities during the eight years she stayed in China (2003–2011). She said she enjoyed her teaching jobs there. She adopted a more interactive pedagogy that she learned in the United States in her college courses, such as group discussion, role play, singing, drama, and power point slide presentations that were different from the traditional ways of learning English in China. “My students loved my teaching. They said they had never enjoyed learning
English so much and actually used English language in real practice.” Her “American” identity, American living and teaching experiences, and the doctoral degree brought her many job offers. “I was treated as a foreign teacher and received higher payment than local teachers. I was highly valued for my American living and education experiences,” said Dr. Lin. She was a popular professor and traveled between several universities weekly. She admitted that her English vocabulary was widely expanded because she was requested to teach quite a few subjects in fields that she knew nothing about. However, the respect, admiration and love from her students truly brought her a great sense of achievement. She was also convinced that she was a great English instructor that inspired many of her Chinese students to learn English differently.

Dr. Lin claimed that she liked both teaching environments, teaching Chinese language in the American elementary schools and teaching English language and literacy in the Chinese universities. However, she felt more comfortable and even a bit of status in Chinese society with her Americanized identity. Dr. Lin said, “It was very convenient to live in China. The food was great and people were lovely. I actually made more money there. If I went back right after I got my doctoral degree, I could be at the dean’s position in the university where some of my friends were.” However, she decided to return to the United States for her sons’ education.

Her sons were fluent Chinese speakers, but she also wanted her sons to receive an American education, to relate to their peers in American schools, and to integrate themselves socially and culturally into American society. Like many Chinese parents, Dr. Lin was an indulgent parent who made her children her top priority and probably overindulged them. For example, she did her sons’ homework for them. When her sons’ school tests were approaching, she studied their textbooks, organized the information, and taught them what she learned. One time, when she was occupied in a staff meeting, she asked me to call her older son in order to wake him because he was almost late for class. She told me she was disgusted at their undisciplined way of life, but she just could not stop helping them when they needed her.

5.2 Dr. Lin’s Expectations of her Teacher Career

Day, Kingston, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) argued that teachers define themselves by their current and past identities and their beliefs about what kind of teacher
they want to be. A teacher’s beliefs about how to be a competent teacher should not be separated from their ideas of professional identity (Lasky, 2005). Through her engagement in teaching, Dr. Lin’s English learner’s identity was changed. Her professional identities was likely reshaped or reconstructed into smaller or sub-identities by the influence of the alterations in the context including environment, activities, experiences, people, and social and cultural influences. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) supported this smaller or sub-identity quality and suggest these are produced when teachers try to balance or harmonize relationships in professional and/or personal contexts. Lewis (2010) used “reconciliation” (p. 160) to describe the process of identity formation. The process of reconciliation facilitates actions and interactions in the community of practice and enables the various forms of membership to coexist. The multi-membership that represents Dr. Lin’s identities becomes more complex because of her various sociocultural experiences, being Chinese and existing as a member of a community in the United States. Dr. Lin had multiple influences and histories from both of these worlds, and so had additional elements in her personal and professional life to include in her identity as a teacher.

Dr. Lin had a set of disciplines and expectations toward her students as well as herself. When I asked her what kind of teacher she wanted to be, she thought for a few seconds and then stated,

Um… most students like my class! Yeah, they would like me too if they like my class. I don’t really expect all the parents or colleagues to like me. I can’t control them. Students are my priority. But I hope the principal and the parents can support my job here. This teaching job is challenging but it enables me to fulfill my true potential.

She understood that she could not please everyone. She wanted to do her duty towards her students and did not yearn for fame or great recognition among parents, colleagues and school and district administrators. I could see that she did not want to pressure herself too much with concerns for interpersonal skills. Nor did socializing with staff give her concern. If Dr. Lin cared only about her own teaching reputation, she would spend time training only a few smart students and let them demonstrate their proficiency to the community members. However, she chose to do much more. She pushed herself and all the students to work through challenges and allowed students who were willing,
to perform on the stage. She also encouraged the students to invite their parents to go to
the events because she knew that those were meaningful and precious memories for some families. She was concerned about her job security, so she attempted to keep the principal updated with her class activities and hoped to gain support from her. Although she knew the district had a hard time filling the Chinese teaching position, she still worried she would be fired. She considered the difficulties of losing her position and knew it would be difficult for her to move to another city or state in which her family did not live. The challenges Dr. Lin met at Shady Prairie Elementary School pushed her to polish her teaching skills. She believed the experiences were valuable and boosted her teaching career.

Figure 16. Major influences impacting Dr. Lin's identities

Dr. Lin had multiple identities, both personal and professional. “An identity is more than a single trajectory; instead it should be viewed as a nexus of multimembership” (Wenger, 1993, p. 159) existing in her job, living environment, and life experience changes. Figure 16 presents Dr. Lin’s identities and the major influences in Dr. Lin’s life. The influences were traditional Chinese culture, that shaped her primary
identity as a member of the Chinese culture, American cultural imperialism, as the driving force of her English learning and immigration to the United States, the Cultural Revolution in China, that impacted her political identity, American life and education experiences, that developed her social and cultural awareness and competences interacting with people in the United States and shaped her perspectives and skills of teaching, CFL (Chinese as foreign language) and EFL (English as foreign language) teaching experiences that shaped her teacher identity and her family that supported her in various aspects in life and at work.

Dr. Lin’s existed identities included “Chinese” that she was proud of being as, “confident and successful English learner” and “scholar” when she was a learner in China. “Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology,” “U.S. citizen,” “American Dream Achiever,” were the honorable identities she earned after striving for about ten years in the United States. “Dr. Lin,” “林老师,” “voiceless minority and an outside” to the school and district staff, a “popular university professor,” and a “great English instructor” were her professional identities in various teaching contexts. She was also a “dutiful daughter” and “indulgent parent” at home with her family.

5.3 The Power Structures and Challenges in Dr. Lin’s Work Contexts

In this section, I briefly review post-colonial theory before I start an analysis of the power structures in Shady Prairie Elementary School. Knowledge of post-colonial theory was essential to conceptualize Dr. Lin’s experiences, interactions and relationships with people in her working environment. I mainly discuss how Dr. Lin interacted with her school and district administrators and colleagues and with her students in the classroom.

5.3.1 Post-colonial theory

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) defined the term ‘post-colonial’ (p. 2) as describing various influences resulting from the domination of an imperial power and process since the beginning of colonization to the present time. They argue that European imperial aggression has had a historically long continuing supremacy and that it significantly impacts the world today. Similarly, Denyer (2011) spoke of ‘post-colonial’ as “an examination of the impact and continuing legacy of European conquest,
colonization, and domination of non-European lands, peoples and cultures” (p. 2).

Discussing further details about when, where, who, and what is post-colonial, Childs and Williams (1997) concluded (in the first chapter of their book, *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory*) that colonization of the world has not ended. Even though the colonies from the last centuries have all been restored to statehood, there are other forms of colonization today, such as capitalism (Childs & Williams, 1997), cultural imperialism (Said, 1993), and Eurocentrism (Amin, 1988). They noted that colonialism could exist anytime and anywhere, happening to anyone. The main goal of post-colonial theory is to express reaction to the undesirable effects of colonial hegemony with its impact on an individual’s self-esteem, self-identification, and self-affirmation by uncovering how Eurocentric ideologies are perpetuated as privileged, authoritative, and sublime forms of knowledge or philosophy (Denyer, 2011). Let us consider several negative effects caused by colonization.

First, cultural and negative stereotypes are forced on colonized people by the colonizer (Singh, 2004). In Said’s (1991) famous work, *Orientalism*, he identified some pernicious stereotypes and misunderstandings that Western people perpetuate toward the Orient (mainly the Middle East). The stories and perspectives Said (1991) revealed in *Orientalism* show how Westerners perceive the Orient, or the way they “constructed” the Orient. It was a popular perception but it was a view constructed to create a particular effect, i.e., an “othering” (Johnston-Parsons, 2011). A number of egomaniacal, narcissistic, and supremacist attitudes of Western societies are also exposed in Said’s work. Dictatorial regimes are perpetuated also in Academia as scholars who study the Orient disregard alternative or marginalized perspectives of the events, activities, and cultural aspects of the people and places they engage in their research. Influenced by European imperialism, these researchers’ evaluations and interpretations of their Oriental subjects were and continue to be based on their superior status as members of colonizing cultures. Therefore, Said (1991) suggested considering Orientalism as a post-colonial discourse because it serves to free the colonized people from the myth, ambiguity, fear, inequality, and inferior positioning that takes place throughout the colonization process.

Second, the voice of the colonized people is ignored (Said, 1991), and the colonized people experience the ‘othering’ (Lewis, 2010, p. 22) process, being treated as
dominated and subjugated “others” (Slemon, 1991, p. 3) and being assigned a disadvantaged or marginalized position. The new immigrant, the working class, women and other ‘post-colonial subjects’ are the group of ‘others’ or ‘subalterns’ to whom Spivak wants to pay more respect. As a post-colonial theorist and feminist, Spivak (1988) raised a similar concern to Said’s (1991) Orientalism in her essay, *Can the Subaltern speak?*, claiming that the subordinate’s voice is not heard. It is not because they cannot speak for themselves or they have no consciousness to do so. Spivak (1988) pointed out the situation for women as subalterns in saying, “The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with ‘women’ as a pious item” (p. 308). Subalterns, like women, are not offered a chance to express their ideas. In her more recent work, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak (1999) continued her argument saying that not only was the subaltern excluded from the discussions of major European metaphysical work (e.g. Kant, Hegel), but that non-Europeans were seen as human subjects having no talent or status for articulating their beliefs, understandings, societies or cultures. Applying this to cultural research, the researcher puts himself/herself in a superior position and the subject in an inferior position. Spivak proposed that speaking on behalf of a group while using a clear image of identity to fight opposition is a strategy to enable the others’ voice to be listened to and to be taken into account.

5.3.2 Power structure at school

Dr. Lin considered teaching in Shady Prairie Elementary School as a good job in terms of the salary. The job offer came to her when she needed it. She was proud of her accomplishments and at being hired for a position in a United States school. She said, “When I told my friends that I organized the Chinese New Year celebration event for more than five hundred students and teachers, they admired me. They thought that only I could have handled this impossible mission.” However, she had complicated feelings toward the principal, Ms. Oliver and the assistant principal, Mr. Jackson. She liked being trusted by Ms. Oliver and entrusted with the management of the Chinese program and other related activities that developed through her time as teacher in the program. However, she was disgusted with how Ms. Oliver and Mr. Jackson seemed to have little respect for her as a teacher, showing this disrespect in front of parents and students. She thought Ms. Oliver could be more professional and should not show her preference for
some teachers over others. From Dr. Lin’s perspective, everyone in the district, especially Ms. Oliver, should be more supportive of the celebration events she created for the school. She considered the events as opportunities to build a positive reputation for the Chinese program at Shady Prairie Elementary School within the community. The school would also gain credit and positive publicity for the school and district as the local media published the stories of the program’s events and curriculum in the news. According to Ms. Suiter, the instructional coach, their student recruitment had increased about 25% (421 students in 2011 and 514 students in 2012). And, although maybe not entirely due to the new Chinese language program, the school also had more teacher applicants than they needed after becoming the multi-language magnet school.

Although most people respected Dr. Lin for her successful organization and arrangements of the celebration events and considered her a good Chinese teacher, Dr. Lin expected to have a higher and more secure status in the school. She believed she should at least have had the support from the school administrators when she had issues with parents, students or other staff members. She did not feel her efforts were appreciated. She said, “I was used by Ms. Oliver. I can be dismissed anytime for incompetence.” Many times, I heard Dr. Lin try to persuade herself not to worry about losing her position. She said, “The district could not find any qualified Chinese teacher, except me, for this position.” However, she did not seem confident when she said that. I believe she was aware that as Chinese language and culture become popular, there are more and more native Chinese speakers in the U.S. investing themselves in teaching Chinese as a career.

A visitor seemed like a threat to her. A student observed Dr. Lin’s class for a week from the university nearby. The visitor’s parentage was Vietnamese and Chinese but born in America. Her Chinese language was proficient enough for teaching in an elementary school setting and she was looking for a teaching practice opportunity to fulfill the practical requirement for her Chinese language teacher qualification certification. I believe that Dr. Lin knew someone like the young teacher candidate could take her position in one or two years once the program she was enrolled in was completed. After the girl left, Dr. Lin told me that the visitor was completely terrified by the students at Shady Prairie Elementary School and she told Dr. Lin that she would
never come back. I believe this was an instance of Dr. Lin comforting herself by telling me about her advantage by holding the position she had in the school. It showed me again that she had a deep concern about losing her position.

Dr. Lin’s role was somehow different from most of the teachers at Shady Prairie Elementary School. She was part of the minority group at the school and in the district. She was new to this particular American school setting. As a person who could be designated as an international, there was no training from any district personnel on how to interact with her American colleagues, her students and their parents or any classroom management workshops to help her work in a school with a socially-culturally-linguistically diverse population. Ms. Suiter said, “Dr. Lin was probably the only one (who might need training on those issues) in our district. We do not have any professional training focusing on those topics. But we do have some workshops that help develop teaching skills.” Ms. Suiter’s reflection indicated that Dr. Lin was at a disadvantage in Shady Prairie Elementary School. Dr. Lin worked on solving the various issues she encountered on her own most of the time.

Through a post-colonial lens, being compelled to acculturate and voluntarily embrace a foreign culture are two reactions to Cultural Imperialism (Tomlinson, 1991). Dr. Lin was actually afraid to reveal her true feelings to people. She would complain to her colleagues who shared similar thoughts about the school’s administrators, but she completely subordinated herself to the principal and the assistant principal on a superficial level. She used her best manners in emails to defend for herself whenever the principal had questions about her work. She also tried her best to impress the principal with her teaching and other work. This “love-hate relationship” (Bruyneel, 2007, p. 13) is called ‘ambivalence,’ the simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from the dominant person(s) (Young, 1995, p. 161). Dr. Lin hid her discontent carefully. She acted as a positive and diligent employee might, and as someone who held her job in high priority. Two other teacher interviewees expressed their fear of the principal at Shady Prairie Elementary School. One of them said, “I have to be very careful about what I do and what I say at school. I need her (the principal) to write me a recommendation letter if I need to go to a new teaching position.” In this case, the administrator and teacher shared an uneasy and tense relationship. If we look at the relationship between teachers and
administrators that these few teachers expressed, with the post-colonial perspective, they seemed to be in the roles of colonizer and the colonized. Childs and Williams (1997) distinguished colonizer or the colonized by evaluating who has more control over resources, the economy, politics, language, mainstream culture, and other such things.

