Taking Student-Centred Learning Outside its Comfort Zone: Student and Staff Experiences of International Higher Education in Vietnam

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 2019
Declaration

I certify that, except where due acknowledgement has been made, I am the sole author of this thesis; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program and any editorial work carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Supanida Chantarin
4 July 2019
Acknowledgement

I am very grateful to all the people who have contributed to the success of this thesis. First of all to my primary supervisor, Professor Christopher Ziguras, for intellectual advice and professional supervision. His expectation for high quality and clarity in this thesis has driven me to improve my skills. I have learned many invaluable lessons from his intellectual advice which not only contributed to the success of this dissertation but also to my professional development in academia.

I am also indebted to Dr Lukas Parker for his supervision and expert advice that has helped me improve the skills needed to complete this dissertation. His guidance throughout my journey contributed significantly to the overall quality of this research.

I would like to sincerely thank the participating universities and all participants who took part in this research. Without their willingness to participate, the goal of this research could not have been successfully achieved.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my own teachers back in Thailand for their dedication and genuine caring. They are my role models that I look up to and they will always be part of my success.

Finally, I would like to express my grateful appreciation to my family, husband and friends who are always there for me. I particularly wish to thank Thomas and Chusri Clasener who become my family since we met in Australia. I feel really fortunate that I met both of them. This research could not have been achieved without Thomas's kindness in proofreading my drafts for many years. His patience, kindness and empathic understanding kept me moving forward during this long and difficult journey. I would like to thank my husband for always believing in me and being a real supporter in everything I do. Without his encouragement and sacrifice I would have not become who I am today. Lastly, I would like to thank my mother who was my first teacher inspiring me and who instilled in me a love of learning. I still remember the times when she checked whether I had done my homework correctly and talked about what I had done at school. She let me pursue my interest in learning and gave me full support without questioning my capabilities. I would like to dedicate this study to her sacrifices in raising me up, teaching me moral lessons in life and giving me strength.
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Abstract

The flow of higher education across borders and the adoption of international models have made a significant impact on cross-cultural teaching and learning, in particular, the spread and adoption of student-centred learning (SCL) across the globe. SCL is widely considered a key element of 21st century pedagogy. The idea of focusing on student learning in education, however, has been around in the West since 1689 (Korab-Karpowicz, 2015). It was explicitly adopted as a guiding philosophy by institutions of industrialised countries in the West to meet with employability needs of post-industrialism since the 1980s. The popularity of SCL expanded further as the globalisation of education and the knowledge economy become a centre of interest and led to the idea of investing in education in order to enhance competitiveness on the global economic stage. Subsequently, in many parts of the world traditional teaching models are now characterised as teacher-centred learning and considered by educational policy makers as less relevant for the changing world. Initially, the paradigm shift from teacher-centred to student-centred occurred in the West. In recent decades, developing countries and former socialist states in Asia have modeled education reforms on Western countries, including the adoption of SCL. In the case of Vietnam, higher education reform has encouraged 'international' programs that explicitly apply foreign approaches and SCL has been an explicit feature of the higher education strategy since 2005 (Harman & Bich, 2010; Hong, 2011).

Previous research on the flow of higher education across borders and the adoption of SCL worldwide has found SCL has been adopted more easily in Western countries than in Asian (Biggs, 1997; Slethaug, 2007). SCL was found to be better suited to liberal democratic and relatively individualistic cultures than to countries with Confucian heritage culture (CHC) of East Asia. Since there are issues of cultural disparity involved, implementation of SCL to CHC students is a challenging task. Studies have shown that both teachers and students deal with pressure and confusion in adapting to each other. Furthermore, there has been concern over the issue of foreign teachers not truly understanding the cultural context of the students they are teaching which could amount to neo-colonialism in education.
In the Vietnamese context, there have been some concerns over the impact of a market economy and globalisation of education on Vietnam's distinctive values and culture. Some concerns, with regard to the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing, argue that imitating a Western pedagogical style will not serve the country well since inappropriate ways of implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning. These tensions are particularly acute in 'international programs' in Vietnam which are taught in English using overtly 'international' teaching methods.

Previous studies have investigated the implementation of SCL approaches in Vietnamese higher education after the economic renovation. While many studies have shown obstacles slowing down the adoption of SCL in Vietnamese universities, there has been little research about what hampers or supports the implementation of SCL at international universities that are partnered with, or owned by, a foreign provider. Furthermore, most research on transnational educational has focused on quality assurance, regulatory issues and institutional management.

Given this gap in the research literature, this thesis employed a case study approach to undertake in-depth and detailed explorations of the implementation of SCL in the context of international higher education in Vietnam where these two educational cultures, SCL and CHC, interact. This study was conducted at two international universities in Vietnam, one a foreign university and the other a local private university that offers a range of foreign programs in collaboration with overseas universities.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how teachers and students of the international universities in Vietnam experience the implementation of SCL. In investigating the situation, I am not interested in abstract questions about what way of learning is best but rather in understanding the experiences of participants in educational environments where SCL is explicitly being applied in Vietnam. My research questions seek to understand various connected elements within a particular institutional case in order to examine the way the different components of the institution shape experience:

Question 1 asks how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the universities involved in the study:
Question 2 asks how academics of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms; and.

Question 3 asks how students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms.

Findings of this thesis show what SCL looks like in practice at the participating universities. Findings also indicate issues of student resistance occurring at both participating universities. Importantly, findings include four strategies that have been found to motivate students to adapt to SCL. These are (1) contextualisation, (2) harnessing collectivism for active learning, (3) co-opetition and (4) affective dimension of SCL.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that, educators need to be supported to be more reflective around how the theory of SCL can be applied in such contexts in ways that will help students to be more active in learning without devaluing their culture or existing knowledge. To achieve such a goal requires international education providers, such as international universities and offshore campuses, to promote 'mutual engagement' of both students and teachers with the challenges posed by different cultures of learning. This study proposes the adoption of four strategies to enhance the implementation of SCL in cross-cultural learning environments: (1) enhancing mutual engagement, (2) finding learning opportunities in cultural disparities, (3) developing the affective aspect of SCL, and (4) engaging students in constructive learning through contextualisation of content.
Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background:

Student-Centred Learning (SCL) has become the dominant approach to teaching and learning employed worldwide (Blackie, Case & Jawitz, 2010; European Students' Union, 2015). SCL can be simply described as the focus on deep learning through the active learning approach in which students take responsibility and accountability for their own learning (Lea, Stephenson & Troy, 2003; Gehrke & Todorovski, 2014). The idea of focusing on student learning in education is not new, it can be traced back to the concept of the democratic classroom of John Dewey in 1916 (Arends, 2009, 2015). The early formation of the idea SCL was significantly shaped by major movements in economics, society and the body of knowledge on teaching and learning theories which took place in the West. After the collapse of communism in the 1990s, many developing countries in Asia instead started to focus on emulating Western liberal approaches to education, as well as other areas of social and economic policy. Education reform in Asia has in recent decades followed much the same path as the West, including the adoption of SCL. Vietnam also has embraced SCL as part of their higher education reform strategy since 2005 (Harman & Bich, 2010; Hong, 2011).

My personal experience as a foreign teacher teaching in an offshore branch campus of a Western university in Vietnam has prompted this current research. Whilst teaching at the university, I noticed Vietnamese students had difficulties and were reluctant to adapt to the SCL approaches. In conversations with other lecturers, I found they also shared similar experiences to mine. I became more interested in investigating the issues that cause difficulties in the implementation of SCL to Asian students in general and Vietnamese students in particular. This personal interest became the starting point of my PhD journey.

Reviewing literature, I found that many studies indicate that SCL has been adopted more easily in Western countries rather than Asian countries. It would appear that SCL is a better fit with similar traditions of liberal democracy, and relatively individualistic cultures than it is with Asian countries with Confucian heritage culture. Since the 1990s, introducing SCL to Asian students with CHC has been an ongoing challenge to educators. With the growing numbers of Asian students enrolled in Anglophone Western
universities, both at home and in host countries, Asian students' learning styles became over this period the centre of interest among many Western educators.

Because of this interest, for over 20 years, there has been an extensive body of literature on how CHC students learn in Western style classrooms. Exploring the literature, I am interested in how the cultural differences in learning and teaching are understood in the literature, and the types of strategies that educators typically use to respond to cultural differences in learning styles.

One of various approaches used in managing the cultural differences includes Biggs' three levels of teaching across culture. Biggs (1999) adapted Nathan's “ladder of abstraction” describing a hierarchy that parallels three common meta-theories of teaching based on what the primary focus of the teaching is. Biggs (1999) distinguishes teaching across culture into three levels: Level 1: Pseudo-Etic Position, Level 2: Emic Position, Level 3: Etic Position. According to Biggs (1999) Level 1 is a deficit model of education because it focuses on a blame-the-student theory of teaching where non Western students are judged for their differences. Level 2 is better than level 1 because it focuses on what the teacher does by adapting one's teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning culture of international students. Level 3 is the best of all three levels because it focuses on what students do to achieve the desired learning outcomes. While Biggs' level 3 represents a good teaching practice, the other approaches that focus on mutual engagement between teachers and students from different cultures can be more beneficial in helping to bridge the gap between those from different cultures.

Looking specifically at Vietnamese higher education, it has always been profoundly affected by foreign influences, including those from Asia and Europe. The earliest and strongest influence was through Chinese colonialism in the first century where Confucianism was disseminated to Vietnam. The next influence on higher education was through French colonialism followed more recently by Soviet communism (Ziguras, Pham & Chantharin, 2017). The latest influence has been through contemporary globalism in which SCL, a western-based pedagogy, has been imported to Vietnam. Nowadays, Confucianism remains one of the most important influences on the way Vietnamese people live and learn (Hai, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Thanh, 2010;
Though SCL has been a crucial part of Vietnam's higher education reform strategies since 2005, there have been many obstacles slowing down the adoption of SCL. Some writers have expressed disappointment about the level of change (Hong, 2011; Pham, 2016; Nguyen & Williams, 2016; Thanh, 2010). In literature, I found four factors that hinder the implementation of SCL. These factors are due to: (1) exam centred education, (2) textbook driven curriculum, (3) hierarchical relationship, (4) infrastructure conditions and resource limitations. Amongst all the challenges, cultural factors are the most difficult to manage. Meanwhile, some Vietnamese teachers have raised concerns regarding the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing, arguing that imitating the western-pedagogical style will not serve the country well. Inappropriate ways of implementing SCL, and the fear, it could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning (Mai & Hall, 2016; Pham, 2016). Many studies recommend moving away from the practice of imposing SCL on teachers and students and advocate instead the provision of relevant and effective training and support to them to enable the effective adaption to the new learning culture (Hong, 2011; Luong, 2015; Pham, 2013). Teacher support, intercultural construction, culturally appropriate pedagogy and the hybrid approach are found amongst important strategies recommended by educators (Ho, 2011; Mai, Terlouw & Albert, 2012; Pham, 2016).

Little is known, however, about what hampers or supports the implementation of SCL at international universities that are partnered with, or owned by, a foreign provider. According to Knight (2014, p.11) “international university” means:

An internationalised university with a diversity of international partnerships, international students and staff and multiple collaborative activities; universities with satellite offices in the form of branch campuses, research centres and management or project offices; and most recently, standalone institutions co-founded or co-developed by two or more partner institutions from different countries.

Reviewing literature in the area of internationalisation of education, most research mainly focuses on quality assurance, regulation issues and cross-border mobility (Nhan
& Nguyen, 2018; Ziguras, 2001). There have recently been a few studies that have paid attention to particular issues regarding the implementation of SCL and investigation of the intercultural or hybrid approaches that I will draw upon and extend. All in all, the gap in literature indicates a need to investigate the implementation of SCL in international universities to find new insights and evidence to confirm and inform effective and appropriate practices in this cultural context. To address this problem, the purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how teachers and students of the international universities in Vietnam experience the implementation of SCL.

1.2 Methodological framework and research questions

The constructivist theoretical perspective was chosen as a methodological framework for this study. My inquiry made knowledge claims based on the constructivist theoretical perspective which aims at “the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meaning socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern” (Creswell, 2003, p. 18). According to Crotty (1998) the constructivist theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance which underpins qualitative approaches. This study is in line with the constructive theoretical perspective in that it aims to describe this specific phenomenon in a real social setting where different cultures meet and seeks to understand how people experience and react to the phenomenon. It investigates the cultural scene normally with an open mind for whatever findings emerge.

In investigating the implementation of SCL in international universities in Vietnam, I am not interested in philosophical questions about what is best, but instead, in understanding the experiences of participants. My research questions seek to understand various connected elements within a particular institutional case in order to examine the way the different components of the institution shape experience.

Question 1 asks how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the universities involved in the study. This question intends to investigate the implementation of SCL at each participating university.

Question 2 asks how academics of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms. This question intends to find key insights from academics' experience in implementing SCL to
Vietnamese students, particularly how they deal with the challenges of the cultural disparities.

Question 3 asks how students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms. This question intends to find key insights from students' experiences of learning in the SCL classroom and analyse what enhances their engagement.

Learning from the experience of participants regarding the implementation of SCL through the above questions, this study will help contribute additional and insightful evidence into the body of knowledge that increase our understanding of the issues in cross-cultural learning environments and the way to effectively handle them.

1.3 Approach of the study

Case study methodology was employed since it suits the purpose and research questions. Put simply, case study is described as “in-depth and detailed explorations of single examples (an event, process, organization, group, or individual) that are an instance drawn from a class of similar phenomena (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 91). In this study, a case study approach was employed to gain in-depth and detailed explorations of the implementation of SCL in the context of international higher education in Vietnam where these two educational cultures, SCL and CHC interact. Case study methodology, in general, seeks “to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.61). Likewise, this study seeks to understand the phenomenon of the implementation of SCL in considerable depth in a small number of sites, and to understand the experience from various viewpoints. Case study methodology allows me to examine the way the different components of the educational institution shape experience of the implementation of SCL.

A major strength of case study data collection is “the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Yin, 2014, p.119). Typically, case study relies on multiple sources of evidence, including documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). This strength of the case study data collection methods influenced my decision to select case study for my research because the use of multiple data gathering techniques at each research site.
enhances the trustworthiness of my study and facilitates closer analysis of the research question (Chalapati, 2007). Another strength of case study is their use of multiple sources to obtain multiple perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 92). This aspect of the case study matches with the aim of this study in obtaining multiple perspectives from students, teachers, learning advisors and teaching advisors.

Case study was chosen because it is one of the qualitative research methodologies that is used extensively to investigate educational change (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006; Zainal, 2007). In addition, Crossley and Watson (2003, p.48) point out “a case study is one of helpful qualitative research strategies to improve education policy and practice in the field of international education in developing countries”. My literature review found that none of the previous studies on this topic in Vietnam have employed a case study methodology.

Both the main strength and the main limitation of case studies is that it focuses on the particularities of the specific case. As such, “conclusions from a case cannot be applied directly to another case because no two cases are identical” (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p.92). However, lessons learned in one case can tentatively be applied to another population or set of circumstances believed or assumed to be sufficiently similar to the study sample that findings apply there as well (Kennedy, 1979, p.665 cited Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p.92). With the above points in mind, a well-designed case study is needed in order to increase the generalisation of findings. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) examining multiple cases has the advantage of increasing the generalisability of case study research. Yin (2014) points out that the evidence from multiple cases, as in this thesis, is often considered more compelling and more robust than from a single case. However, a weakness of the multiple-case study is that it requires extensive resources and time, which is often beyond the means of a single student or independent researcher (Yin, 2014).