Even though the school principals were in supervisory positions, there is an assumption that they would respect the teachers they supervised and support them in most situations. One teacher expressed her feeling toward the principal saying, “She treated us as her laborers who worked in her kingdom. She hardly gave us compliments or positive comments for our good performance.” Dr. Lin said, “The principal and the assistant principal would only talk to me when they needed me. I was transparent to them most of the time.” I had the same feeling described by Dr. Lin when I helped her with her bus duty assignment. I found that the principal and the assistant principal were warm and friendly to the students and their parents, but they hardly said anything or had any eye contact with the teachers who were doing bus duty at the time I helped.

Contract renewal and teacher evaluation caused many of the staff members stress and the supervisors seemed to be perceived as manipulators of the policies involving these two activities. At least these were the factors that caused Dr. Lin to decline the collaboration with my study at first as I described in Chapter Four. This Shady Prairie Kingdom had a new and advanced infrastructure, however according to Dr. Lin and her colleagues, “We could not work here long. To live longer and healthier, we need a less stressed environment.”

It sometimes appeared that the administration used a set of double standards within the school. For example, they took advantage of the intellectual property law by making hundreds of copies of the entire workbook that was a publication on the market in China for Chinese language lessons. Without contradicting Dr. Lin’s case to use this material in her classes, they cooperated and provided photocopies of the workbook. Yet, in another case, when Dr. Lin played a video that someone told them was rated “R,” they accused Dr. Lin of playing an “R rated” movie to the students before they had looked into the issue to see if there was any truth to the story. Dr. Lin might have violated norms in both of these examples, but she received two extreme results. She did it “well” and saved money for the school and the district when the school administrators were with her. She
did it “terribly” when she made the decision alone by herself. The use of double standards
does not build trust for supervisors among those who were given the guidelines to follow.

Dr. Lin’s attitudes reflected her resentment and distrust of her supervisors. As a
colonized individual, she chose the pretense of admiration of the principal’s leadership
and recognition of the principal’s policies and decisions. Possibly other teachers in
Shady Prairie also had this emotion. Ms. Suiter stated that the senior teachers and new
teachers were informed about the philosophy and policies of Shady Prairie Elementary
School and its status as candidate for International Baccalaureate school certification and
given a choice to leave or stay. That they did not leave I interpret as they joined the
school because they shared the same values and goals the school held. However, later
they found the working conditions were not as good as they expected. They could not
leave the job for realistic reasons. They stayed, but they felt and acted like Dr. Lin did. Dr.
Lin allied with her colleagues who had similar feelings and she performed well
superficially to gain her supervisors’ recognition.

To Dr. Lin, some parents also played the colonizer role. They had high
expectations for their children, so they paid extra attention to Dr. Lin’s pedagogy and
class activities. Some parents were reasonable. They remained quiet when they were not
satisfied with their children’s learning. In the interview, Jed’s mother told me that she
thought Jed’s Chinese learning was too little and too slow. She stated, “She (Dr. Lin)
could teach more. I thought they were done with numbers 1 to 10 last year. But he’s still
working on them.” She was not too happy, but she remained positive toward Dr. Lin and
her instruction. Some other parents did not keep quiet. When they had questions or
concerns about their children’s Chinese learning at school, they went directly to the
principal rather than discussing their concerns with Dr. Lin. It might have been their way
of avoiding direct confrontation with Dr. Lin, or they simply did not want to deal with the
language barrier or cultural differences. Whatever their reasons, they complained to the
school administrators and then the school administrators passed the criticisms and
complaints to Dr. Lin and laid the blame on her for those complaints. Interrogation from
the principals and unreasonably high expectations from many sources were important
factors distressing Dr. Lin and increasing her rebelliousness toward the school
administrators.
Being a minority in the U.S., Dr. Lin’s life was ruled by the Anglo-White majority, both personally and professionally. The power shifting at school was frequent and it could happen between Dr. Lin and students, colleagues, other teachers, and school authorities. Dr. Lin worked diligently to learn to teach like American teachers in order to meet students’, parents’, and school’s expectations in terms of teaching styles, technology utilization in the classroom, teaching materials selection, and other aspects. This is where mimicry was initiated.

Bhabha (1994) defined colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable ‘Other’, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 122). Bhabha described the inner and outer changes of an Other under colonial authority. A colonized subaltern may need to meet expectations of a colonizer, and mimics desirable behavior. Childs and Williams (1997) illustrated Bhabha’s idea that mimicry fits within a strategy of colonial power and that the colonizer wishes to include the approved ‘Other’ and to accept the ‘good native,’ as well as to exclude the ‘bad native’ (p. 129). Mimicry is ambivalent because it may require colonized people to appear almost the same as the colonizer but colonized others can never be the same. The ambivalence comes from two sources. First, the colonizer cannot categorize the subaltern as belonging to a superior class. Because of this, the subjects become alienated (Bhabha, 1994). Second, the colonized people resist the colonization power and maintain some of their original identity, as shaped by their native culture, even when forced to imitate the colonizer.

Dr. Lin’s mimicry was not completely voluntary. Dr. Lin might have resisted implementing exactly what the teachers were told to do, although they have to follow the school’s policies and were not to challenge the power of the school administration. So, she had to make herself into the “perfect American school teacher” by imitating other American teachers’ behaviors through observations and social interactions. She just hybridized to become a colonized figure who subjugated herself to the power of American school authorities. Hybridity can be interpreted as the compromise between colonial power and resistance to it (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha (1994) argued that colonial hybridity, as a cultural form, produces ambivalence in the colonial masters and so, alters the authority of power. Hybridity can be interpreted as the result of colonial power.
(Bhabha, 1994) that shifts between the colonizer and the colonized, a power never fully controlled by the colonizer (Childs & Williams, 1997). Meanings and understandings that the colonizer brings to the colonized will be adjusted and interpreted to some extent by the Other’s culture. So often a new concept, like the “creation of new transcultural form” (Ashcroft, Griffith, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 118) is produced and then adopted by the colonizer. There are various forms of hybridity, including cultural, political and linguistic.

When Dr. Lin resigned, she said the principal did not persuade her to stay, but she asked, “Why did you decide to leave? Aren’t we nice to you? I hope you can help us organize the celebration programs for the coming Chinese New Year.” Dr. Lin helped them organize this event before leaving the position. Dr. Lin had several reasons for doing this. First, it was a difficult decision for her to leave her students and to give up the opportunity where she could demonstrate her strengths – that of organizing big celebration programs. Second, Dr. Lin cherished the cultural arts of singing, dancing and training students for performances. Third, she wanted to keep the connections open between herself and the district administrators in case they might have to work together at some point in the future and so she attempted to establish a harmonious ending to her teaching assignment. This last reason resounds with the colonized voice. As long as Dr. Lin taught in the American education system, as a minority with linguistic, social and cultural disadvantages, she would need to live a colonized life, striving for her dignity and rights.

5.3.3 Power structure in the Mandarin Chinese classroom

With the pride of a teacher, more than sixteen years of teaching experience and being one of the rare qualified candidates, Dr. Lin brought her traditional Chinese ideology to Shady Prairie Elementary School. She constructed a learning environment guarded by the philosophy and rules of her heritage culture. To follow the traditional Chinese teachers’ discipline, Dr. Lin expected students to listen attentively and to sit quietly at their seats. Students only talk when called upon to answer a question in this tradition (Larson, 2012).

In Dr. Lin’s classroom, she decided what ought to be taught as the curriculum, the learning process and the teaching style and the scope and sequencing of the curriculum. Hauser-Cram, Sirin and Stipek (2003) defined this as curriculum-centered teaching, while
other educators might call this style teacher-directed instruction (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988). Dr. Lin was the only person to speak in the classroom. Her students were given permission to speak when she asked questions during lessons. She sometimes ignored students when they were not invited to talk. She also requested students’ obedience in the classroom. For example, they asked her permission for using the restroom, washing hands after doing artwork, and for looking for their workbooks that might be in the storage cupboard. She lectured the students with the idea of “respect yourself and respect others,” located in the student code of conduct, whenever she did not think they performed well. She emphasized the high status of the teaching profession by repeatedly telling students that, “In China students greet the teacher first,” and, “Chinese students highly respect their teachers.” When the classroom was out of Dr. Lin’s control, she shouted out loud, “No talking,” and, “Close your mouth,” in order to gain students’ attention. A couple of times, she stated in front of the classroom, “I am the boss of the classroom. You must follow the rules.” Dr. Lin played the dominant role controlling the activities and student behavior in the classroom. She was the colonizer in the Chinese classroom. The Chinese classroom was the sphere where Dr. Lin would not allow anyone else to influence or to intrude. She treated her students as colonized soldiers. She was the commander who demanded high discipline, obedience, and respect. The students who did not follow her leadership were labeled as “bad students.” They constantly received warnings or detention or were sent away, so her lessons could proceed unimpeded.

Dr. Lin did not like to be challenged or mocked by the students because she would lose face. She liked the students who cooperated and learned Chinese well. She was particularly pleased with students’ smart questions or findings. For example, “what is the plural form of 山 (shān, mountain)?” and “鸟 (niǎo, bird) looks like 马 (mǎ, horse)” as I mentioned in Chapter Four. However, not every child felt like sharing ideas in class. Jed, the fourth grade boy in the gifted program, told me that he liked learning foreign languages, but he almost did not ask questions in Chinese class. After checking his understanding about the workbook, I know that he noticed the details that Dr. Lin did not cover, such as, the stroke order, example phrases, and Pinyin, but he did not care for Dr. Lin’s neglect of teaching those aspects in class.
Jed and I originally had our interview at a corner that was quiet but visible to people walking by. When our conversation went longer than I expected and Dr. Lin was about to come back from lunch, I asked Jed if we should move to somewhere that could not be seen by Dr. Lin. He looked nervous and he immediately said, “Yes, let’s move.” He quickly packed his belongings and moved to our new table. His quick movement to avoid Dr. Lin was in contrast to my original impression of him—shy, quiet and gentle. It seemed he was concerned about the consequences that my interview with him might bring. When I asked him about how he felt learning Chinese with the Chinese students, he said, “You are not gonna show this to her, right?” After I told him, “Never,” he continued, “Look at what she does. She pays more attention to them.” I asked him to give me examples. He said, “She gives them a lot more Chinese talk. … and she pays more attention to them, by like, somebody raises their hands, like when I sometimes raise my hand, she doesn't care very much.” It seemed to me Jed did not care too much about what Dr. Lin taught in class. He was just afraid that Dr. Lin would possibly identify him as a traitor if she found out someone spoke ill of her.

Within her territory, Dr. Lin bribed students to learn with stickers and candies as well as the opportunity to use a computer and perform in the celebration events. Then she tried her best to keep possible external obstructions from her territory without acknowledging this. For example, she only opened her traditional Chinese culture after-school program to students in the second grade or older. She refused first graders purposefully.

In the Expectation Night, a White, middle-aged woman came into Dr. Lin’s classroom with her first-grade daughter, a short and slim girl with Asian look. The girl did not look as happy as other children who were with their parents that attended the Expectation Night. The mother and Dr. Lin chatted for about a minute. She asked Dr. Lin what she had taught since the school started. Then, she looked at the whiteboard and pointed at one Chinese character.

Parent: What is that word? (She pointed at the word 雨 (yǔ, meaning rain) on the whiteboard and looked down at her daughter.)
Child: ... (The child kept silent and looked confused.)
Parent: You don’t know what it is. (The woman raised her voice and sounded angry.)
Dr. Lin: I haven’t taught them that word yet. It was for the fifth grade.
Parent: That is HER NAME. (She shouted out loud and starred at her daughter angrily.)

This parent also criticized Dr. Lin in her first year for letting her child watch too much video in her kindergarten year. The principal told Dr. Lin that this parent wanted her child to practice more writing. Since then and with this Expectation Night experience, Dr. Lin wanted to do as little with this girl as possible. She said, “I don’t want her parent to come to me again. Her attitude was domineering.” Dr. Lin expressed that most teachers at school knew that this girl was adopted by her parents in China. Her parents wanted her to learn Chinese well and not to forget her ancestry and Chinese identity. I could visualize the parent that strived to teach excellence. However, this parent challenged Dr. Lin’s authority and made her feel like there was intrusion into her classroom territory. Dr. Lin felt that the parent blamed her for not teaching enough even as she pointed at her daughter in an abusive manner.

Foucault (1990) asserted “where there is power there is resistance” (p. 95). The interplay between power and resistance pinpoints a person’s agency and self-identity. People become more aware of who they are and what they want because they see the differences between their original identity and what they are being required to do (Johnston-Parsons, 2011). The girl’s mother, the girl who yelled at Dr. Lin not to touch her, the boy who told Dr. Lin to go back to China and never come back, and many other children in Shady Prairie were not satisfied with Dr. Lin and her teaching. I think the cause of their dissatisfaction were the ways she controlled the Chinese class with her own “traditional Chinese style” – how she interacted with the students as colonizer and with them as the colonized. The American students were brought up with American sensitivities. They were not used to Dr. Lin’s authoritative teacher-centered style of teaching. Dr. Lin’s view was that the Chinese language and culture were to be appreciated by her students and the way they would best acquire the language and cultural appreciation was through lecture. It was clear to me that the children and parents were neither happy nor used to having the traditional Chinese teaching ideology imposed on their sensitivities. The backlash of criticism increased as Dr. Lin continued to colonize her students with her dictatorial instruction.
One day, Alyssa and her friend who constantly received warnings were criticized by Dr. Lin again for talking too loud. They were angry with Dr. Lin and said, “We were not the only people talking in the classroom. Those Chinese girls and others were talking too. But you always correct us. Do you know why we didn’t like your class? Because you are not fair! You only let the Chinese girls do the fan and peacock dances. We want to dance too, but you never give us a chance.”

I watched how Dr. Lin responded to the students. Dr. Lin tried to explain that there was need for a limited number of traditional Chinese dancers. The dancers also needed special costumes and a lot of time to practice. The Chinese girls could dance because they knew the foundational dance techniques and had the appropriate costumes that their parents bought for them from China. Dr. Lin would borrow or rent costumes for the one or two American students, like Yuki, who was a very good dancer. Dr. Lin tried to help the children understand how and why she made those decisions. After class, Dr. Lin told me that she was nervous during the conversation because she was afraid that the students would make this a big deal and complained to their parents and the principal.

Dr. Lin may not quite have told the full truth to the students in her answer to their accusations. In addition to Dr. Lin’s personal preference to the traditional Chinese arts and probably Chinese students, the Chinese parents’ expectations also furthered Dr. Lin’s decisions. Those Chinese parents had to know what Dr. Lin was going to do in the next year, so they could purchase adequate costumes for their girls. Like Jed, Alyssa and her friends also showed their concerns about Dr. Lin’s favoritism to Chinese students.