After shortlisting and approaching international universities in Vietnam, two agreed to participate in the research. One, which will be referred to as 'Foreign University', is one of several tertiary education providers in Vietnam that was established to offer international programs. The other, which will be referred to as 'Local University', is a Vietnamese private university which delivers some programs through international
partnerships. The institutions I approached were selected based on three criteria. Firstly, participating universities had to employ SCL as an explicit feature of their 'international' pedagogical approach. This criterion was set based on the aim of this study in investigating the implementation of SCL in international universities. Secondly, the universities need to offer programs in business administration because these degrees are widely offered across universities in Vietnam and examining the same field of study would enable more reliable pattern matching across cases. Thirdly, the language of instruction was limited to English since this is a defining feature of nearly all 'international' programs in Vietnam and allowed me, a foreigner, to communicate with participants in English without the need for an interpreter during the data collection.

In order to understand how SCL is implemented and experienced by key participants of international universities, participants for this study comprised teachers, learning advisors, teaching advisors and students. From across the two universities, 51 participants were interviewed and 14 observation classes, learning skills workshops, teacher orientations and student orientations were observed. Available documents relating to pedagogical approaches, learning skills workshops, student orientation and teacher orientation were also collected from each institution and analysed.

1.4 Significance of the study

SCL has spread from the West to other countries around the world since the rise of globalisation. Many Asian countries, including Vietnam have embraced SCL as part of their higher educational reform in response to the concept of the globalisation of education. Since 2005, SCL approach has become a crucial part of Vietnam's higher education sector reform (Hong, 2011).

One of the prominent characteristics of Vietnam's traditional teaching and learning approach is CHC. CHC still remains the way of life of the Vietnamese people in many aspects, especially in teaching and learning (London, 2011; Ratliff, 2008). This poses a challenge to educators who aim to implement SCL, a pedagogy which has Western underpinnings, to Vietnamese students who are more familiar with a teacher-centred learning approach.

This study set out to make a contribution to both the theory and practice of developing
intercultural understanding and to promote 'mutual engagement' of both students and teachers in international institutions. Importantly, it is expected to make a contribution to teaching and learning for transnational education in Vietnam in particular and the Asian region in general. One of the challenges of internationalization of education is to bridge the gap in differences in teaching and learning attitudes, and in approaches and cultures of different countries without destroying diversity (Mai et al., 2012; Mai & Hall, 2016; Pham, 2016). This can be achieved by developing a mutual understanding between the different parties who hold different teaching and learning attitudes, approaches and cultures. By exploring SCL implemented in two international universities in their natural settings, some common themes and patterns of attitudes, experiences and behaviours found across universities could help to describe situations, giving a holistic view of the studied area and also helping to understand behaviours of the studied cultural groups involved in particular circumstances.

Findings of this study will benefit teachers who are facing difficulties in implementing SCL to students from non-western backgrounds because by understanding students' experiences, perceptions and reaction toward Western teaching and learning approach, teachers also learn to adapt their teaching approaches to be more flexible in dealing with educational cultures different from their own. Furthermore, understanding how students adapt to a new learning environment, enables teachers to assist their students to reach their full potential and help students to gain advantage by building on diversity in teaching and learning cultures. Findings of this study contribute to informing leaders of international universities by adding additional and insightful evidence into the body of knowledge that increases our understanding of the issues in cross-cultural learning environments and how to effectively handle them.

1.5 Structure of the study

This thesis consists of eight chapters. This introduction chapter provides an overview of the thesis including the purpose of the study, methodological framework and research questions, approach and structure of the study. Chapter two considers the influence and impact of SCL philosophy in cross-cultural context by reviewing existing literature on the SCL philosophy, including its origins and the major influences which have contributed to shaping this approach from the past to present. In order to gain a holistic
view into this particular study context, this chapter also investigates the issues in cross-cultural classrooms and approaches that have been taken by educators to deal with the issues. Chapter two begins with an exploration of what SCL is and the examination of the underpinning theories that contributed to the fundamental structure of the approach. It then summarises and discusses the worldwide spread of SCL that has been influenced by the globalisation of education. Finally this chapter explores models and strategies recommended to deal with cultural issues in the cross-cultural context.

Chapter three, on foreign influences and the integration of SCL into the Vietnamese higher education system identifies gaps in literature by reviewing the transition of Vietnamese higher education since Doi Moi (Vietnamese economic renovation in the mid 1980s). It includes the Vietnam higher education reform, the growth of international programs and campuses, and the implementation of SCL in some local universities. Vietnamese education and learning styles relevant to this particular study context have also been summarised and discussed to illustrate the transition in Vietnamese higher education and review the links between this study and the accumulated knowledge in the area of the study. The information gained from this chapter assist in interpreting findings in the later stage.

Chapter four on research methodology outlines the methodological framework, data collection and data analysis used in this study to investigate the experience of SCL approach in international universities. Furthermore, this chapter explains strategies used for establishing validation of the investigation. Lastly, it illustrates the strategies used to ensure privacy, confidentiality and ethical conduct in the research process.

Findings of this study are presented across three chapters, five, six and seven. Chapter five, examines the backgrounds of participants to gain insight into who they are and to what extent their backgrounds affect their learning and teaching experience of SCL. This chapter consists of three sections; situational passivity, parental influence and pressure, and what it means to be an independent learner. Each of these themes are explained, explored and defined in this chapter. The themes are important since they provide a solid foundation and insights that help in understanding the layers of complexity that contribute to students' perceptions, learning motivations and adoption of SCL approaches, especially in relation to self-study and independent learning. The
findings are also useful in the analysis of other relevant findings in subsequent chapters. For example, findings about students' backgrounds are employed in analysing findings in chapter six and seven as to what extent students' backgrounds affected their learning experience and what appropriate strategies should be employed to help them move forward to greater autonomy. Finally, the findings also support the intercultural construction approach as the way forward in dealing with the cross-cultural issues.

Chapter six examines how each university introduces aspects of SCL to their new students and how the guidance and training provided in orientation programs could help students prepare for the new learning experience. It also examines teacher orientation programs offered by each university to their new teachers to understand what aspects of learning facilitation of SCL new teachers need to be prepared for. Findings from this chapter are not to be used in isolation but also for a further analysis of the particular on-going support that students and teachers need in this context.

Chapter seven, examines classroom practice and considers students' and teachers' views about what works well and what does not work well in the implementation of SCL. It brings together key findings collected from class observations, focus group interviews and individual interviews with participants.

Each of the three findings chapters is interrelated, commencing from chapter five where the backgrounds of students and academics are given. This information is not only helpful in developing a better understanding of participants but also supports both chapters six and seven. For example, findings from chapter five about participants' backgrounds were employed in analysing findings in chapter six on whether the training provided by the participating universities was adequate and catered to participants' needs. Similarly, in chapter seven, findings from chapter five were employed to analyse whether participants' backgrounds affected the learning and teaching experience at the universities. Likewise, findings from chapter six about training for new comers were used to analyse findings.

Chapter eight presents the implications of findings for theory and practice. The implications for practice concern not only universities in Vietnam but also other universities in Asia with students of Confucian heritage culture that are facing similar
challenges in the implementation of SCL. The conclusion includes consideration of the strengths and limitations of the study and my reflections.
Chapter Two:
Influence and impact of student-centred learning philosophy in cross-cultural context

2.1 Overview

SCL is a well known pedagogy, especially in the West where it was originally developed. SCL has spread from the West to other countries around the world since the rise of globalisation. Many Asian countries have integrated SCL as part of their higher educational reform in response to the globalisation of education and the knowledge based economy. However, students and teachers of Asian countries with Confucian heritage culture are facing many challenges adapting to SCL, a new pedagogical approach different from their own. To make it clear, not all Asian countries are considered CHC countries. China, Vietnam, Singapore, Korea and Japan are countries that are often referred to as CHC countries (Phuong-Mai et al, 2005). This cultural disparity between SCL and Confucian heritage culture does not only affect individuals but also has effects at higher societal levels, including educational reform and internationalisation of education.

There has been an extensive body of literature on how CHC students learn in Western style classrooms. Exploring the literature, I am interested in how the cultural differences in learning and teaching are understood in the literature, and the types of strategies that educators typically use to respond to cultural differences in learning styles.

This chapter begins with an examination of SCL origin, its wide spread to Asian countries with Confucian heritage culture, advantages and disadvantages that come with the expansion and, importantly, models and strategies recommended to deal with cultural issues in the cross-cultural context. This will provide a frame/lens through which I will examine contemporary practice in international universities in Vietnam.