The Chinese students were like Dr. Lin’s messengers. They were good and fast learners. Ms. Bruce, the second grade teacher, said, “They (Chinese heritage students) are all in the gifted program. I can’t think of anyone who is not.” Ms. Wu (little Elsa’s mother) and Mr. Wang (Holly’s father) also told me that they only wanted their children to go to the gifted program at Shady Prairie Elementary School. They would transfer their children to another school if they were not accepted into the gifted program. Their Chinese competency was used by Dr. Lin to represent her teaching effectiveness. However, the Chinese children also had objections to Dr. Lin’s teaching and management of the Chinese program. Holly said,
I like that she wants us to do performances. But all she does is buy little costumes, props, and she rented a lot of things too. She just spent lots of money focusing on the performances. She spent about 3000 dollars I heard at one point. …. they are just performances, you don't have to spend 3000 dollars.

I asked if Dr. Lin shared this information with her. She said, “I think she one time told me that the principal or the vice principal wouldn't let her spend any more money and she was really upset about that.” It sounded to me that Dr. Lin was seeking acceptance from students by pursuing their common interest in performing. Dr. Lin might have been seeking admiration and obedience from her colonized (students) by showing them that she was working to manage the performance programs and the opportunities for them to demonstrate their abilities. However, she related to the students that the school administrators attempted to stop her and to ruin the students' enjoyment of performing. It seemed to be a type of bribery – Dr. Lin tried to bribe her students with the chance to perform and included them in her effort to fight against the hegemony of the Shady Prairie “Kingdom” administrators. However, she overlooked that the students might be more attached to the school administrators and other teachers than to her.

After Dr. Lin decided to leave her position in January 2013, she notified the principal a few days before the spring semester started. That took Ms. Oliver, the principal, aback. I asked Dr. Lin if she postponed informing Ms. Oliver about her resignation. She said she did not. Her husband told her about the vacancy of the Chinese teaching position in his school. She applied for it and she accepted the offer in late December 2012. Dr. Lin said everything happened fast and she had informed the principal as quickly as she could. Dr. Lin agreed to teach the first two weeks in the spring semester. That allowed Ms. Oliver time to look for a new Chinese language teacher. It took them a semester to fill the Chinese teaching position.

Later, Dr. Lin came back to help the students and staff with the Chinese New Year celebration in February 2013. She repeated what Ms. Oliver said to her, “I feel helpless without you. I appreciate that you came back to help us.” It sounded to me the students, staff, and parents enjoyed the Chinese New Year celebrations. They might have considered it a part of their Mandarin Chinese program but would need someone like Dr. Lin to help manage it. In year 2014, there was no Chinese New Year celebration held in Shady Prairie Elementary School.
The ways that Dr. Lin treated her students in the Mandarin Chinese program, how she developed the program and indoctrinated her students to the Chinese tradition sounded like historical progression of colonization. Under the supervision of the principal and assistant principal, Dr. Lin was marginalized by the administrators and some staff as a minority in the school. During the othering process, she felt and acted like a colonized person. I found that Dr. Lin realized her voice could hardly be heard with her colonized identity in Shady Prairie Elementary School because she did not have the power of the colonizer. She knew, however, the Mandarin Chinese program and the students might be a voice of her culture and in this gave her a voice too. The reputation of the Mandarin Chinese program and students’ learning performance embodied her values and they would be her bargaining points if she needed to negotiate with Ms. Oliver or the district administrators for better treatment. Dr. Lin actually liked teaching and wanted her students to acquire Chinese language skills. In addition, a lot of her students liked to perform. Motivating the students to learn Chinese language and having them perform on the stage were Dr. Lin’s strategy to demonstrate her teaching competence, to increase her employee value and to secure her position in Shady Prairie Elementary School. To consolidate her teaching career, Dr. Lin needed to be the master in her classroom.
The illustration of multi-layers of hegemonies in different levels of colonization at Shady Prairie Elementary School is shown in Figure 17. The principal and assistant principal played the colonizer’s role and controlled the teachers as colonized at school. The teachers, such as Dr. Lin, showed ambivalence, toward the administrators’ domination. So the colonized connected and formed an alliance to support each other mentally (the red dotted lines). Dr. Lin’ Mandarin Chinese program and maybe in other teachers’ classes as well developed hegemonies and became the colonizers in their own colony (class/program) to subjected their subalterns’ (students) to follow their rules. The Mandarin Chinese program, the traditional Chinese culture after-school program, the related information and ideas about Chinese language, and culture were the artifacts that Dr. Lin created or imported. They might continue to exist after Dr. Lin left. When Dr. Lin was in Shady Prairie Elementary School, the Mandarin Chinese program was Dr. Lin’s project that indicated her competence and value to the school and district administrators, and even the parents. It was also a place for Dr. Lin to achieve her ambition and to show her identities by making relevant decisions on how she wanted her Chinese language.
classes to be. Like a lot of colonies, the colonized missed the colonizer after they left the colonies. Dr. Lin missed the space that Shady Prairie Elementary School provided for her to demonstrate her competence and potential in teaching and event organization. The students missed Dr. Lin’s cultivation of their Chinese language and culture and the opportunities she created for them to demonstrate their Chinese language abilities in the performances. This might provide those exposed to Dr. Lin’s program a life-long memory of their enjoyment and accomplishments.

Britzman (2003) asserted that an identity is a constant social negotiation. Similarly post-colonial theorist, Hall (1996), claimed that identity is constantly evolving and includes the characteristics of continuity, differences, and involvement in a social or cultural group. In section 5.1 there was some discussion of Dr. Lin’s personal and professional identities. Many of them were influenced by her thoughts and behavior in the work context at Shady Prairie Elementary School. What Dr. Lin experienced in the setting was multi-layers of colonization that would also shape her personal and teacher identities. From a post-colonial perspective, identity is the result of hybridity which is the interaction of two or multiple races, cultures, languages, or religions (Singh, 2004). Bhabha (1994) developed the idea of hybridity as a form of the indigenous and colonial cultures and identities resulting in conditions of colonial antagonism, contestation, and inequity. In other words, a new or hybrid identity is constructed from influences from more than one location, very possibly balanced between the colonizer and the colonized cultures.

In Shady Prairie Elementary School, I saw the hybrid identities of Dr. Lin and the students’ language and culture. Dr. Lin learned the language particular to communicating with her colleagues and students. She would not assimilate to American pronunciation in some words. She said, “Students were taught British English at my time. I felt badly when students teased or tried to correct my pronunciation of words, such as sit ‘down.’ I can’t and I don’t want to change because they wanted me to.” From this and other similar examples described in this study, Dr. Lin resisted the cultural capital within the American education system that consisted of a collective cultural knowledge negotiated between power and status (DiMaggio, 1982). Bhabha (1994) proposed in his work, *The Location of Culture*, that not only the colonized world is affected by imperialist power, but the
colonizer’s world is also inevitably altered. Dr. Lin learned the usages and manner of written and oral expressions when she interacted with the American staff via email or social conversation as well as maintained her rights and social status at school.

5.3.4 Social and cultural challenges

My first impression of Dr. Lin and her Chinese language teaching was not too positive. She said she did not know anything about Shady Prairie Elementary School’s community before she took the position. She complained about the students’ behavioral problems quite often. She stereotyped some students when she described them. She said she and many other teachers did not like the ideas of International Baccalaureate School because the IB curriculum organizing and teaching added extra work for them. In the IB curriculum meeting I was invited to attend, I found Dr. Lin listened to the IB coordinator’s expectations on how she wanted her to cooperate with other classroom teachers on the “food” topic theme. Dr. Lin was quiet without asking any questions. She told the IB coordinator that she had no problem developing this theme in her class. Then I discovered Dr. Lin taught the food topic, basically just translated it into Chinese. She asked me to create power point slides that showed the food images, and English and Chinese names. For example, 鸡肉 (jī ròu, chicken), 猪肉 (zhū ròu, pork), 鱼 (yú, fish), 虾 (xiā, shrimp), ... etc. Dr. Lin told me that instead of showing the ancient way of Chinese farming, she would rather teach words related to the theme and relevant to the students’ daily lives. She considered showing how food was grown and processed in China as presenting the backward images of Chinese society. She told me that she could not present the impoverished scenes of China to the students, as this would embarrass China and her people. She could not cause China to lose face.

Dr. Lin expressed her disgust at having to do lunch and bus duty as she thought teachers’ time should be used on intellectual work. Her language use and the way of thinking and speaking made me think that she might have some issues in adapting to social and cultural aspects of the United States. She might have spent more time investigating the district, the school and the students before accepting the job if she truly considered developing Chinese language teaching as her career in the U.S.. She probably should not have accepted the job if she knew ahead of time that she did not like to work...
with the IB curriculum and philosophy. She could have appreciated the opportunities for socializing with the students and her colleagues outside the classroom while on lunch and bus duties.

Dr. Lin had a few colleague-friends at work. She said the aging staff members were isolated at school by the principal and some of the younger teachers. It sounded like discrimination of race and/or age as Dr. Lin interpreted it. However, there might also be a gap between these social groups that prevented them from knowing more about each other. Ms. Rivera, the ESL teacher, shared her observation about Dr. Lin’s teaching in the interview, “My students said her Chinese class was boring. She should probably add more activities to attract children to learn.” She said she would tell Dr. Lin about her thoughts and comments if she approached her for suggestions. Ms. Suiter, the instructional coach, responded to my concerns about Dr. Lin’s social barriers at the school. Ms. Suiter said,

She understood me fine, but she did not ask for help actively. I heard of her classroom management problem and I could have sent someone to coach her if she had requested assistance for teaching or for classroom management ideas. She did everything on her own, teaching and organizing of the programs for the Chinese New Year celebration. She was independent but it was too much work for her. So, I had to check in constantly and see if she needed any help. She would accept my offer after I repeated myself several times that I was available and I wanted to help.

I was told that another teacher in Shady Prairie Elementary School also had an issue with the school administrators. Like Dr. Lin, she sought support from the teacher’s union. At the end, that teacher had no trouble and she was pleased with the results. I wondered if Dr. Lin sacrificed the time to socialize with her colleagues at school when she worked so much of the time by herself. In other words, she missed the chance to learn the culture and the tacit knowledge in her working environment by not asking for staff collaboration on her projects. The teacher’s union might have mediated her issues with the parent and students better if she was aware of the nuances in people’s interactions in school systems in the U.S..

In the traditional Chinese concept, a capable person tends to complete a task alone without using help from others. In American sensibility, however, success usually means a group of hard working people incorporating their resources to complete tasks in a
collaborative team relationship. Throughout my observation, I found Dr. Lin was proud of her personal achievement in doing everything alone. However, her inability to collaborate in the ways teachers in the U.S. do made her continuing use of her traditional Chinese teaching philosophy difficult and she seemed increasingly unhappy as the study progressed. When she needed the music teacher’s help with the sound equipment in the celebration programs, she did not receive it. This and other reasons, caused Dr. Lin to keep her distance from the music teacher. If Dr. Lin had invited collaboration from the music and art teachers to design and organize the programs together, this might have benefited many more people. With the professional knowledge and skills of the music and art teachers, the Chinese New Year celebration programs in Shady Prairie Elementary School might have been better received and appreciated.

Dr. Lin purposefully avoided the administrators and the teachers that she believed did not like her and who seemed to be closely aligned with the principal. She simply greeted them if they passed each other in the corridors. In Dr. Lin’s mind, the principal was the “领导” (Lǐng Dǎo, leader of a group) of the school. She did not want to be seen as a social climber. A Chinese saying goes, “One who is unaccountably solicitous is hiding evil intentions” (无事献殷勤，非奸即盗). Thus Dr. Lin thought if the principal did not like her, she would just keep her distance as the more she communicated to the principal, the more mistakes she might make. Finding so many cultural clashes and misunderstandings in my first impression of Dr. Lin, I doubted if Dr. Lin was an example of “hybridity.”

Before Dr. Lin became the Chinese teacher in Shady Prairie Elementary School, she was already an example of hybridity having adopted both Chinese and American education and cultures within her past living and learning experiences. When she took this Chinese language teaching position, she mimicked her American colleagues’ behaviors and thoughts, such as their language, classroom management skills, pedagogical ideas, and even interpersonal strategies to act more in the American way and meet more people’s expectations. She found her students liked computers, so she allowed students who finished their tasks first to use the computers. She knew that other students might never have a chance to use the computers in her classroom. But in order to better manage her classroom, she persisted in this inequitable practice. Dr. Lin confessed to me,
“I know most teachers here promote equal opportunities and let students take turns to use the computers.” It was clear that Dr. Lin was aware of the American cultural and social norms. I was sure she would take the American way to meet the school’s requirements and expectations if her class was observed and evaluated by the school administrators on this matter. This partial voluntary mimicry of American culture became a new culture, behavior and thought (Bhabha, 1994) for Dr. Lin: a cross-cultural hybridity of Dr. Lin’s original culture and the new American school culture.

When I analyzed my findings from the observations of Dr. Lin’s classroom and from the interviews and informal conversations with her, I had a different perspective of her. According to the IB coordinator, they offered Mandarin Chinese as the required foreign language program, but it did not have to be included in the IB curriculum. There were no requirements or guidelines in Shady Prairie Elementary School or in the district about how Chinese language and culture should be taught or learned. In other words, the IB coordinator could organize the IB curriculum and connect every subject to the themes ideally. However, in reality, Dr. Lin taught her own plan that was fitted to her students’ language levels and interests and her teaching goals. To introduce the topic “food,” Dr. Lin taught the titles of food in Chinese. Animals were the target words in the workbook and the dish names could easily be applied in the daily life. She prepared the children’s language ability for the real life challenges.

When Dr. Lin was upset about how rude the school administrators and the young teachers treated her, she said, “They were not civilized. Americans have only two hundred years of history. American cultural is incomparable with Chinese culture. Some American are very nice, but they are probably influenced by their religions.” She preferred Chinese culture that was deep and cultivated Chinese as introverted and humble individuals. This sounds like stereotyping; however I believe she used cultural differences to defend herself from being called a misfit at this school. The gap between Dr. Lin and the others blocked the communication of knowing more about each other and their cultures.

Students’ behavior problems had been a serious concern for Dr. Lin and some other teachers in Shady Prairie Elementary School. Throughout the study, I found that Dr. Lin complained about it because she cared about it. I think students’ behavior problems
in the community of Shady Prairie Elementary School and in many other neighborhoods in American society are not possible to completely solve. Teachers might have to live with them and look at the problems and students from different perspectives. When Dr. Lin saw only students’ misbehavior at the surface and she did not have a chance to understand the causes behind their behavioral problems, it was normal for her to complain due to her lack of experience and the cultural shock associated with teaching in a setting divergent from her expectations. Dr. Lin also could not stop comparing the students in Shady Prairie with the Chinese heritage students she taught in another U.S. school district and in China. I could relate with her interpretation of students’ misbehavior as the result of inappropriate family education. This is a common way of Chinese people – to blame problematic behaviors on family upbringing.

Dr. Lin kept saying her classroom management in the second year (2012) was much better than the first year. She said, “I did not actually teach much in the first year because I spent most of my time in classroom management. There were always some naughty students in each class.” I do not believe the “troublemakers” disappeared or were prohibited to attend Chinese class in the second year. Dr. Lin told me several times that she found some kids were smarter than she thought and they could learn well too if they were motivated. She said,

I used to stereotype some races. That might be from some misunderstandings from their negative social images. When I talked with my students and spent time with them, I found most of them were as lovely and smart as Chinese children. Most of them have great potential to learn well. Some of them had behavioral problems because no one cared about them at home. Some children were poor, but they studied really hard to honor their parents. After knowing more and more about them, I started to admire them, their ancestry and histories.

In her limited teaching experience with American children, Dr. Lin thought Chinese children were the best because she liked that they were more communicable with her in her native language and they had relatively less behavioral problems in class. It was not wise for her to treat students differently. However, I think she showed her respect and encouragement to most of her students and tried to influence them in positive ways. For example, Dr. Lin gave a compliment to a boy that wrote technically correct Chinese characters. “You did a very good job,” Dr. Lin smiled. She encouraged him to write more in the workbook. Twenty minutes later, Dr. Lin sent the boy to the office because he
received three warnings from talking too loudly and disturbing his classmates. She gave punishment to maintain the order of the classroom, and she gave positive comments when her students learned or performed well.

I think she gradually discovered the strengths of the children in poverty and recognized them as good students in the second year. That made her feel her classroom management was easier at the second year. I believe this situation changed when her mentality changed and that her students were influenced positively by this change. They started to like each other and to treat each other politely and kindly because they found they could befriend, not just antagonize each other. I considered this example as powerful evidence of Dr. Lin’s teacher identity reformation. Hybridity results in a new instance of culture and generates new concepts for the mixed culture (Bhabha, 1994). During the hybridity formation process, negative stereotypes of the ‘Others’ (students as colonized in Dr. Lin’s classroom) could sometimes be discarded and a subaltern’s voice could be heard (Royster, 1996). As I presented in the previous section, Dr. Lin was the colonizer in her classroom and the colonized at school. The classroom management and other social and cultural challenges disturbed Dr. Lin at the beginning and later she learned to deal with issues from both contexts. A new hybridity formed through this process and this new teacher identity influenced her decisions and changed her attitude and thoughts about her students.

In my observations, Dr. Lin liked American society and culture in general. She chose to stay and raise her sons in the United States when she had opportunities to develop a successful life and career in China. Dr. Lin, as a hybrid, was more Americanized compared to many Chinese who lived in China although she was not so American compared to the Americans who were born and grew up in the U.S.. In the process of socialization, Dr. Lin mimicked how Americans talk, think, and act unconsciously and learned the tacit knowledge through the interactions with people in American society. As her identities were formed and evolved, she could no longer be the same person as when she first arrived in the U.S. in 1987.

**5.3.5 Challenges of teaching Chinese as a foreign language**

I calculated how many students were devoted to the performances and wanted to learn Chinese language well for that purpose. About one third of students, mostly girls, in
each class, were passionate towards singing and dancing and loved to perform. Another third of students were not interested in the physical activities. They liked character writing and paper cutting and coloring. They worked quietly in most of the sessions. The last third of students sometimes participated in singing and dancing depending on how much they were familiar with the lyrics and movement. Many of them were actually more interested in socializing with their friends at the times those activities took place.

Temmerman (2000) agreed that singing and dancing might help increase the variety of the classroom activities. However, I doubt if repeating the same materials as much as Dr. Lin did in her class and reviewing some songs and dance movements in every session really helped advance student’s Chinese skills. Holly, the fifth grade student argued about the effectiveness of learning from songs. She stated, “People just focus on singing the songs, not really thinking about the words. This is just like you might say things but you don't know what it really means.”

Throughout the practice and preparation of the Chinese New Year celebration programs, traditional Chinese dance became the prerogative of some Chinese heritage students. They were permitted to skip Chinese classes and practice their dance movements in the hallway. However, a couple of times I found those girls did not practice their dance. They sat in the back of the classroom and checked their emails and surfed online on the computers. As I discussed earlier about the power structure in Dr. Lin’s classroom, some students were not satisfied with Dr. Lin’s favoritism towards Chinese students. The freedom Dr. Lin granted to the Chinese students became an issue for her classroom management.

I think it was not easy for the students to follow Dr. Lin’s simultaneous class activities. Dr. Lin often assigned various activities to let students work on at the same time. Dr. Lin would play the music videos, distribute paper cutting activity sheets, request students to respond to her questions and allow students to write their workbook at the same time. She thought it was good for students to expose them both to visual and audio materials simultaneously. For instance, she asked them to listen to songs and to write Chinese characters at the same time. However, her songs were all in music videos with children’s dance movements. I found most of the students were used to her
multitasking teaching style. Some of them would follow her instruction while others would do whatever they liked doing with no thought to their lesson assignments.

One day, Dr. Lin asked the students in Section 5D to listen to her and circle the numbers on the activity sheet. Some students followed her instruction. Some students could not find their worksheets, so they kept writing in their workbook or cutting and coloring their Chinese characters. The rest of the students ignored Dr. Lin. They either kept talking with their friends or did nothing and put their heads on the table. Dr. Lin confessed to me that she found it was very difficult to keep students focused on her instruction. She said, “I wanted them to listen to me, but they just kept writing in their workbooks.”

Holly commented on Dr. Lin’s multi-tasked teaching style in the interview. She said, “She (Dr. Lin) teaches (words) while we copy them. How can we copy and listen at the same time?” Holly talked about how Dr. Lin taught a new word. In fact, there were not many students paying attention to her lecture. They were more interested in writing the new words in the workbook. When the students were offered choices of learning activities at the same time, they would either follow Dr. Lin by listening to her instruction or choose something they were interested in to work on. When students were used to the freedom of choosing among multiple tasks, focusing on one single instruction, especially if it was boring, became difficult for some of the children. Several times, I observed Dr. Lin’s successful teaching with only one task that was facilitated by multimedia on the computer. For example, Dr. Lin taught word transformation with the visual aid of a PowerPoint slide show. Students liked it and seemed to learn the content quickly.

In addition to the expectations from the parents that I have already discussed, such as wanting more reading and writing focus, less video watching, placement of the students according to their levels, student and parent participants also expressed their expectations toward Dr. Lin and the Mandarin Chinese program in the interviews. Among the five student interviewees, Alyssa and Diego were happy about Chinese learning. They thought the learning quality and quantity were good in Mandarin Chinese class. However, Holly, Jed and Yuki had suggestions for improvement. First, they all thought that Dr. Lin should teach more words. Holly said,
I think she should spend more time teaching words with us. The point of Chinese classes is to help us learn different languages. I think she should spend more time on reading and writing. And the problem is when she does reading and writing, it's not really fun. It's just really boring. I am just like copying the words. I don't even know what the word means sometimes.

As Holly pointed out, they were learning a language. They should be able to speak the language and use it to communicate in daily life situations. These children were young, but they were clear about what they needed. Jed proposed a solution for Dr. Lin. He said, “I would teach kids sentences, maybe go to, like, this website Quizlet. They can use the laptops, then they can go to Quizlet and do Chinese there.” Quizlet (http://quizlet.com/) is an online learning tool that helps in memorization activities. Users can create "sets" of terms customized for their own needs to learn languages, such as Chinese, English, French, German, and Spanish language learning. Jed actually expressed two points in his expectations – learning more words and using computers in a productive way. With his mother’s support, Jed utilized online resources well. He noticed that students who used laptops in Dr. Lin’s class did not do anything related to Chinese language or culture learning.

Both Jed and Yuki considered “computer games” as fun ways to learn Chinese. Yuki stated, “Kids go on the computers in the back and they do stuff that is not related to Chinese at all. So I think it will be better if they do something related to Chinese. That will help them learn better.” I asked Yuki further about what she wanted to learn about Chinese online, she responded, “I don't know any Chinese website, so I didn't know what to do with the computer.” The two children’s reflections supported Dr. Lin’s observation of her students’ strong interest in using computers and online resources. The students wanted to learn in a fun way and they cared about what to learn with the computer in Chinese class. It sounded to me that they valued their learning time and opportunity. They really carried out the code of conduct – to become productive citizens, and to act in a courteous and responsible manner in all school-related activities.

Dr. Lin thought her idea and arrangement of the “好人 and 坏人” (good man and bad man) paper cutting activity successfully engaged students in learning and practicing the target vocabulary. However, Holly thought she should not go off the topic.
Holly: So it's nothing to do with Chinese. She told us a story when we made paper cuttings. And I thought it would be like Chinese words, … then she made the H word (HELL). And then she made a cross out of it. But I thought this isn't really religious class. What does this have to do with Chinese, really? So she goes off topic a lot.

Hsiao: Did you learn any Chinese in that activity?

Holly: No. And I don't get why she really spelled the word, the H word. … you have to be careful in religion because some people might have different religion and it might be offensive to them.

Hsiao: Who do you think could be offended?

Holly: I don't know. I was a little offended because I am Christian. I believe in God, but I have never heard of this story in the bible before.

Holly certainly made sense with her points. Before talking with her, I thought the activity was generally effective. The students practiced the Chinese words all through the activity. Most students participated and were well behaved although I was uneasy about them using the word, “HELL.” The process of cutting and rearranging the paper somehow highlighted the word. It seemed the focus of the activity was shifted from language learning to a more controversial religious matter for the students. The “H word” and the cross were the results of the paper cutting activity after all. Just like cutting E and F to learn 王 and 土, students might think they were supposed to learn the “H word” and about the Christian cross out of the activity.

I did not think of the appropriateness of mentioning religious ideals in class. Neither did Dr. Lin. I asked where that idea was derived from, she said that she found it online. She thought it was very cool and she managed to teach 好人 and 坏人 out of that activity. I consulted with my friend who was American, teaching in the elementary school in the U.S. for more than fifteen years, about how she perceived this teaching activity. She commented that, “She could teach a foreign language through telling a story but teachers should not talk about religion in a context like that in the classroom. It was a common social norm for most of the teachers in the United States.” I was surprised that this “off topic” instruction not only lacked appropriate learning focus but also violated the social norms. I believe an issue like this is a pedagogical as well as a social and cultural challenge for international teachers. Similarly, her selection of the “R rated” video that I discussed was also a pedagogically, socially, and culturally challenging issue for a foreign teacher like Dr. Lin.
5.4 Identities Influenced Dr. Lin’s Decisions at School

Wenger (1998) and many others identified teacher identity formation as a complex process of socialization. Within the complex process, a teacher’s philosophy of teaching and personal values and beliefs could influence what is taught. A teacher’s pedagogical decisions might conflict with the policy and curriculum or the constraints of school ethos (Goodson, 1992; Helms, 1998). Dr. Lin’s past experiences shaped her identities. They also influenced her behavior and decision-making for her teaching in the classroom and interactions with others at school. In this section, I discuss how Dr. Lin’s pedagogy, teaching strategies and her social interactions within her position as the Mandarin Chinese teacher were affected by the identities she acquired as she experienced her own unique socio-cultural Chinese and American life and educational experiences.

5.4.1 Shaped by traditional Chinese philosophy and cultures

Respect for the teacher. “Respecting the teacher” was the most significant Chinese cultural concept Dr. Lin repeatedly delivered to her students during her teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School. This could be due to Dr. Lin’s early educational and family experiences in her country of origin, during a time when major philosophical change was occurring there. The Cultural Revolution resulted in a massive disruption of China’s traditional education system. Where teachers traditionally were held in high esteem, the profession became one of the lowest levels of Chinese society due to the Chinese Communist’s policy of reducing class differences in educational achievements (Deng & Treiman, 1997). Other than the ten years when the Cultural Revolution was at its height, teaching was an honored profession. Chan and Adler (2013) attributed the persistent ideal of honoring teachers in spite of the political climate and the forces behind the Cultural Revolution, to the favorable policies in teacher education, the strongly embedded Chinese cultural tradition, and the historical Chinese schooling and testing systems. Dr. Lin adopted the historical Chinese traditions and supported the values of Confucianism. These concepts and ideals formed the foundation of her pedagogy and life style and permeated her teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School.

Authoritative discipline as classroom management strategy. Dr. Lin demanded student obedience and their quietness in the classroom. The authoritative discipline Dr. Lin adopted in her classroom, still commonly present in current Chinese schools (Pierson,
1996), might have been influenced by her personal learning experiences in China. She often said, “I am sure what they (her students) do and say to me would be unbelievable for many teachers in China. Students in China would never do anything like the students here do. Their parents would not allow such disrespectful behavior.” Teaching students to behave respectfully toward their teachers, where they speak in socially and culturally acceptable ways to teachers, parents, peers, and others, as well as behaving in ways that adhere to traditional Chinese social norms, is a high priority for most teachers in China (Pratt, Kelly, & Wong, 1999). Dr. Lin believed her American school administrators would appreciate her classroom management and would consider it highly effective.

**Gender stereotyping.** Cooper (2010) asserted that it was a challenge for teachers to avoid gender stereotypes and treat male and female students equitably. It was evident that sex role classification was part of Dr. Lin’s perspective. This may have been due to the influence of traditional Chinese values and Dr. Lin’s more conservative living environment in China. One day, Dr. Lin told the 5D Section that she would arrange a Lion and Dragon Dance program. She showed a traditional Chinese green lion head to the students. The students greeted this dance prop with enthusiasm. Several students showed strong interest in participating in the dance. One girl said, “I want to be the lion.” Dr. Lin looked at her and said, “No, only boys can play the lion or the dragon,” thereby designating certain traditional dance roles to a particular sex and conveying gender placement to her students.