2.2 What is 'Western' about SCL?

Development in pedagogy has reached the point where SCL has become the dominant approach to teaching and learning employed worldwide (European Students' Union, 2015). SCL can be described simply as the focus on deep learning through the active
learning approach in which students take responsibility and accountability for their own learning (Lea, Stephenson & Troy, 2003; Gehrke & Todorovski, 2014). The aim of SCL is to develop learner autonomy and independence (Leo, 2007).

SCL is a reaction to teacher-centred learning which focuses on the role of the teacher rather than students' learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Teacher-centred pedagogies had been commonly employed around the world, including in the West before the paradigm shift to student-centred. The paradigm shift was influenced by major movements in economics, society, culture and teaching and learning theories which took place in the West. In order to understand the origin of SCL and how it became the dominant paradigm, this section examines the culturally embedded nature of SCL and the underpinning theories that contributed to its constitution.

The prominent influence on the rise of SCL in the West can be traced back to the work of John Locke, an English philosopher known as the “Father of Liberalism”. In 1689 he proposed in his work, 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding', the idea that the only knowledge humans can have is based upon experience (Korab-Karpowicz, 2015, p.291). Locke believed that both truth and knowledge are the result of observation and experience rather than manipulation of accepted or given ideas. He argued that the existing traditional teacher centred approaches that emphasise the subordination of students to teachers and memorization of facts would not lead to an education (Hayes, 2006).

Elements of SCL began to develop in the beginning of nineteenth century when John Dewey explored many of what are now important features of the SCL curriculum (Johnson, 1995). Dewey, a well-known American philosopher and educational reformer of the 20th century, was one of the main theorists who contributed to the development of SCL and a progressive educational movement in the United States. Dewey believed that traditional educational philosophies were inadequate because the curriculum was designed to teach a “known” body of knowledge emphasising classical literature, history and philosophy which had little to do with social utility and the practical subjects needed for an increasingly urbanised and industrialised world. In addition, the traditional educational curriculum ignored the internal aspects of learning such as students' interest and motivation (Johnson, 1995). Dewey believed that curriculum designed for students should contribute to their intellectual, interest, social and personal
development. Dewey believed that one cannot learn without motivation (Dewey, 1897). As such, if a student is put into a passive role of learning, such as in absorbing information, it would weaken the student's intellectual curiosity. To promote progressive education, teachers are to take part in assisting students' learning, not as an authoritative figure (Dewey, 1897). Dewey's teaching and learning theories have become known as Experiential or Social Reconstructionist where they influenced the progressive educational movement in public schools in the United States and the paradigm shift from teacher centred to student centred (Johnson, 1995; Kohn, 1999). Later on, with the influence of humanistic and cognitivist psychologists, SCL has affected all the contents of classrooms at all levels and for all ages in the United States (Johnson, 1995).

Democratic education is another educational philosophy that had a strong influence on the constitution of SCL. Democratic education refers to “the process of educating society by means of education activities by transferring the principles and rules of democracy, human rights and freedoms being transferred into open or closed goals in the education programmes” (Şanlı & Altun, 2015, p.1). Dewey (1916, p.81) pointed out the necessity of having a type of education that could serve democratic society as follows:

A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control and the habits of minds which secure social changes without introducing disorder.

The above quote highlights the link between a tradition of liberal democratic society and SCL. In this aspect, SCL is a suitable approach to serve a democratic society where equality, individual rights and freedoms are recognised. In the frame of democratic rules, students “should be provided to think, to argue, to criticise and to be criticised, to respect different thoughts and majority, to act tolerantly, to reach an agreement” (Mem & Mem, 2015, p.1). Clearly, an authoritarian education where teachers take absolute control of a learning process cannot support students to take such democratic roles. However, student centred practices can, since they emphasise student empowerment and interest. Another example of how SCL has been driven by liberal democracy was
the massive student movement in Europe and America protesting against the elitism of universities during the 1960s. This movement promoted student empowerment, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to provide students with the “knowledge to challenge the common knowledge, perceptions and myths in society” (The European Students' Union, 2015).

Constructivism is an important dimension of SCL. Constructivism focuses on how learners learn by constructing their own knowledge through active learning methods (Cruickshank et al., 2012). The origin of constructivism lies within the cognitive theories of Jean Piaget (1936) a Swiss theorist who was the first psychologist to make a systematic study of cognitive development. Piaget explored the process by which humans construct their knowledge of the world and argued that knowledge cannot be simply constructed through knowledge transmission from one person to another person, instead, an individual person needs to reconstruct his or her own knowledge by linking their existing knowledge with new knowledge (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Clearly, constructivism is opposed to the teacher-centred approach. The assertion in constructionist theories is described as:

We take a view of learning as a reconstruction rather than as a transmission of knowledge (and)...extend the idea of manipulative materials to the idea that learning is most effective when part of an activity the learner experiences as constructing a meaningful product (Papert, 1986).

Social constructivism is another underpinning dimension of SCL. Ley Vygotsky was a Russian theorist whose social constructivism theory has influenced the student-centred learning approach of collaborative learning. His theory stresses the fundamental role of social interaction dimension in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). He believed that knowledge is constructed better through the learner's interaction with other individuals or social negotiation (Fetherson, 2007). In SCL, collaborative learning is encouraged because it provides students with the opportunities to learn from their peers. The student-centred teacher's role is to infuse collaborative opportunities into each lesson (IOWA, 2012).

Besides constructivism, SCL also has roots in humanistic education which focuses on the affective dimension and aims to motivate students to pursue their own interests in
learning by creating learning environments based on empathy, trust and respect (Naude et al., 2014). Carl Rogers (1969), an American psychologist and among the founders of humanistic education, pointed out that “one of the most important contributors to the development of student-centred approaches, postulated that all humans have a natural propensity or eagerness to learn” (cited in Naude, Bergh & Kruger, 2014, p.212). Rogers and Frieburg (1994, p.35) gave insight into humanistic education as follows:

I want to talk about learning, but not the lifeless, sterile, futile, quickly forgotten stuff that is crammed into the mind of the helpless individual...I am talking about learning-insatiable curiosity that drives the adolescent mind to absorb everything he can see or hear or read about a topic that has inner meaning. I am talking about the student who says 'I am discovering, drawing in from the outside, and making what I discover a real part of me.

In the humanistic education, teachers play an important role in creating an enabling environment to facilitate the development of the learner which can be accomplished through “establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable to consider new ideas and are not threatened by interference” (Naude et al., 2014, p. 212). The core value of this approach is that it places emphasis on the role of affective domain where students not only gain knowledge but could also develop positive personal development such as self-direction, self-respect, self efficacy and self actualisation.

In the 1980s SCL became explicitly adopted as a guiding philosophy by institutions of industrialised countries in the West to meet with the employability needs of post-industrialism (Attard, Loio, Geven & Santa, 2010; Land, 2004). For example, the UK's higher education system and curriculum has adjusted to respond to the perceived needs of a globalised economy. Specifically, in the 1990s, the UK higher education system changed its pedagogical approach to enable greater emphasis on active learning (Land, 2004). In Europe, a study funded by the European commission on SCL presents the initiative approach of European higher education toward SCL and stated about the importance of SCL that:

European higher education also faces the major challenge and the ensuing opportunities of globalisation and accelerated technological developments with new providers, new learners and new types of learning. Student-centred
learning and mobility will help students develop the competencies they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens (cited in Attard et al., 2010, p.13).

By 2002, SCL principles were the norm in Australian universities. Characteristics of effective teachers provided by Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC, 2002) are very consistent with SCL principles. For example, some of the main roles suggest teachers should encourage students to take control of their own learning, draw on students' interests and life experience and provide a supportive environment that fosters inquiry-based and deep learning (Harman & Bich, 2010). By 2010, Universities Australia believed that they were leading the world and boasted that “Australia’s commitment and record of student centred learning and student services is now the benchmark for other developed countries” (Universities Australia, 2010, p.1).

Table 2.1: Summary of key ideas of SCL based on the theoretical perspectives reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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So far in this section, the culturally embedded nature of SCL and the underpinning theories that contribute to its constitution have been examined. Up to this point, it is clear that SCL arose from, and fits well within, Western culture. In the upcoming sections, the expansion of SCL and the challenge in the implementation of SCL to Asian countries with CHC will be examined to provide a background of the situation in cross-cultural teaching and learning.

2.3 The rise of SCL from the West to the East

After the end of the Cold War, the rise of the world wide web, personal computers and free trade agreements, the whole world was increasingly connected (Friedman, 2007). These factors contribute to 'globalization' where people of the world are incorporated into a single world society (Albow & King, 1990). In brief, globalization refers to “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas...across borders. Globalisation affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities” (Knight, 2015, p.3). The concept of globalisation of education and the knowledge economy became a centre of interest when governments, business sectors and educators began to discuss how education could be matched to the needs of the global economy. It led to the idea of investing in education for the development of human capital in order to maintain competitiveness on the global economic stage and generate economic growth (Spring, 2015).

The World Bank played a key role in promoting the knowledge economy concept in developing countries, particularly, through providing education policy advice and loans (Spring, 2015). The World Bank's aim is to equip learners with the skills and competencies they need in order to succeed in a knowledge economy. To prepare young people for the new world of work, the World Bank argues, teaching and learning activities must be arranged in such a way that the creativity, problem solving and analytical thinking skills of the learner are enhanced to meet the demands of the changing world (Spring, 2015). Clearly, what the World Bank requires above is consistent with the characteristic of SCL emphasis on active learning.

Not to be left behind from the rest of the world, developing countries and former socialist states in Asia responded to the knowledge economy by aiming to establish their education systems in a similar style to developed Western countries. As previously
mentioned, the paradigm shift has already happened in the West and SCL has been considered best teaching practice for the 21st century. Education reform in Asia is following much the same path as the West, including the adoption of SCL. Meanwhile, Western universities also see the demand of Asian countries to improve their educational system as an opportunity for becoming leading global education providers. The demand fuelled the supply and growth of internationalisation of education in Asia, especially in a form of transnational education (TNE). McBurnie and Ziguras (2007, p.21) define TNE as a “form of provision in which the student is located in a different country from the institution's home campus, including international branch campuses, partner-supported programmes and international online or distance education”. Healey (2017, p.67) points out that the growth of TNE is prompted by three broad motivations: (1) demand absorbing, (2) export orientation, (3) demonstration effect.

The first motivation, demand absorbing, happens when transnational education become a solution for a country that is falling short in supplying university places and/or quality of higher education to their local students. For example, the governments of Hong Kong and Malaysia, “have used transnational education as a way of supplementing domestic higher education and increasing the supply for places to local students, sometimes in a deliberate effort to reduce the foreign exchange drain of students going aboard to study” (Healey, 2017, p.67).

The second motivation, export orientation, is a strategy used by transnational education providers for creating 'education hubs' which are intended to attract foreign students from across the surrounding geographic region (Knight, 2011; Verbi & Merkley, 2006). According to Healey (2017) the benefit of an export-oriented approach includes helping a transnational education provider project 'soft power', with students returning to their home countries as advocates of the country that provided their education.

The third motivation, the demonstration effect, is a policy to use high quality foreign universities to provide examples of best practice and “to encourage the transfer of forms of education technology, including curriculum design, pedagogy, quality assurance, the use of English as a medium of instruction and systems of academic governance” (Healey, 2017, p.68).

Having explored the three motivations, it becomes clear that the first two motivations
are mainly to serve economic purposes. The demonstration effect, however, is more about serving the educational demands of local institution in improving their teaching and learning practice. In the case of SCL, transnational education providers would use the demonstration effect to promote SCL as the best practice of the West to the local institutions and students. In the case of Vietnam HE, it encouraged growth of local and international private universities to boost supply of HE to absorb excess demand. It also encouraged private and public universities to establish international linkages in an effort to align Vietnam with international practices and thereby have a demonstration effect on the system more broadly.

### 2.4 Issues in cross-cultural classrooms

Since the 1990s, introducing SCL to Asian students with CHC has been an ongoing challenge to educators. With the growing numbers of Asian students enrolled in Anglophone Western universities, both at home and in host countries, Asian students' learning styles of CHC became the centre of interest among Western educators. Since the huge number of Asian students has been generating significant income for the Anglophone Western countries, the ability to effectively teach students with a Confucian background becomes more important. Ballard and Clanchy (1996) pointed out two main challenges faced when teaching international students:

1. time pressure associated with the perceived need for a higher time investment when teaching IS, and
2. confusion related to the lack of knowledge about and/or experience in teaching students from other cultures (cited in VUW, 2004).

Not only do teachers face a challenge in teaching students from a CHC, those CHC students also face a lot of pressure in adjusting to the new learning environment. Ballard and Clanchy (1991, 1997) illustrate how students from a CHC are facing a difficult situation where their culture related learning approaches, which they have been mastering for years, are not valued and encouraged in the new learning environment:

Some of those adaptation problems are rooted within past learning experiences. Offshore students bring with them learning experiences that are often very different to what they will experience in Australian education system. What worked with their prior local learning experience is no longer
considered valid in the Australia education system. This leaves students with the task to rebuild a new understanding of what works and what does not.

Ballard and Clancy (1996) point out that international students, confused by the new experience, discover that many of their techniques do not work in the new learning environment. The time pressure and the confusion cause the following consequences:

If the situation is not resolved, then resentment can follow. Academic staff may increasingly begrudge the time they spend on overseas students. Overseas students, working under the same pressures, may decide that their problems are really due to racism or to victimisation by unsympathetic staff (cited in VUW, 2004, p.2).

As can be seen from the above examples, both teachers and students deal with pressure and confusion in adapting to each other. In the case where only students are required to adapt to the Western learning style, those students are more likely to be even more stressed which affects the quality of teaching and learning as a whole. Bodycott and Walker (2000, p.92) express a concern regarding Western universities that are getting only the students to adapt. He states “for many tertiary teachers, the onus is often placed on students to adapt to the cultural context in which they are studying with the result that the quality of teaching and learning can suffer, or at worst, become irrelevant.”

Beyond the difficulties of adapting to teachers, there have been issues of students being required to adapt to the Western learning style with inadequate support. For example, a Singaporean student shares an insight about a lecturer who did not give him or her enough time to adapt into SCL, self-directed learning style. The student says:

...using methods they used in Australia and thinking that adults all should be self-directed...but not everyone is. It requires time for us to go through that mode; we would have appreciated self-directed learning more if we have more time (Hoare, 2006, p.197).

The cause of the above issue is possibly coupled with the belief of the teachers teaching offshore students that their prior experience teaching international students in Australia had well prepared them to teach offshore. This belief is more likely to cause them to take for granted the offshore students' specific learning needs. A study of Gribble and
Ziguras (2003) investigates how lecturers from Australia are prepared for overseas teaching. The study found that the majority of participants believed that prior experience teaching international students in Australia had well prepared them to teach offshore. Gribble and Ziguras (2003, p.210) point out that “despite this confidence, there was general agreement that, although teaching international students is good preparation for the offshore experience, lecturers also need to develop an understanding of the culture, political, legal and economic contexts of each country in which they are teaching”. The study also found an Australian offshore program was criticised for the lack of understanding of the students they were teaching and their culture. An example is:

...a Chinese partner institution had expressed dissatisfaction with the offshore program because of Australian academics lack of understanding of the students they were teaching and their culture. Staff involved in such programs, he [a lecturer] observed, need to be able to bridge the cultural differences in order to provide students with what they want from a foreign degree in a way that is not disrespectful to Chinese cultural values (Gribble & Ziguras, 2003, p.211).