Another example of gender stereotyping occurred as she handed out motivational stickers to her students. She often associated gender with colors and objects. One day, a boy asked Dr. Lin if he could have two stickers because he wanted to give one to his younger sister. Dr. Lin responded cheerfully, “Sure. I’ll give you a green one and your sister a pink one.” Another day, a boy said he wanted a butterfly sticker. Dr. Lin smiled and responded to him, “No. Butterflies are for girls. I’ll give you a baseball.” Dr. Lin’s gender stereotyping might be labeled as sexist in the United States, especially in a society promoting gender openness and equality. However, being brought up in the Chinese patriarchal society, Dr. Lin’s rationale is understandable. The values underlying gender stereotyping can be hidden but might remain unchanged.
The practice of drilling and recitation. Current educational practices in the United States discourage drill and recitation (Chastain, 1987). Some of Dr. Lin’s learning materials emphasized drilling and recitation. These teaching strategies probably were derived from Dr. Lin’s learning experience in China using “cramming.” She was good at learning through reciting. This skill made her a good telegraph operator during the Cultural Revolution. Dr. Lin and many students in China believed that reciting a massive amount of words and articles was the most effective way to acquire a new language (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). Many English learners in China get good grades in the English proficiency tests, such as GRE and TOFEL mainly by reciting thousands of English words. However, Huang and Naerssen (1987) argued reciting words does not necessarily advance listening and speaking abilities if the words are not used in contexts, such as retelling a story. Many Chinese students have difficulty communicating in English-speaking countries when they study abroad even though they have studied English (Gebhard, 2013).

Reviewing selected songs, copying the words in the workbook, creating and repeating rap songs, cutting the same words from paper repetitively was consistently the routine in Dr. Lin’s teaching. From my observations of these rote activities, students did not seem to identify the words they had been repeating in these activities when they heard or saw them in other contexts and or in the combination with other words. For example, they learned “花” (huā, meaning flower) in the song “小伞花” (Little Umbrella Flower). When Dr. Lin taught “花” again together with rock, dirt and grass, almost no one recognized it. Dr. Lin continuously mentioned the importance of review in her teaching. At first it seemed like she was trying to defend her slow teaching progress. Later, I realized that she believed the power of revisiting the content would reinforce student memory and build up their Chinese language knowledge. Carrying the parents’ and the school administrators’ expectations and her own commitment to Chinese teaching, Dr. Lin had her students recite the lesson content intensively. She wanted to make sure they learned what was taught and that they could demonstrate their language skills as requested. However, just like Chinese learners who learn English words without sentence structures and contexts, it was difficult for students to know how and when to use the new words in their speech.
**Sacrificing learning autonomy.** Holec (1981) defined autonomy as the ability that learners can be responsible for their learning and manage their own learning pace.

I found Dr. Lin’s teaching focused heavily on implanting knowledge in her students and cultivating students’ abilities through coaching them in a step-by-step manner. Donato (1994) emphasized the importance of scaffolding students when they are not able to learn independently. However, students need to develop their learning autonomy, the ability to acquire the awareness and capabilities of learning on their own eventually. Many of Dr. Lin’s pedagogical decisions helped students only in class. When students left the classroom, they would not be able to learn Mandarin Chinese on their own if they had not anyone who knew the language at home.

Dr. Lin refused to use the published and market-available Chinese textbooks as guides for appropriate curriculum content for student language levels, which was one of her major concerns she voiced. She was also worried that parents would complain if she could not finish the textbook in the desired schedule. My interviews with the students and parents showed only one parent cared to have a marketed textbook for Chinese class. Ms. Wu stated her opinions on Dr. Lin’s design of the learning materials saying, “I think it was good for my daughter to learn with the topics that she is interested in and in a flexible schedule. I know many Chinese textbooks in the market. I don’t like most of them.” Another parent, Mr. Wang agreed saying, “I don’t think Holly needs a Chinese textbook at school. As a professional, I trust Dr. Lin’s selection of the learning content.” When I continued to ask if they wished to learn with some audio materials after class, four parents and three children respond positively. Jed said, “I would like to have a CD. So, my mom and I can learn together at home.” Jed’s mother said, “Yes, I’d very much like to have some audio materials for Jed to listen to at home. So, he can review and I can check his pronunciation. I don’t speak Chinese. It was difficult for me to help him at home.” Dr. Lin assigned Chinese homework. The content of the homework was mostly review of what they had learned in Mandarin Chinese class. None of the homework Dr. Lin had assigned needed the assistance of computer or internet resources. Dr. Lin expressed that she knew that not every student had an access to computer and internet at home. Most of the homework required students to read, write and interact with their family members. For example, to practice the numbers with your family members and
ask their birthdates, and then write them down in the worksheet. Some audio materials might reinforce students’ learning and help in development of their self-learning abilities through the reviewing or previewing of lesson content at home. The home learning approach could also promote the Chinese learning in the community by engaging students and their family members in the learning materials.

I consider teaching Pinyin as another approach where learning autonomy in Chinese learning might be developed. Chinese language learners can comprehend through reading Pinyins of the words in a sentence or in context. As Chinese native speakers, both Ms. Wu and Mr. Wang agreed with the importance of learning Pinyin for their children’s Chinese language learning. Ms. Wu said, “I would like Elsa to learn Pinyin. Pinyin is the essential tool for learning how to read and write Chinese. I can help her at home if Dr. Lin hasn’t the time to teach it at school.” Mr. Wang said, “I helped Holly with her Chinese speech for the Expectation Night by writing all the Pinyins in her script. She memorized the speech through practicing with the Pinyins over and over again. I think she did a good job.” Mr. Wang’s daughter, Holly, also thought learning Pinyin was useful. She said, “I think Pinyin helps correct my pronunciation. When I am not sure how to say a word, I ask my dad to write the Pinyin (of the word) for me. Then I can remember the word better.” With the Pinyin input knowledge and skill, students could use a dictionary or use a computer to learn with the resources online. Equipping students with self-learning skills could amplify their confidence as well as promote their learning autonomy.

5.4.2 Shaped by American education and cultures

TPR in the classroom. Singing and dancing were the most characteristic activities in Dr. Lin’s Chinese class. Dr. Lin also had students learn through role play and did the Chinese radio gymnastic exercise (广播体操) in class. In teaching methodologies, Asher (1969) categorized these activities as Total Physical Response (TPR) that coordinates target language learning and physical movement. These activities use a relatively relaxed format. They are not heavily implemented by most teachers in China due to the intensive learning progress and pressure of testing in most Chinese schools. I argue that Dr. Lin’s enthusiasm for applying singing, dancing and role-play in her curriculum was encouraged by her American educational experience that promoted
interaction and learning motivation in the classroom. She was also lucky to be able to implement TPR in a classroom environment that did not require regular progress in student scores and in the lessons.

Rapping. Dr. Lin brought in ‘rapping’ and blended it with her teaching materials. Dr. Lin acquired the knowledge and social cultural value of rapping from her prolonged exposure to American culture and education. Students enjoyed this format of learning and learned it very quickly. Dr. Lin was worried about the delivery of the content. She thought students might not get the idea from her demonstration if she could not chant the words with a fast enough rhythmic beat. Almost every student understood Dr. Lin’s rap immediately upon being introduced to it. The students started to “rap” intuitively. She was surprised at and pleased with how fast they picked it up. Dr. Lin quickly adopted this rapping element in her teaching materials after she worked with her American students and colleagues. This indicated Dr. Lin’s acculturation to the local community. She showed appreciation and acceptance of her students and colleagues’ culture and created a cultural and intellectual hybridity in her teaching materials to interest and motivate her students to learn Chinese Mandarin.

No language abuse. Dr. Lin said she believed encouragement promoted learning. Throughout my observation in the classroom, I found that Dr. Lin had carefully commented on students’ performance or behavior. She expressed that she would never abuse students with inappropriate language. She shared her son’s learning experience in China with me. Her son was not learning the Chinese language well in the first year after moving back to China in 2003. His Chinese reading and writing abilities were far behind his classmates who were born and grew up there. He was frustrated with his Chinese class and was made to feel inadequate when his Chinese language teacher gave him a hard time by sending negative comments on his learning performance reports most of the time. It was hard for him to accept the negative comments when he was used to the positive and encouraging American teaching style.

Dr. Lin’s insistence on choosing not to give negative comments on the students’ learning performance was influenced by her son’s learning experience. She would not duplicate her son’s negative learning experience for her students. This decision might have also been shaped by her learning and living experience in the United States. This
was definitely not the traditional Chinese teaching style, especially not for the Chinese teachers of Dr. Lin’s age. Many Chinese teachers would feel no remorse at embarrassing their students with negative comments. They believe humiliating their students inspired them to do better.

**Strive for rights.** While Dr. Lin thought she was shabbily treated by the school administrators, she reported everything to Ms. Sanchez, the Director of ESL/Bilingual Education, and articulated that her rights and position needed to be respected and protected. This was not a moderate Chinese way to smooth things over. It might be her personality of wishing to not confront the principal or the assistant principal directly. She did want Ms. Sanchez to stand up for her and to find a solution for the conflicting perspectives the administrators and she seemed to have.

Dr. Lin also wrote Ms. Sanchez about the amount of extra hours that she worked for the Chinese New Year celebration preparation. She then received overtime pay for the extra hours. This assertive attitude, that of striving for personal rights and benefits, was not found within the philosophy of Confucianism. It could have been that Dr. Lin developed this attitude from her American education as well as the twenty years of living in the United States.

5.5 Knowledge transformation

Nonaka and Konno (1999) categorized knowledge as either explicit or tacit. Explicit knowledge can be learned from a book, a video or a web page. It can be shared in the form of data. Tacit knowledge, as opposed to explicit knowledge, is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing it. For example, stating to someone that quiche is one kind of savory, open-faced pastry crust with a filling of savory custard with cheese, meat, seafood, or vegetables is a piece of explicit knowledge that can be written down, transmitted, and understood by a recipient. However, knowledge about how to make quiche is tacit knowledge. Some coaching from an experienced person, watching, and practicing are needed in the process of gaining experience and competency. Other tacit knowledge examples are facial recognition (Lam, 2000), speaking a language (Nonaka and von Krogh, 2009), riding a bicycle, leadership (Eraut, 2000), attitude, sense of humor (Koskinen, 2003), and other such things.
Nonaka and Konno (1999) described knowledge creation as a “spiraling process of interactions between explicit and tacit knowledge” (p. 39). In their ESCI (socialization, externalization, combination, and internationalization) model (see Figure 18), “ba” (means space in Japanese) is essential. During the socialization process, tacit knowledge can be exchanged through social interactions when people spend time together in the same environment. In the Chinese classroom, students captured the tacit knowledge of Chinese language and culture by interacting with Dr. Lin in her classroom where was a common place (ba) that Dr. Lin transferred her personal knowledge directly.

In the externalization stage, tacit knowledge needs to be articulated and translated into comprehensible forms that can be understood by people. Dr. Lin repeatedly told her students about the importance of teacher respect in Chinese culture. She lectured them about the importance of the idea in class. She also integrated the Chinese language, such as “Lǎo Shī” (老师, meaning teacher), “Nǐ Hǎo” (你好, meaning hello) and “Zǎi Jiàn” (再见, meaning goodbye) in their daily interactions to practice the Chinese tradition of teacher respect by telling students to greet her and other teachers first. This piece of tacit knowledge was converted into explicit knowledge. Nonaka and Konno (1999) claimed that new knowledge is generated in this stage. To the American students and staff at Shady Prairie Elementary School, the Chinese expectations that students must greet the
teacher first to show their respect was a new idea and was easily forgotten in their daily lives because it conflicted with traditions in American culture.

Next in the combination stage, explicit knowledge was converted into more complex sets of explicit knowledge. New explicit knowledge needs to be integrated. The explicit knowledge can be diffused through public presentations. The processing of explicit knowledge makes it more usable and more concrete. Dr. Lin arranged a special teacher appreciation program in the Chinese New Year celebration event. She created a big red heart with words of “Xiè Xie Lǎo Shī” (谢谢老师, meaning Thank you, Teacher!). The students sang and danced with the prop. After that, the students gave flowers to all of the teachers who were present. Dr. Lin said the teachers were surprised and happy to accept the flowers. The students were proud of themselves by being able to demonstrate their Chinese abilities and in doing something meaningful to make their teachers happy.

Finally, the newly created explicit knowledge is converted into the organization’s tacit knowledge in the last stage, internalization. In practice, explicit knowledge has to be embodied in action and practice. There should be a process of embodying the explicit knowledge, such as practice or experiment, to produce a hands-on experience. After teaching the related words in class, Dr. Lin also reminded her students to greet her when she saw them outside her Chinese classroom. Dr. Lin shared her experience with me. She said,

At the beginning, I said “Nǐ Hǎo” to them first. Only a few students responded to me by saying “Hī” or “Nǐ Hǎo” back. I think they need to be encouraged to say greetings. I also emphasized the value of this Chinese tradition in class a lot. I told them that I felt hurt if they ignored me. After a while, more and more students responded to me after I said “Nǐ Hǎo” to them. Some even started to greet me first when we met in the hallway or at the entrance of the school. After a year and a half teaching and practicing, I think they had kept this habit to greet me first and practice it in the daily basis.

I do not think that the students in Shady Prairie Elementary School only carried out this idea with Dr. Lin. When I walked around in the school, most of the students greeted me with “Nǐ Hǎo” before I said anything. I also heard a lot of students saying “Zài Jiàn” to me when I help Dr. Lin with the bus duty in the afternoons. I also saw most of them say “Bye-bye” to their American teachers first before they left school. I think the idea of respect for their teachers has been spread and consolidated in Shady Prairie.
Elementary School. Not only Dr. Lin, but many other teachers also appreciate this traditional respect. Ms. Suiter said, “The idea of respecting your teacher is seldom emphasized in American education. I think that it is important to our children. We should keep this valuable tradition at our school.”

In terms of knowledge transformation, I think Dr. Lin successfully transferred the concept of “respect the teacher” from an explicit knowledge to a tacit knowledge and embedded in the mind and behavior of the students and teachers at Shady Prairie Elementary School. After a year and a half of implementation by Dr. Lin, “respect the teacher” was no longer just a piece of information in the book. I think it became an attitude and a behavior that the students at Shady Prairie Elementary School recognized, held, and practiced on a daily basis.

Another knowledge transformation example within Dr. Lin’s Chinese teaching was found in the traditional Chinese dances that were performed by a group of girls in the celebration events. In this traditional Chinese dance group, most of the members were Chinese girls who were born and only lived in the United States. Sometimes Dr. Lin invited one or two American girls to join. The Chinese girls might have some Chinese language foundation acquired from the interactions with their Chinese parents. It was unclear whether anyone of them, except one who took an extracurricular traditional Chinese dance class, had any ideas about traditional Chinese dance. Dr. Lin told me that they were introduced to a new dance from the video she found online. They watched the videos several times. Dr. Lin and the girls analyzed the movements and practiced them section by section with the new music that Dr. Lin retrieved online. It took them a long time to prepare a dance due to the limited practice time and the different personal schedules. I observed their practices several times. They usually practiced in the hallway while other students with whom they had Chinese class and with Dr. Lin in the classroom. I was surprised by their attentiveness and self-discipline.