The above issue of not truly understanding the offshore cultural context could escalate to an undesirable issue of educational neocolonialism. Recently, there has been growing concern that internalisation may further generate colonialist, capitalist global relations, and reproduce the Euro-supremacist foundations of modern Western higher education (Stein, 2017). For example, Mai et al. (2012) expresses concerns on how Vietnam, which is under the pressure of financial loans and the continuing need to modernise, is rapidly reforming its education system without paying much attention to the possibility of false universalism, the believe that a practice that originated from elsewhere can be “cloned” with similar results. Tran et al., (2017, p.1900) point out that “one of the key concerns is around the nature of [policy] borrowing, whether it is passive, selective or creative borrowing and its impacts on the development of higher education in the country as a whole.” Smith and Smith (1999, p.77) recommend strategy to deal with the situation where the cultural difference is prominent as:

In those cases where a significant difference has been shown, it is prudent to consider adjusting teaching and support strategies to reflect those
differences. Failure to take account of those differences runs the danger of being new colonialists who assume that the organisational, knowledge and belief structures that we develop in the English speaking West will transfer without adaptation to another culture (Smith & Smith, 1999, p.77).

Up to this point, it can be seen that dealing with issues in cross-cultural classrooms is challenging. The next section further investigates the issues in cross-cultural classrooms and approaches that have been taken by educators to deal with the issues.

### 2.5 Dealing with the cultural disparities

This section examines various approaches managing the cultural tensions in cross-cultural teaching and learning. For over 20 years, there has been an extensive body of literature on teaching across cultures. A significant study that has been influential for the past two decades is Biggs' (1997) three levels of teaching across culture, which still provides a useful framework for thinking about approaches to dealing with cultural differences. Besides Biggs' work, more recent approaches that focus on mutual engagement have been proposed to handle the challenges in cross cultural teaching and learning, including the 'reconciliation approach' (Sanderson, 2006), 'intercultural construction' (Crichton & Scarino, 2007; Wang, 2008), 'intercultural competence' (Bodycott & Walker, 2000), 'intercultural learning' (Ho, 2011), intercultural dialogue and engagement (Leask & Carroll, 2013) and 'third space' (Flessner, 2014). To provide an overview of the literature in this area, this section will examine each approach, starting with Biggs' three levels of teaching across culture, followed by these more recent 'mutual engagement' approaches.

#### 2.5.1 Biggs' three levels of teaching across culture

Biggs (1999) adapted Nathan's “ladder of abstraction” describing a hierarchy that parallels three common meta-theories of teaching based on what the primary focus of the teaching is. Biggs (1999) distinguishes teaching across culture into three levels: Level 1: Pseudo-Etic Position, Level 2: Emic Position, Level 3: Etic Position. According to Biggs (1999) Level 1 is a deficit model of education because it focuses on a blame-the-student theory of teaching where non Western students are judged for their differences. Level 2 is better than level 1 because it focuses on what the teacher does by adapting one's teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning
culture of international students. Level 3 is the best of all three levels because it focuses on what students do to achieve the desired learning outcomes. The three levels are further illustrated as follows:

**Level 1: Pseudo-Etic Position**

At level one, the primary focus is on what students are and struck by student differences. Biggs (1997) labels Level 1 as the 'pseudo-etic' vision of cross-cultural comparisons in that a particular cultural style is used as a universal ideal. At this level, students' differences are seen as problematic. For example, “where one group, usually Westerners, make their own cultural norm a universal one by which all cultures are to be judged. In the case, Western teaching and student behaviour are taken as the universal against which non Western students are judged, and deemed exceptional” (Biggs, 1997, p.1). What underlies Level 1 view is the expectation that international students assimilate to the host model of teaching. If the students don't learn, then it is not because teaching has failed but because students are not capable of taking an active learning approach given they come from non-western backgrounds (Biggs, 1997).

Biggs (1997) points out that the real danger of Level 1 is stereotyping. Similarly, Sanderson (2006) states that for Level 1 teaching, “culture is visible in the classroom through stereotype. What is lacking is an understanding and an appreciation of culture.” Biggs took an example from Harris (1997) where Level 1 teaching was being used to describe CHC students.

So far as Far Eastern (China, Japan, Korea) students are concerned it is a truism that, raised in a conformist educational system, they are happier with memorising and reproducing information than with problem-oriented and more active teaching strategies (Harris, 1997, p. 87).

Another example of stereotyping, with attendant an self-fulfilling prediction found by Biggs from a study of McKay and Kember (1997, p.55):

Students in Hong Kong...expect lecturers to teach them everything they are expected to know. They have little desire to discover for themselves [...] They wish to be spoon fed and in turn they are spoon fed [...].

Level 1 teaching is a deficit model of education because it focuses on a blame-the-
student theory of teaching. For example, CHC students get blamed for not behaving like the Western students. Biggs provides an example of an expatriate teacher teaching in Hong Kong to demonstrate the issue:

I found the deathly silence that preceded the start of the lecture quite unnerving, the more so when my open-ended questions met with no response. I had to plough on, and if, as was likely, I ran out of prepared materials, I had to ad lib until the scheduled end of the lecture. (1989, p.3)

Biggs indicates that in this case the teacher had an expectation that CHC students would behave like those Western students whom this teacher was used to working with, such as spontaneously asking questions and volunteering comments. Biggs (1997) states that, instead of blaming students for their passivity, the teacher should use the appropriate teaching method of eliciting questions and comments.

Biggs (2003) found some stereotypes about CHC are simply wrong. For example, Biggs (1998) states that, while it is correct that CHC students use memorisation in their learning, it is incorrect to conclude that memorisation is surface learning. Similarly, Hess and Azuma (1991) describe memorisation and repetition used by CHC students as a route to understanding. As can be seen the focus on stereotyping does not really provide insights into CHC learning cultures nor does it suggest any useful approach in minimising the negative effects of the differences. Thus the way forward is to move out from the traditional approaches in cross-cultural teaching and learning that focuses on mapping differences between cultures.

**Level 2: Emic Position**

Level 2 is moving away from focusing on cultural differences to instead focus on what the teacher does in adapting their teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning culture of their students. Biggs (1997, p.3) labels Level 2 teaching as “emic position” and explains that “each educational system evolves and operates in a cultural context, and educational procedures are relative to the context. Successful teaching thus involves doing what is culturally appropriate.”

The emic position of Level 2 means well, however, its practicality is debatable. For example, Sanderson (2006, p.2) points out an impractical approach of Level 2 teaching
where “…international students being taught and assessed in their preferred (including home) language by dual-language Australian lecturers whose pedagogy caters for the student’s “cognitive styles”. This kind of approach is also critiqued by Biggs (2003, p.138) as “impractical and quite absurd”. Furthermore, in a classroom where international students come from different countries and cultures, it seems to be impractical to alter the whole course to accommodate international students who, themselves, are not homogenous (Ballard & Clanchy, 1997 cited in Sanderson, 2006). There are some teaching tips used in Level 2 teaching to accommodate international students that are acceptable such as speaking slowly, avoiding colloquialisms or modifying body language because it might be considered inappropriate for some international students (Sanderson, 2006). However, according to Biggs (2003) these strategies are not real teaching principles that can contribute significantly to students' learning. After all, for Biggs, Level 2 teaching remains a deficit model of education given it focuses on what the teacher does in accommodating international students with little or no emphasis on the learning outcomes.

**Level 3: Etic Position**

Level 3 focuses on what students do to achieved the desired learning outcomes. Biggs (1997) labels Level 3 as 'etic approach'. In this case, etic teaching is based on the universality of the learning process. The theory of learning underlying Level 3 is based on the constructivism model which is concerned with how learners learn by constructing their own knowledge through active learning methods (Cruickshank et al., 2012). Level 3 teaching is directed at helping students develop the necessary skills and cognitive processes to meet the learning objectives of their studies. For Biggs, Level 3 represents a good teaching practice that can be employed in any country and cultural context. Biggs points out that Level 3 provides “an inclusive model of teaching that maximises student engagement while minimising the negative effects of cultural disparities, so that culture, or belonging to a minority culture, is not in itself seen as a reason for educational exceptionality” (Biggs, 1997, abstract). At this level where constructivism is the key and ethnicity is beside the point, what students are and what teachers do to adapt their teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning culture of international students not the concerns of (Biggs, 2003).

Up to this point, it can be seen that Biggs' level 3 place emphasis on the constructivist
model which is one of the important aspects of SCL. However, it does not cover the affective dimension of SCL which places emphasis on learning environments based on empathy, trust and respect (Avid et al., 2015). This could be a disadvantage since the affective aspect of SCL is more likely to lessen cultural tensions in cross-cultural teaching and learning since it brings teachers and students from different cultures together through the quality relationship and learning environment.

2.5.2 Mutual engagement approaches

More recent scholarship on cross-cultural teaching and learning converged upon what I will call 'mutual engagement' approaches which are different from Biggs' three levels in that they focus on developing a shared understanding between teachers and students of different cultures by requiring both sides to reflect and adapt. In this section, I will introduce several closely related mutual engagement approaches, including, Sanderson's (2006) 'reconciliation' approach, Bodycott and Walker's (2000) 'intercultural competence', Ho's (2011) 'intercultural learning', Crichton and Scarino's (2007) 'intercultural constructions, Wang (2008) 'intercultural construction', Leask and Carroll (2013) 'intercultural dialogue and engagement', and Flessner's (2014) 'third space'.

Sanderson (2006) analyses Biggs' three levels of teaching and suggests there should be another level in between levels 2 and 3 to bridge the gap between them. He calls this level a 'reconciliation' approach:

The lecturer should recognise and respect all cultures in the classroom and be committed to helping all students meet the learning objectives of their studies. This includes the use of whatever universal teaching strategies and support initiatives are necessary to assist all students in this regard. This recognises both the uniqueness of the students as cultural and social beings and also the commitment of the lecturer to help all students develop so they can meet the learning objectives of their studies (Sanderson, 2006, p.9).

Sanderson (2006) identifies that teaching with an awareness of culture in the reconciliation approach is different from those deficit aspects of cultural awareness being used in Biggs' s Level 1 and Level 2. For example, cultural awareness is not being used as in Level 1 to judge the other cultures nor to be used as in Level 2 in isolation from the learning outcomes. In fact, in the reconciliation approach, cultural
awareness is being used to enhance Level 3 teaching.

Bodycott and Walker (2000, p.87) describe the development of intercultural competence in learning and teaching “as a self-reflective process which prompts learners and teachers to rethink and confront their beliefs and biases.” Intercultural competence is also proposed as:

the process of acquiring the cultural-specific and culture general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic developmental, and on-going process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby (2003, p.177).

According to Ho (2011, p.6) intercultural learning encourages “the learner's tolerance, respect and empathy towards other peoples and cultures.” This aspect matches with affective aspects of SCL which place emphasis on learning environments based on empathy, trust and respect (Avid et al., 2015). This could be an advantage since the affective dimension of SCL is more likely to lessen cultural tensions in cross-cultural teaching and learning since it brings teachers and students from different cultures together through the quality relationship and learning environment. Developing intercultural competence does not come naturally, it requires the right approach and a educational program catering to it:

moving well beyond a static approach to learning isolated facts about an individual culture and involves the learner in a process of transformation of the self, his/her ability to communicate and to understand communication and his/ her skills for on-going learning (Papademetre, 2003, p.14).

Crichton and Scarino (2007, p. 2) point out that while the construction of 'intercultural' mediated through language, “such constructions are meaningful only when understood within the context of human ethics, values and interactions – in other words, when they are held and animated by people." Crichton et al. (2007, p.15) in acknowledging interaction as a key principle in both the practice and development of intercultural awareness. It also recognises that:
the intersubjective reality of teaching, learning and assessment is accomplished and sustained through participants' ongoing negotiation of their perceptions of themselves and others through their use of language in interaction. 'Sites of intercultural interaction' refers to opportunities provided on courses and taken by students and lecturers to participate in the practices of their disciplines and to thereby negotiate and develop new cultural understandings of themselves and their ways of knowing.

Crichton and Scarino (2007, p. 12) propose five generic principles as a construction of the cultural as intercultural in international education:

Principle 1:

Interacting and communicating: acknowledging that our understanding of others is not "given in advance", but that interaction and communication involve the continuous interpretation and making of meaning between individuals.

Principle 1 acknowledges that interaction is a key principle in both the practice and development of intercultural awareness. The culture of knowing becomes reciprocal, development and ever-changing (Crichton & Scarino, 2007).

Principle 2:

Connecting the intracultural with the intercultural: understanding that it is not only "others" who are culturally variable/different, but that we each have a variable linguistic and cultural identity which we draw on and manifest in interaction.

Principle 2 develops an understanding of ourselves as examples of cultural diversity, and how we are to understand and negotiate our own and others' cultural differences in interaction mediated through different language and cultures.

Principle 3:

Constructing intercultural 'knowing' as social action: considering our knowledge, values and beliefs not as "uniquely" or "self evidently" true but
in relation to our particular and linguistic backgrounds and practices.

This principle 3 indicates that we need to realise that others may not share our knowledge, beliefs or values. Therefore, when dealing with others of different beliefs, we need to be aware of those differences.

Principle 4:

Reflecting and introspective: recognising that only by understanding and monitoring our own linguistic and cultural identities can we engage with different ways of knowing, and reflect sensitively and critically on successes, failures, uncertainties and future developments in interacting with others.

This principle 4 indicates that we need to recognise our own linguistic and culture identity first before we can truly engage with those of other cultures.

Principle 5:

Assuming responsibility: developing an ethical stance which recognises that we and others have identities which are linguistically and culturally variable, and that this implies a responsibility to respect and seek to develop sensitivity towards multiple perspectives and needs.

This principle 5 is about respect for differences in culture identity. In education you need to be sensitive to those differences. A teacher needs to be sensitive to the variations even amongst people of their own culture.

'Intercultural construction' is another term used to describe the concept and process of the intercultural approach in cross-cultural teaching and learning. Wang (2008, p.59) proposes educators in a cross-cultural context follow 'intercultural construction' which emphasises framing cultural interaction through intercultural dialogue:

Intercultural dialogue acknowledges culture dissonance and allows dynamic interactions between hybrid cultural forces. It seeks to enhance intercultural sensitivity, mutual understanding, and reciprocal relationships during the interactive process. Teachers and students in transnational programs
become partners in intercultural construction.

Wang (2008) asserts that the concept of intercultural understanding is a way forward for transnational education since it offers “possibilities for building emergent understandings and new frameworks rather than submission to imported wisdom.” (2008, p.59). According to Wang (2008, p.64) leadership developers from Western countries who follow intercultural construction “may act as culture and knowledge brokers in introducing alternative perspectives and practices rather than as radical change agents in bringing about immediate transformation in recipients' leadership conceptions and practices.”

A study of Leask and Carroll (2013) also proposes that one of the good practice principles in teaching across cultures is about facilitating meaningful intercultural dialogue and engagement. In order to enable meaningful intercultural dialogue and engagement, it is necessary to create opportunities for all students to learn and “practice” intercultural communication skills.

Last but not least, 'third space‘ is another approach that shares a similarity with the intercultural approach given that it aims to develop a mutual understanding between the different parties who hold different teaching and learning cultures. Third space focuses on mutual engagement to create a new space between different cultures. Flessner (2014, p.6) defines a third space as “a place of reflection, renewal, and change in which two supposedly oppositional worlds are re-imagined to identify tensions, conflicts, exaggerations of distance, commonalities across domains, sources of insight, and inspiration for action.” Two things that can be drawn from third space are the recognition of binaries and the creation of new spaces for reflection and renewal (hybridity).

Table 2.1: Summary of key principles of mutual engagement approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutual Engagement Approaches</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senderson's (2006) 'reconciliation' approach</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodycott and Walker's (2000)</td>
<td>The process of acquiring the cultural-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>'intercultural competence'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crichton and Scarino's (2007) intercultural constructions</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flessner's (2014) 'third space' focuses on mutual engagement to create a new space between different cultures.

### 2.6 Conceptual framework

So far in this chapter, we have seen that a key challenge in cross-cultural teaching and learning is the operational reality that large institutions achieve efficiencies by standardising teaching and other processes, and adopting practices that seemed to have been effective elsewhere. This is risky in culturally diverse setting: it should not be taken for granted that the best practice in implementing SCL employed in one culture will work the same way in a different culture.