Even though I grew up in Taiwan and am familiar with the traditional Chinese arts, I would not have guessed that the girls were born and grew up in America when I watched them dance on the stage. I also watched the recorded video afterwards of their performance several times. Their dance captured the essence of traditional Chinese art. Both the Chinese and American dancers delicately conveyed the gracefulness of
traditional Chinese females in their beautiful movements, facial expressions and appearance. In this example of knowledge transformation, Dr. Lin did not construct an apprenticeship relationship with the students. She introduced the Chinese culture as explicit knowledge. After analyzing and practicing the dance in the video, I think the girl students completed the externalization, combination and internalization of the knowledge. I think they expressed their understanding of the knowledge and embodied it in their behavior. I consider this a successful knowledge transformation attributed to Dr. Lin’s Chinese teaching.

5.6 Divides in Dr. Lin’s Technology Application

The idea of CALL (computer-assisted language learning) (Levy, 1977, p. 1) has been widely discussed and implemented in various teaching and learning contexts. It covers fields of instructional technology and second/foreign language instruction (Butler-Pascoe, 2011). In the market, a lot of language learning programs have been created to facilitate language learning. Language teachers who require appropriate technology education and training face increasing demands for technology capability (Hubbard, 2008). In this section, I analyzed the “divide” situation in Dr. Lin’s application of technology resources in her Chinese language classroom. While she utilized some technology resources available at Shady Prairie Elementary School, she ignored many others. This may have been caused by factors identified in the phenomenon, digital divide, and perhaps also by the scarcity of support for the use of available technologies within the school’s environment.

The digital divide, defined as the gap between people who do and do not own access to a computer and internet technology (Pierce, 2009), has been an important issue for researchers in various fields throughout the world. Research continuously shows that many people, no matter their circumstances, suffer from some variety of digital divide due to the differences of gender, age, income, social status, etc. (van Dijk, 2008). Reviews of student participants’ comments and Dr. Lin’s reflections revealed several gaps between students’ expectations of learning the Chinese language with computer technology, the existing situations of Dr. Lin’s teaching with computer technology, and the technology resources and support available at the school.
The first gap was found between Dr. Lin’s technological knowledge and abilities and the students’ expectations of what they were going to be experiencing in her classroom. Dr. Lin knew that her students liked to learn with computers, but her capability of making use of the technology, especially the various language learning programs available, was not as high as it could have been. Likewise, she had problems entering grades in the district’s digitized grade reporting system. It did not appear that she was a technophobe—fearing, disliking, or avoiding new technology (Oxforddictionaries.com, 2014)—or that she was unwilling to change or take advantage of new developments (Lam, 2000). It was clear to me that she used computer technology to enhance student learning as well as to improve her classroom management. Her lack of being tech savvy may have been partially a result of her age. As she explained in the interview, most people at her generation in China did not learn to use computers. She also lacked experience incorporating computer technology into her curriculum because her previous jobs did not require much use of computers.

Chen (2008) discovered that teacher training and continuous professional development focusing on internet-integrated language instruction were essential for her EFL (English as Foreign Language) teacher participants. When Dr. Lin sought help from the technology support staff in Shady Prairie Elementary School, she received neither prompt assistance that met her needs nor sufficient training in technology-assisted teaching. The rich technology resources for the teachers to use in their daily instruction seemed created the expectation that teachers of Shady Prairie Elementary School should be using technology in their teaching. Hubbard (2008) indicated that there is an imbalance between the availability of technology education in teacher training programs and the institutional demand for technology savvy teachers. Hubbard (2008) found in his studies that the quantity and quality of technology applications in teaching is increasing, but the available technology education in teacher education programs or in schools are not promoted according to the need. The second gap appeared to be the discrepancy between the school and the district’s expectations on using technology-assisted teaching and learning and the actual resources and support they offered. It did not seem realistic to expect teachers to learn to use technology on their own. This seemed especially true for
the newly hired staff. Technology training seemed only to mean an offering of a couple of hours of tutoring on accessing the email system and district resources.

The third gap could be found between the technology resources and the availability of technology specialists at the school. Technology specialists do not only solve technology problems. They also have knowledge and skills to investigate the features of technology resources and to create or manipulate computer technology to facilitate the implementation of curriculum. Ms. Rivera, the ESL teacher, purchased Rosetta Stone\(^9\) for her students to practice English. If there was a technology specialist that could show Dr. Lin the features of the program and tell her how to use the program in her teaching, or there were professional development opportunities for teachers to share their technology applications, Dr. Lin and her students in the Mandarin Chinese program might also have benefited from the program. It seemed that the technology resource budget at Shady Prairie Elementary School included enough money to construct a language lab for foreign language learning. It seemed a waste for Shady Prairie Elementary School to have abundant computers and programs but not enough technology specialists with technology proficiency to adequately organize the resources and help teachers to acquire and develop their technological knowledge and skills. This issue was probably the major factor causing low technology resource use in Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese classroom. The research on this issue has overwhelmingly concluded and I concur, that computer technology resources, continuous professional development, and competent consultants within the technology support staff are equally important for foreign language instruction in an institution.

**5.7 Influences of Dr. Lin and the Mandarin Chinese Program**

Dr. Lin’s teaching in the Mandarin Chinese program in Shady Prairie influenced the students, school, and the community in various ways. Some influence was obvious. Some other influences that may have been occurring and may still be present at the school but may not be discovered for some time.

\(^9\) Rosetta Stone (http://www.rosettastone.com/) is a commercial language learning program that enables learners learning thirty different languages including French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Japanese through interactive activities on the computer or online.
5.7.1 **Motivation sustained long term learning**

Dörnyei (1990) and others acknowledged motivation as the primary impetus for second language learning. With strong learning motivation, students are more likely to prolong their learning and overcome any obstacles during the learning process (Dörnyei, 1998). Focusing on singing, dancing and letting students demonstrate learning achievement was one of the most distinctive features in Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese classes. This strategy might decrease her learning time for vocabulary and sentences; however, it promoted some of the students’ learning motivation. The interesting content, such as the formation of Chinese characters, paper-cutting for symmetrical words and images, and daily life vocabulary, could make learning Mandarin Chinese more fun and give students a positive impression of the Chinese language and culture. Diego, a fifth grade boy, stated in his interview, “I love the activities in Chinese class. The video about the Chinese words (word transformation and origins) is so fun and I learned a lot from it. I thought Chinese was difficult, but it is actually not.” My observation of Dr. Lin’s teaching and her students’ feedback proved that the university expert’s point about Chinese being too difficult to learn might not be valid. I think Dr. Lin successfully promoted student motivation and introduced Chinese language and culture in a fun and meaningful way. I thought that the enjoyment could influence students’ interests of learning Chinese in the future.

5.7.2 **Steps toward multiculturalism and globalization**

Learning a foreign language and different cultures was an important step for the children in Shady Prairie Elementary School in their exposure to the world outside their community. Socializing with people of international origin and learning about their cultures was helpful for the children and broadened their horizon developing their interest in various fields where international knowledge and second language skills would be useful. Dr. Lin’s teaching of Mandarin language and Chinese culture bridged a gap between language and culture and exposed students to understanding that there were other languages and cultures besides those we inherit. China is no longer just a disembodied word for Dr. Lin’s students but has depth and meaning. Ms. Bruce, the second grade teacher, taught in a general education class. She described her observations
of the influences of the Mandarin Chinese program on the students, staff, school and the community stating,

I think it’s actually been fairly significant. All the second grade Chinese students were in the gifted class, so they don’t interact with the Asian people in their neighborhood. Compared to learning Spanish, which is more important because of the higher Hispanic population in this country, learning Chinese is like a novelty for them. Mandarin Chinese is a very complex language. If they did not receive it, unless they receive support for Chinese outside of their elementary training, they won’t learn it, particularly because they don’t speak it at home. Their only exposure to Chinese culture is to Chinese food. So, it’s important for Dr. Lin to introduce them to various aspects of Chinese culture. That’s also why I work at this school because it is the only place where they are getting this kind of support and knowledge. Once they are out of school, they don’t move away from the neighborhood. They stayed like the adults.

From Ms. Bruce’s comment, this Mandarin Chinese program was significant to expose the children to other cultures in this low-income neighborhood. Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) found in their study that foreign language study help narrow achievement gaps between children from high social economic status and from the disadvantaged groups. Through the participation in the Chinese New Year celebration events and interaction with students’ Chinese homework at home, the parents in the community also interacted with the Chinese language and culture. In addition to the language and culture exposure, the Mandarin Chinese program also created opportunities for the community to interact with international people, the students at school and parents and other community people at school events. The social and cultural experiences were valuable. As many children and parents expected to acquire Chinese as a power tool for job market, this Chinese learning experience might be a window of opportunity for the students and the community to step toward beneficial features of globalization.

5.7.3 Interdisciplinary curriculum

Chinese acculturation was not only limited in the Chinese classroom in Shady Prairie Elementary School. It had been spread out on campus as my study progressed. Dr. Lin had food as a topic in her teaching to correspond with other subjects in the IB curriculum. Other teachers also introduced Chinese language and culture in their schedules. Ms. Miller, the art teacher, arranged several projects with Chinese themes in her class. She adopted Dr. Lin’s ideas and had students make a Chinese dragon and
lanterns and fold and cut the symmetrical butterfly and the character “春” (chūn, meaning spring). At the Expectation Night, the school was decorated with a Chinese theme. The colorful Chinese lanterns were hung everywhere and the Chinese artifacts, such as Chinese knots, Chinese style clothes, ornaments, toy figures, etc., were found in the hallways as well as in the Mandarin Chinese classroom.

Ms. King, the Kindergarten teacher, used some Chinese language and cultural aspects in her classroom lessons. She placed a sign saying “平安快乐” (píng ān kuài lè, meaning safe and happiness) at her classroom door at exactly the same place that Dr. Lin placed her sign in her Chinese classroom. She explained that she wanted her kindergarteners to be familiar with Chinese language and feel all their learning was connected. Dr. King expressed that her students like learning Chinese very much, they expected the Chinese class to be fun, and they recognized Chinese characters when they saw them in their learning materials. Ms. King said, “Dr. Lin works so hard. I feel I should help her. That’s actually helping my students too. My kids and I practice the phases they learned in Chinese class. They sang the Chinese songs to me too.” Ms. King stated that she and her students sometimes greeted each other by saying “你好” (nǐ hǎo, meaning hello) and “再见” (zài jiàn, meaning goodbye). They also reviewed some Chinese songs when they mentioned something relevant, such as family members, and animals. Ms. King actually learned a Chinese song when she played the piano for the song “小兔子乖乖” (The Little Rabbits) in the Chinese New Year celebration event. She noted the sound of each word and taught her students to sing it. It seemed to me that the children in Ms. King’s class were learning their curriculum with two languages in two cultures.

For Ms. Miller and Ms. King and probably some other teachers in Shady Prairie Elementary School, Mandarin Chinese was not merely a dispensable special course. It had been blended in their curriculum and used in students’ every day learning activities.

5.7.4 Model construction and stereotype shifting

Potentially Dr. Lin’s teaching in the Mandarin Chinese program could be influential for constructing models and shifting stereotypes. She provided a particular model of Chinese performing events, the engagement of the parents and community, and
teaching styles for subsequent Chinese teachers to follow. It could have provided standards and expectations for the staff and students since they had some successful experiences with Dr. Lin. The parents and community of Shady Prairie Elementary School were highly aware of and engaged in the Mandarin Chinese program due to their participation in the celebration events at school and some interactions with their children’s Chinese homework. There was probably not too much involvement for Chinese language learning for the parents and community due to language barriers. However, almost every household was invited and participated in the Chinese New Year celebration events. Ms. Suiter said, “We’ve never had so many parents in a single event. The gym was so packed and full of people.” Dr. Lin told me about her strategy of encouraging participation. She asked students to invite their parents to watch their performances. They were awarded with two stickers if their parents attended the event. Dr. Lin’s teaching with singing, dancing and other interactive activities were entertaining. Compared to the vigorous singing, dancing and other performance activities, students might feel her reading and writing instruction was relatively boring.

Dr. Lin saw this as an example of a successful Mandarin Chinese program. She demonstrated a unique teaching style. I assumed the school administrators, staff, students and parents might expect subsequent Chinese language teachers to provide similar services and teaching strategies. Dr. Lin’s pedagogy and strategies and the short instructional time were more suitable for Chinese culture immersion than for intensive Chinese language learning. Ms. Sanchez, the Director of ESL/Bilingual Education, described that the goals of the Mandarin Chinese program were for students to acquire the foundation of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in Mandarin Chinese. They would promote knowledge about Chinese culture, positive attitudes toward the Chinese language and multicultural attitudes, and knowledge towards other cultures and languages. It would be hard for other teachers to follow her model if they did not have the interest and abilities in performing arts training and organization. I was told by a staff member that after Dr. Lin left, the new Chinese language teacher did not organize a Chinese New Year celebration and that many students were disappointed.

Stereotypes often identify Chinese culture as Kung Fu, martial arts, and Chinese as one of the most difficult languages, and the culture as traditional and conservative, etc.
(Pessoa, 2013). Through learning in the Mandarin Chinese program and participating in the Chinese culture related celebration events, the members in the community of Shady Prairie Elementary School had different understandings about Chinese language and culture and further appreciate the opportunity of learning the language. Some staff and students in Shady Prairie Elementary School held other stereotypes about Asian Americans before they worked with Dr. Lin. For instance, obedience to authority (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), submissive, humble, passive, quiet, good at mathematics, stay with their own race, not willing to mesh with American culture, and poor or non-English speaking people (Kim & Yeh, 2002; Lee, 1996). Many of those misunderstandings could be eliminated quickly if people had further contact with each other through a program such as Dr. Lin’s. Dr. Lin’s hard working and courteous attitude was obvious to students and staff. She also brought homemade Chinese food to share with colleagues and helped and cared for her peers. I believe people who admired her might have more favorable impressions about the Chinese language, culture and people, just as Dr. Lin had favorable views of the American languages, cultures, and people. Dr. Lin’s behavior was the sort of thing that often perpetuates or helps to reduce the stereotyping of Chinese people.

5.7.5 Chinese culture popularization

Dr. Lin’s persistent attitude to carry forward Chinese civilization and its reputation was stirring to me. In several emails she wrote to me, she showed her identity of protecting the Chinese national dignity. When she changed her mind and agreed to be interviewed and audio recorded again she said, “Sorry to postpone your study progress. Hope your advisor does not feel that the Chinese are capricious.” Dr. Lin put herself into the broad image of the Chinese population, and she cared about how “Westerners” looked at Chinese people. After I sent her my design of the flyer for the after-school program, she showed her appreciation in an email, “It’s so beautiful. We will recruit more students after we send this out. We must revitalize our Chinese power and influence.” The context was that she was competing with the music teacher on recruitment of students for her program. However, she was more concerned about how many students could accept and appreciate Chinese culture. I sent her questions that I was interested in knowing about her and her teaching, and she replied, “I will honestly respond to your questions about current Chinese society and politics. However, will it wound our national pride? Should family
quarrels only be settled behind closed doors? I’ll let you decide.” It seemed to me that maintaining the positive perception of Chinese government and culture was her priority and responsibility. Her patriotism set the perception of China as more important than what people thought of her. This strong personal identity and patriotism of Dr. Lin’s was consistent throughout my observations. I believe she expected herself to undertake the mission of popularizing Chinese language and culture in Western countries.

5.8 Conclusion

Dr. Lin had several personal and professional identities, existing simultaneously yet changing. Her identities included the multi-membership identified by her roles in the contexts in which she lived and worked. Dr. Lin’s identities were strongly influenced by traditional Chinese culture and American culture. American cultural imperialism had a great impact on the choices she made when she was young, such as choosing the English language and literature as her major in university and choosing to enter a doctoral program in the United States. Dr. Lin was proud of being a member of Chinese society and culture. She thought of herself and appeared to others as a confident and successful scholar. She approached the academic world in her early thirties and was awarded her doctoral degree in her early forties. Dr. Lin was a real American Dream Achiever after she was granted her American citizenship. She had experiences teaching both English in Chinese universities and Chinese in the American elementary schools. Staff and students called her Dr. Lin at the elementary schools in the United States. Chinese people and her students in China called her 林老师. However, Dr. Lin was a “voiceless minority” and outsider in American society and sometimes perceived that she was racially discriminated against. In contrast, she was a popular professor and a noted English instructor in China. Dr. Lin was also an indulgent parent and a dutiful daughter in her personal life. Dr. Lin’s teacher identity was probably first influenced by the role model instructor with whom she interacted as a young student. This identity over time was reconstructed influenced by her increased teaching experiences in various contexts. This was also true about her personal identities.

I used post-colonial theories as a way to describe two layers of colonization at discovered in Shady Prairie Elementary School—the school administrators were the colonizers and Dr. Lin was the colonized in the supervisor and supervisee relationship.
and Dr. Lin was the colonizer and her students were the colonized in the Mandarin Chinese program. Dr. Lin did not feel that she was properly respected and supported by the school administrators in situations where parents and students might have complained about her. Dr. Lin respected them as her 领导 (supervisor), loving the support they offered on her classroom management and performance organization, but hating their bureaucratic behavior and attitudes. Dr. Lin’s ambivalence resulted from her mimicry of American social and cultural behaviors and the resistance and resentment to the power of administrative hegemony. Dr. Lin was an example of hybridity employing both Chinese and American characteristics.

Dr. Lin’s teacher-centered teaching style and compelling attitude in behavior control in class made her the colonizer and her students the colonized. Dr. Lin’s students who grew up in American culture resisted her dominance, creating situations where some of them acted out in the Mandarin Chinese class. Students liked Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese class for singing and dancing performances and the fun learning activities. Students’ ambivalence resulted in their mimicry of the behavior that fit the expectations of a traditional Chinese culture and in some ways demonstrated some evidence of hybridity that included American culture and partially some traditional Chinese norms.

Working in a context like Shady Prairie Elementary School brought Dr. Lin many challenges, socially, culturally and pedagogically. She had no idea about how to work with students and parents who live in poverty. She did not appreciate the themes of the International Baccalaureate curriculum. She kept her distance from the administrators to avoid conflict and tended to work alone instead of collaborating or socializing with colleagues. She missed chances to gain tacit knowledge in her working environment, how to smoothly navigate conflicts with students and parents, how to choose videos for students that met the social and cultural expectations, and how to appreciate the social meanings behind some school assignments, such as bus and lunch duties.

Dr. Lin experienced some challenges in teaching due to her unique teaching style. She gave some Chinese students more freedom of choice among the learning activities in the classroom, practicing dancing programs in the hallway, or using computers in the back of the classroom. Students noticed this preferential treatment and many of the students did not like this discrimination. Her multi-task teaching style was not easy for
students to follow. Students expected her to teach more words and to use the computers for language instruction. A paper cutting activity that Dr. Lin used to teach 好人 (good man) and 坏人 (bad man) highlighted her lack of knowledge of subtle social, cultural and instructional knowledge that teachers in the United States would learn through their membership in the American culture.

Many of Dr. Lin’s identities influenced her decisions at work—her identities that were shaped by the traditional Chinese philosophy and culture and her American educational and cultural experiences as discussed throughout this chapter. Her Chinese tradition and philosophy shaped her identity emphasizing respect for the teacher and the use of authoritative discipline as a classroom management strategy, so students were required to follow Dr. Lin’s rules in the classroom. Dr. Lin also emphasized drilling and recitation practice because she believed that they were the necessary skills and processes to learn a foreign language well. Developing learner autonomy was not considered important in Dr. Lin’s teaching plan but rather her teaching style was to implant knowledge in the students and coach them step-by-step without offering skills or knowledge for self learning. Dr. Lin’s self-designed materials did not have the correspondent audial materials. Students did not learn skills, such as Pinyin, that would have aided them at developing autonomous learning for use outside the Chinese classroom.

Dr. Lin’s identities were shaped by her experiences with American education and culture and helped her to select culturally appropriate activities that motivated her students to learn. She also blended some of her teaching content with the uniquely American style of music rap. Students loved these activities. Dr. Lin insisted on avoiding use of abusive language with her students. The external knowledge that Dr. Lin promoted became the tacit knowledge that the students and teacher shared together. First, they learned Chinese greeting about students greeting the teacher first. They gradually learned some of the language, kept the outlined manners in mind, and then implemented these things on a daily basis. Second, the performers of the traditional Chinese dance learned through the dance videos and demonstrated the facial expressions and body movements with strong Chinese style.
Dr. Lin used limited technology resources in her classroom due to the digital divide on age. Some other reasons caused her insufficient use of the technology resources were gaps in (1) Dr. Lin’s technology ability and students’ expectations of learning with technology, (2) the school’s expectations for teacher’s use and the teacher’s actual competence with using instructional technology, and (3) the available technology resources and technology specialists at school.

Dr. Lin and her Mandarin Chinese program influenced the students, staff and the community of Shady Prairie Elementary School in several ways. First, her teaching focused on motivation that might sustain long-term learning. Learning Chinese as a foreign language was a chance for children living in poverty and children of color to gain knowledge of a foreign language and culture to broaden their horizons and give them an advantage in preparing them for global challenges. Chinese language and artifacts were seen displayed and were seemingly adopted by students, staff members and community members everywhere on campus and at important events. The interdisciplinary curriculum examples were: a kindergarten teacher and students reviewed Chinese songs or words when they mentioned related topic in their course and the art teacher organized projects on symmetrical paper cutting and Chinese lantern making. Dr. Lin’s teaching in the Mandarin Chinese program might be an example for future Shady Prairie Elementary School Chinese language teachers to follow. Her behavior and attitude could help eliminate or perpetuate the students’ or staff’s stereotypes of Chinese people depending on their impression toward or interactions with Dr. Lin. Dr. Lin was an advocate of popularizing Chinese language and culture in Western countries.
CHAPTER 6
REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Mismatched Chinese Curriculum

Curtain and Pesola (1994) and many others have noted that components of a foreign language program, such as scheduling, curriculum design, instructional materials, staffing, coordination, and evaluation, need to be taken into consideration during planning and designing stages. As my study of the Mandarin Chinese program at Shady Prairie Elementary School progressed I found that few of the essential considerations mentioned in the research literature dealing with initiation of foreign language programs had been completed by any of the key personnel involved. If the essentials of design were considered, they were not well communicated to the others involved in the program’s initial and later manifestations.

There was no written curriculum nor was there a textbook selected and shared with the key participant educators before program initiation. The program features listed in the one-page “Mandarin Goal” (describe in 3.4.3) were rather general. They should probably specifically focus on the characteristics of Mandarin Chinese teaching and learning. Dr. Lin recalled that she was simply told that “the major goal of the program was to build Chinese cultural awareness in the students.” Dr. Lin’s frustration with the Mandarin Chinese teaching position stemmed mainly from her lack of knowledge of the students and parents in the school’s neighborhood and community. She was also unaware of the particular school culture of Shady Prairie Elementary. Dr. Lin’s perception was that the principal never clearly stated her expectations of what the curriculum should include or not include. Dr. Lin believed from those first meetings that the design and implementation of the Chinese language program rested solely upon her shoulders – the entire program was her responsibility and she felt she had done what had been asked of her.

More importantly, while Dr. Lin received suggestions from parents regarding increased reading and writing instruction, the principal was neither supportive of the first major goal of the program, that of developing the children’s cultural awareness, nor so much the development of the students’ Mandarin Chinese language proficiency. Dr. Lin’s
view was that the program expectations and other pertinent information should have been shared with the parents and that the parents’ input into the design of the program should have been solicited before the program began. Moreover, Dr. Lin saw the principal, as her “领导” (Lǐng Dǎo, leader or supervisor) allowing the parents huge sway over school matters. It appeared that the principal did not always view what Dr. Lin taught in her classes as valuable, but was more concerned about how to use the Mandarin Chinese program to increase the school’s student enrollment and to use it to strategically attract a higher economic-social class of Chinese and White families in the district.

With limited learning time but abundant resources at Shady Prairie Elementary School, it was more effective for Dr. Lin to address cultural aspects in terms of Chinese tradition, customs, food, architecture, and the like, rather than emphasizing language learning. Aided by multimedia, students could virtually travel among Chinese cities and immerse themselves in Chinese cultures if Dr. Lin had better use of the technology resources.

I viewed this situation similarly to Dr. Lin, as I was an English language teacher in Taiwan and Mandarin Chinese teacher in the United States. To assume that the district’s Chinese language program design and implementation success could be solely placed on one person’s shoulders was faulty thinking. It seemed like the district administrators who were involved with the initial processes shifted all the responsibilities of success or failure to the Chinese language teacher they hired. It also looked as if there was not enough guidance and input from these same individuals during the initial stages, in influencing curriculum choices. The district may have believed they were hiring an expert in Chinese language curriculum and teaching, but they did not insist that Dr. Lin involve parents, students or other district and community people in creating the program’s curriculum. This put the district administrators and the Chinese language teacher in awkward positions. It was as though Dr. Lin viewed the district as giving her full authority over the program and that the district administrators viewed Dr. Lin as having the needed expertise to give her that authority, with each not understanding the other’s concepts and ideas as they might have, and each feeling confused when their ideas were not used or accepted by the other. This mismatching of ideas and concepts in program design might have been avoided with more collaborative planning before the
initiation of the program and later on-going collaborations organized. It most certainly would have been a way of preventing some of the miscommunication between the parties involved in the program.

6.2 Reflections

I found Dr. Lin’s changing her Chinese language instruction and evolving her identities throughout my observations and interviews. It seemed that she wrestled with the challenges and difficulties in both her living and working environments. Dr. Lin chose to leave a situation where colonization was prevalent and where she felt resistance that she disliked, to move to another school that supported freedom and respect towards teachers. The logic of this choice was similar to her choice of immigration from China to the United States. She loved China as her home and mother country, however she longed for the freedom of thought and speech and the better quality of life in the United States. She was patient with and positive toward the challenges she had in United States’ society. She usually said she needed to endure in order to keep a job to support her family. People compromise their ideals in order to work within various realities. However, as I knew her longer, I found that it was one of her qualities—that she never admitted defeat in her spirit. That quality presented itself all the way through her life from the very beginning where she worked diligently to study English to pass the college entrance exam in order to earn a higher social status. Then, she sought support to acquire a scholarship from the United Nations and to apply for the doctoral program in the United States, and then to establish herself in the United States. It was not entirely luck that allowed her to do these things. She achieved these things through her efforts toward achieving an American dream, just as many others have who toil and prevail to make better lives in strange lands.

6.3 Review of the Goals and Findings of the Study

I proposed three research questions for this study. They indicated my interests and the directions of this thesis project. A review here helps examine if the findings addressed the research questions and if I fulfilled my goals and interests in the study I created.

*Question One: How were Dr. Lin’s personal and professional identities constructed, reformed, and evolve, from being an English language learner and teacher in her home country, to being a member in a minority group in U.S. society and as a Chinese*
Chapter 5.1 discussed Dr. Lin’s identities by analyzing how events and turning points shaped her identities over the course of her life. Chapter 5.2 described her own expectations of her teaching profession. The discussion uncovered her professional identity and showed how it was re-formed by her teaching experiences in Shady Prairie Elementary School. In Chapter 5.3, multi-layers of colonization were found at school and in Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese classroom. At school the administrators had the power to control Dr. Lin and other teachers. They played at the colonizer and colonized roles. In the Mandarin Chinese classroom, Dr. Lin wanted to dominate students’ learning and their behavior. She was the colonizer that controlled her students, the colonized, in their Mandarin Chinese learning. Dr. Lin was a hybrid of traditional Chinese and American cultures. The experience working under the dominance of the school administrators influenced Dr. Lin’s teacher identity. She became more socialized and acculturated toward American society through the process of mimicry and new hybridity formation. The social, cultural and other challenges in teaching that Dr. Lin had at work were presented following the power structure discussion. Two examples were considered covering multiple challenges– her paper cutting to teach “good man” and “bad man” and the playing of an “R rated” movie to her students.

Question Two: How did Dr. Lin’s identity influence her teaching and shape her students’ perceptions of the Chinese language learning?

Chapter 5.4 discussed Dr. Lin’s decisions influencing the development of her identities. Traditional Chinese philosophy and cultures and her American education and cultural experiences were the two major forces that formed and shaped Dr. Lin’s identities. Dr. Lin’s decisions, behaviors, and the expectations she embraced, impacted her Mandarin Chinese teaching and the interactions with the students, staff, and parents involved in the Mandarin Chinese program. These included: respect for the teacher, authoritative discipline as classroom management strategy, gender stereotyping, the practice of drilling and recitation, sacrificing learning autonomy, TPR as the language teaching method, rapping, no language abuse to students, strive for rights. Students’ perceptions about Dr. Lin’s teaching was mainly discussed in the power structure of the
Mandarin Chinese classroom (5.3.3) and the challenges that Dr. Lin had in teaching (5.3.5).

*Question Three,* how did Dr. Lin engage student thinking and facilitate student understanding of Chinese text, expression, and narrative in the activities she used in the classroom? And what computer and internet resources were used in the classroom and at children’s homes after school?

My findings about Dr. Lin’s teaching materials and teaching strategies and styles were described in Chapter 4.3 and 4.4. The characteristics of her teaching, how she used the teaching materials and managed her classroom were discussed. She particularly used students’ existing knowledge (4.4.4) and encouraged their observations (4.4.5) to help students learn and comprehend the materials. In Chapter 5.5, I further presented and analyzed two examples of knowledge transformation by showing how the students in Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese program internalized the knowledge they learned and repeated it. In the first example as they learned to respect and greet teachers first. The second example was that the dancers who performed in the traditional Chinese dance programs demonstrated the facial expressions and body movements that were similar to the native Chinese dancers in the videos that they copied from. The information they learned had been digested and reproduced as Dr. Lin expected. I described the technology equipment and resources that Dr. Lin used in Chapter 4.1.3 and presented how her students could use the computers in Chapter 4.4, concluding that Dr. Lin had limited utilization of computer and internet resources in her classroom. Due to the concern of students’ technology access at home, Dr. Lin did not assign homework that needed the assistance of computer or internet resources. In Chapter 5.6, I synthesized the causes of Dr. Lin’s insufficient application of technology in her classroom. She appeared to be suffering from the digital divide because of her age. There were other divides found relevant to students’ and school administrators’ expectations on technology applications, and between technology resources and the support of the specialists.

At the end of the study I concluded by describing the influences of Dr. Lin and her Mandarin Chinese program on the students, staff, parents at Shady Prairie Elementary School and its community. Dr. Lin’s motivational teaching focus might promote sustained long term learning. The Mandarin Chinese language and cultures brought the
participants toward multiculturalism and then globalization in the sense that the children were becoming more skilled in the necessary languages they might need to communicate in their future job situations. The students engaged in many aspects of Chinese language and culture in the interdisciplinary curriculum at school. Dr. Lin established a model for the teachers who would follow her in teaching at Shady Prairie Elementary School, and the images she presented probably shifted the stereotypes towards Chinese people that were held by the students, staff and parents. Dr. Lin was an advocate for Chinese culture popularization.

6.4 Improvement of this Study

I had rich data from many students, parents and teachers that were involved in Dr. Lin’s Mandarin Chinese program. However, I had only one district administrator, Ms. Sanchez, the Director of the ESL/Bilingual Education program who I was able to include in the interviews. If I included the school principal, the assistant principal and or the magnet school coordinator, the data might have shown possibly divergent viewpoints and given the study a deeper sense of understanding of the Mandarin Chinese program, how the program related decisions were made and how Dr. Lin’s teaching and her management of the Mandarin Chinese program was perceived by those in authority. Their experiences with Dr. Lin and the Mandarin Chinese program would have provided me with insight into the challenges that Dr. Lin and the district experienced during the program initiation and its ongoing progress. I tried several times to make contact with school and district administrators and invited them to participate in my study. Ms. Sanchez was the only administrator that responded and consequently participated.

I had planned to investigate Dr. Lin’s social and cultural challenges in both her professional and personal life. In the end, I found I had gathered information mostly concerning her work contexts. The information I did gather on her personal life, was mostly that shared by Dr. Lin in the interviews or in informal conversations and not from formal observations of her home life. I mentioned in Chapter 4.11.3 that Dr. Lin withdrew temporarily from my study because she was experiencing distress and worries about the risks of participating in my study. In order to decrease her distress, I took out the plans to meet with her husband, two sons and other friends, which cost the study in richer data in this line of inquiry. Without these sources of data, I missed the opportunity
to triangulate the statements she made about the events and the attitudes she expressed during the study. Because of this, I did not address much on the challenges she met in her personal life. However, her past experiences and stories that I could not investigate from other sources were examined by analyzing her responses to different questions I gave her in different contexts and at various times throughout the duration of the study. The way she described her life experiences and stories was the way that she wanted people to see her, representing her identities. I accept and appreciate this.

6.5 Implications

When I searched through the library database and online resources using the key words, “Chinese language teaching and learning,” I found several journals on Chinese language teaching/learning: Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association (JCLTA), International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning (IJTTL) supported by the Society of International Chinese in Education Technology (国际华人教育技术学会), Journal of Technology and Chinese Language Teaching (TCLT—科技与中文教学), and Taiwan Journal of Chinese as a Second Language (TJCSL—台灣華語文教學研究). The majority of the studies I found on Chinese language teaching and learning focused on promoting Chinese language learning, Chinese linguistic features, and technology assisted Chinese language teaching. Like TCLT and TJCSL, most of them are presented in Chinese and published in Chinese speaking countries or areas such as Singapore, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Other articles written in English about Chinese language teaching and learning are mostly published in second/foreign language and teaching focused journals. Few of the articles touched on issues of social and cultural differences. Most of them addressed teaching strategies, methods, and again, how to use technology to assist in Chinese language teaching. Topics about Chinese language teachers’ social, cultural, and linguistic challenges in an alien environment and the issue of their professional identity were not present in these journals. They agreed that it is important to promote Chinese language learning in the United States and around the world by enhancing Chinese language teachers’ teaching skills and knowledge. In my opinion, understanding the contexts of these Chinese language teachers is a significant issue and should be given higher priority in what is needed in professional and research
discussions. Hope that the findings and discussions in this study provide readers some insight into Dr. Lin’s situation as an international teacher teaching Mandarin Chinese in the United States is part of the reason I feel this study is significant to foreign language, language teaching, and the teachers who may be experiencing the internationalization of their schools. Foreign language teachers who work in alien countries or environments, or people who work in a strange lands far from their home countries could be able to relate to Dr. Lin’s experiences at Shady Prairie Elementary School and could help in their understandings of what might be happening in their own situation.

Teacher identity is an important topic that I have discussed in my study and want to explore further in future studies. This study reviewed how teacher identities influenced instruction. Many studies also research how professional development influence teacher identity for teachers in different fields. These looked into how to improve professional development and how to support teachers. After working with Dr. Lin, I realized it is probably more important to understand how identities influence a foreign language teacher ‘s perception about professional development, and then to discuss what needs to be included in the professional development specifically for foreign language teachers.

It happened often that the school district prepared professional development opportunities, mostly focusing on instruction and classroom management, for teachers in all subject areas. In Dr. Lin’s case, both Ms. Suiter and herself agreed that there were limited resources for professional development in the district that met Dr. Lin’s needs. Dr. Lin expressed that she was not interested in joining those workshops because most of them were not relevant to her teaching. I did not focus too much on this aspect in my study, but it is an important topic worth further exploration. I am interested in knowing how she perceived the professional development opportunities offered by the district. Does an international teacher like Dr. Lin have the same understanding about professional development as most local American teachers do? How does an international teacher decide to go for professional development or not? What does an international teacher think s/he needs for professional development and what makes her/him think so? How does teacher identity influence an international teacher to cooperate with the professional development?
To understand the role that professional development plays is important too. Findings in this study showed that Dr. Lin needed pedagogical, social and cultural support to adjust to her working environment. So, how and what can an international teacher like Dr. Lin learn through available professional development? By whom and how should the appropriateness and effectiveness of the training content for an international foreign language teacher be evaluated? Many of Dr. Lin’s frustrations were rooted in her unfamiliarity of the culture of the students, school and district. Might she have experienced more or less social and cultural clash if she contacted the people outside the circle or worked within the context she was familiar with? Investigating how identity influences international foreign language teachers’ perspectives about professional development is a direction that would interest me and that would inform the field of foreign language learning.
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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Institutional Review Board
530 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820

July 11, 2012

Margery Osborne
Curriculum and Instruction
386 Education Bldg.
1310 S Sixth St
MC 708

RE: Chinese language program in an elementary school: Teacher identity and Chinese Language Learning
IRB Protocol Number: 12822

Dear Margery:

Thank you for submitting the completed IRB application form for your project entitled Chinese language program in an elementary school: Teacher identity and Chinese Language Learning. Your project was assigned Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Number 12822 and reviewed. It has been determined that the research activities described in this application meet the criteria for exemption at 45CFR46.101(b). Category 1 applies because the study is attempting to determine the social, cultural and academic challenges that teachers of the Chinese language in Illinois elementary schools. The study uses interview procedures, and observations of classroom instruction, parent teacher conferences and teacher meetings. The study is occurring in commonly accepted educational settings and is attempting to determine the effects/effectiveness of instructional procedures and curricula.

This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted. Exempt protocols are approved for a maximum of three years. Please note that additional modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and exemption determination or approval before the modifications are initiated.

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subjects research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our website at http://www.irb.illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ronald A. Banks, Human Subjects Research Coordinator, Institutional Review Board

c: Hui-Lien Hsiao
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE MANDARIN CHINESE TEACHER

1. Please tell me your family and education background.
2. How did you build up your English ability?
3. When did you come to the United States and how did you start your Chinese teaching career?
4. What are the social and cultural challenges you faced in the American society?
5. What are the challenges you have experienced since you started to teach Chinese in the American schools?
6. Do you have any problem getting along with your colleagues at school or in the district? With the students and parents?
7. How do you balance your job and family?
8. What kind of teacher do you expect yourself to be?
9. How do you see yourself in the American society?
10. How do you value your Chinese teaching at your previous and current school?
11. How are the feedback from the students and parents about your teaching?
12. What are the differences between the Chinese and American teaching and learning styles? How do you fit yourself in the American teaching/working ideology?
13. How are American students different from the Chinese students that you have taught? How about their parents?
14. How are the American school administrative systems different from the Chinese administrative systems that you have been working with?
15. What are the activities or components in your Chinese teaching you consider as the most significant and/or essential parts that your American students definitely have to learn/know?
APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF/OTHER TEACHER

1. How long have you been working at this school?
2. What do you do at this school? Please describe your job content?
3. When did this school start the Chinese program? And how was it started?
4. Who initiated the proposal of this Chinese program? Please tell me your experience with this process.
5. Who is in charge of the Chinese teacher recruitment? What are the criterion of hiring a Chinese language teacher at this school?
6. How well do you know the Chinese teacher (Ms./Mr. XXX)? Have you collaborate with him/her since he/she came to this school? If yes, please tell me about your experience working with him/her.
7. Do you contribute to the students’ Chinese learning in some ways within your responsibility?
8. How do the school, staff and teachers at this school support the Chinese program?
9. Are there any professional development opportunities or trainings for the second language teachers at this district or at this school?
10. What is the influence of the Chinese program to the students, staff, school or even community? Please describe what you observed.
11. What has been changed since the Chinese teacher started his/her teaching in this school, in terms of his/her influence to the students, staff, school or even community? Please describe what you observed.
12. Did you find that the students are interested in the Chinese classes?
13. What are the parents and community feedback about the Chinese program at your school?
14. How easy or difficult for you to cooperate with the schedules of the activities or classes related to the Chinese program?
15. Are there any extended activities or classes related to the Chinese program?
APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANT

1. Please introduce yourself, your name, grade, and interested school subjects.
2. Please give me some brief introduction to your family background.
3. How many hours do you have for the Chinese classes at this elementary per week?
4. Do you attend any other Chinese classes after school? If yes, where and what is Chinese program like there?
5. Are you happy learning in the Chinese classes? Can you give me a couple of examples of how you like or dislike your Chinese classes?
6. Do you think your Chinese is improving? If yes, do you have some examples? If not, what makes you think so?
7. What have your learned in the Chinese classes and what is the most interesting part that you like about the Chinese classes?
8. Have your Chinese teachers ever contacted your parents for any reason? If yes, what is that for?
9. If you can choose, will you still go to this elementary school? Will you choose to attend the Chinese program? Why or why not?
10. Do you have enough support learning Chinese at school or at home?
11. Do you do Chinese homework at home? If yes, do you have anyone that can help you when you have difficulties? If not, what would you do if they experience some difficulties learning Chinese at home?
12. Do you ever practice Chinese at home? If yes, what do they do? If not, why not?
13. Do you wish to continue learning Chinese after you complete the Chinese learning here at this school?
14. How are you going to develop your Chinese language ability at this current Chinese program and others if you plan to continue?
15. What’s your expectation on your Chinese learning? How are you going to use your Chinese language ability when you grow up?
APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENT PARTICIPANT

1. Please introduce yourself, and please give me some brief introduction to your family members.
2. How many children do you have that go to this elementary school?
3. How often do you visit your children at school?
4. Why do you choose this school? And why do you choose the Chinese program for your children?
5. Do your children attend other Chinese programs outside this school? If yes, where and what is that program like?
6. Are your children happy learning in the Chinese classes? Can you give me a couple of examples of your observation.
7. Did you see the progress in their Chinese language abilities or the enhancement of their Chinese sense of culture? If yes, do you have some examples? If not, what makes you think so?
8. Did you find anything different related to the Chinese learning on your children after they joined the Chinese class?
9. Have you ever contacted your children’s Chinese teachers at school? If yes, what did you usually talk with him/her? If not, why not?
10. If you can choose again, will you still send your children to this elementary school? Will you still let them attend the Chinese program? Why or why not?
11. Do you think your children have enough support learning Chinese at school and at home?
12. Do your children do Chinese homework at home? If yes, do you help them? And what would you do if they experience some difficulties learning Chinese at home?
13. Do your children ever practice Chinese at home? If yes, what do they do? If not, do you wish them do some practice at home?
14. Do you wish your children keep learning Chinese? If yes, do you have any plan other than having them attend the Chinese program at this elementary school? What other plans do you have to develop their Chinese language abilities?
15. What’s your expectation on your Children’s Chinese learning? How do you want them to use their Chinese language ability in the future?
APPENDIX F. OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

1. The observation will be conducted in fall semester (August-December), 2012. If more data is a need, I will continue going in spring semester (January-May), 2013.
2. I will observe a class two times a week, two to three classes in total. Each observation will be 45 to 90 minutes depends on the class session.
3. I will sit at the corner of the classrooms and try not to disturb the classes as possible as I can. From the corner, I would be able to see the teachers’ and some of the students’ faces. I would also be able to see the whiteboard and how the class activities are arranged and conducted.
4. The decoration in the classrooms will also be one of the important foci of my observation. So, I will look around and take notes about what I see in the classrooms and even in the other parts of the school.
5. In addition to taking notes during my observation, I will also ask teachers to carry my audio recorder with them if they agree. The recordings will help me with the transcription of the teacher and student responses. If some students do not agree to participate in the study, I will not transcribe their words.