Mutual engagement approaches were found to be most useful to my study because they focus on developing a shared understanding between teachers and students of different cultures by requiring both sides to reflect and adapt. Mutual engagement approaches go beyond the basics of cultural knowledge to acquire in-depth understanding that is applicable to a real life practice. This is because mutual engagement approaches are more than the acquisition of factual knowledge based on the presentation of cultural facts and dos and don'ts of cross-cultural interactions. It involves the process of observation, analysis and interaction where the culture of knowing becomes reciprocal, developmental and ever-changing (Crichton & Scarino, 2007).

In this study, I have developed a conceptual framework that includes seven different approaches to cross-cultural pedagogy, and I will use this framework as a lens to investigate the implementation strategies and experiences in international universities in Vietnam. I am interested in which of these approaches is being used, and how these affect the experiences of participants.

### 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed influence and impact of SCL philosophy in cross-cultural contexts by reviewing existing literature on the SCL philosophy, including its origins and the major influences which have contributed to shaping this approach from the past to the present. Importantly, this chapter also investigated the issues in cross-cultural classrooms and approaches that have been taken by educators to deal with the issues.

This chapter examined various approaches managing the cultural differences in cross-
cultural teaching and learning. For over 20 years, there has been an extensive body of literature on teaching across cultures. A significant study that has been influential for the past two decades is Biggs' (1997) three levels of teaching across culture, which still provides a useful framework for thinking about approaches to dealing with cultural differences. Besides Biggs' work, more recent 'mutual engagement' approaches have been proposed to handle the challenges in cross cultural teaching and learning. In this study, my research inquiry is to be undertaken based on mutual engagement approaches aiming to develop a shared understanding between teachers and students of different cultures by requiring both sides to reflect and adapt.
Chapter Three: Foreign influences and the integration of SCL into the Vietnamese higher education system

3.1 Overview

One of the planks of Vietnam's higher education reform strategies since 2005 has been an emphasis on SCL (Harman & Bich, 2010; Hong, 2011). This represents the adoption of pedagogical approaches that are globally dominant, and while not associated with any particular source country, they are consistent with the liberal individualist educational cultures typical of most Western countries, as discussed in the previous chapter. This poses a challenge to educators who aim to implement SCL with Vietnamese students who are more familiar with teacher centred learning approaches influenced by the country's Confucian heritage culture (Ratliff, 2008; London, 2011).

This chapter examines the transition of Vietnamese higher education from the era where Confucianism entered Vietnam until today, where it meets with SCL, the western-based pedagogy. Other major foreign influences and movements, including French colonialism, Soviet communism and contemporary globalism, will also be examined to provided background to the contemporary transition. The discussion about historical context is important since I am acknowledging that there has been a long history of importation of educational models in Vietnam and the way Vietnamese scholars have thought about and studied SCL. Later in this chapter, previous research on the adoption of SCL in Vietnam will be examined, with a focus on the challenges identified and the strategies recommended for educators to deal with.

3.2 Foreign influences on Vietnamese education

Vietnamese education has long been affected by foreign influences, including those from Asia and Europe. The earliest and strongest influence was through Chinese colonialism in the first century B.C. when Confucianism, a Chinese ideology, was disseminated to Vietnam. The next influence on higher education was through French colonialism followed more recently by Soviet communism. The latest influence has

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been through contemporary globalism in which SCL, a western-based pedagogy, had been imported to Vietnam as a modern teaching and learning practice of the 21st century. Importantly, the following sections will explore in what ways learning and teaching has continued to respond to each of these influences.

3.2.1 Chinese influence through Confucianism

Nowadays, Confucianism remains one of the most important influences on the way Vietnamese people live and learn (Hai, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Thanh, 2010; Tung, 2015). According to Nguyen (2002) Chinese cultural practices tended to coexist with, rather than replace, traditional Vietnamese culture. This could be a reason why CHC by far has had the most profound impact on Vietnamese culture, much more than other foreign influences.

The main Confucian principles of five constant virtues and three fundamental bonds that were designed to guide people's behaviour and aspirations in traditional China were brought into Vietnam since the first period of Chinese domination. These five constant virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness. Wuchang (2009, p.2254) describes the five constant virtues as follows:

Benevolence means not being able to endure (seeing others suffer), loving others, and aiding all living things. Righteousness means doing what is proper. In making judgements one hits the mark. Propriety means to enact. That is, to realize the way and perfect the refined. Wisdom means knowledge. One has a special understanding and can know things before hearing about them. He is not befuddled by matters and can discern subtleties. Trustworthiness means sincerity. One cannot be deterred from his purpose.

The three fundamental bonds deal with important social relationships: father and son, lord and retainer, and husband and wife. The relationship is in hierarchy from top down with no mutual obligations as “a retainer serves his lord; a son serves his father; a wife serves her husband” (Wuchang, 2009, p.2253). Confucianism is a collectivist-based value system which embraces a set of moral codes of behaviour designed to regulate the relationships between ruler and subject. Strict observation of this social code promotes collective social norms which constitute the foundation on which harmony rests. In the
“collectivistic” societies under the Confucian influence, it is harmony rather than competition which is promoted (Miller, 2008).

Face-saving is a Confucianist morality that helps maintain authority, relation and harmony in Confucian society (Han, 2016). Therefore, causing someone to lose face is considered an inappropriate behaviour. In the context of the classroom, CHC students are not supposed to question or act in a way that could potentially cause their teachers to lose face. For example, asking a question that the teacher may not know the answer to. In this case, saving face of authority or senior figures is the way to show respect and loyalty. Face-saving is not limited to authority figures and their juniors but also between people of the same level such as friend and friend (Han, 2016, Thanh, 2010).

From the 11th century, at the time of monarchical systems, Confucianism became highly appreciated by the feudal governments as a way to rule over the people, which could not be provided by other main influences such as Buddhism and Taoism. Confucianism was employed to complete the state institutions where “the mystique could create royalty; the sacredness could create the king and subject relationship; the norms and content of the government official training could help to extend to the power of the King” (Tung, 2015, p.72). For this period, the three moral bonds and five constant virtues were used to protect the king subject hierarchy and to maintain the constant ruling of the King's family line. According to Tung (2015, p.73) due to a persistent dissemination made by the feudal class in medieval times, Confucianism gradually became a part of Vietnamese cultural actors, “including the aristocrats, government officials, scholars, and village notables. Confucianism also took root in a part of the spiritual culture in society, forming an orthodox culture in addition to folk spiritual cultural activities.”

Confucianism is an elitist model of government since “the duty and privilege of rule can only be accorded to those with intelligence and education, because “government by goodness” can only be promoted through study and learning by those who have a superior intellect and moral standard (Miller, 2008, p.1). In the Monarchical period, the elitist model of government of Confucianism was a foundation to set up an official system of education in Vietnam with 4 levels; Imperial, Provincial, Inter-district-and District. The exams were held in which the state officials and village notables were selected based on the results of the exams (Tung, 2015). This official system was run in
parallel with “the folk education at families, trade village, and hamlets, where children were taught how to properly treat towards family members, parents, grandparents, ancestors, relatives, neighbors, and gods etc” (Tung, 2015, p.74).

As time went by, Confucianism was adapted to suit Vietnamese traditions. For example, the hierarchically-structured relationships have been extended to cover five moral bonds instead of the three from Chinese origins. In the Vietnamese version, the five moral guides cover; the ruler and the subject, the father versus the son, the husband and the wife, the elder brother versus the younger brother, and friend and friend. As can be seen, this version is focusing on family. According to Nguyen (2013, p.43) in this moral guide, “family values may hold special meaning not only for individuals but for the stability of the society and the whole nation.” As a result, behaviours within a family are strictly disciplined. For example, a person is expected to maintain 'filial piety', the duty of children putting parents' interests in front of their own (Charlotte, 2004). Filial piety is the core of Vietnamese culture as Jamieson (1993, pp.16-17) states:

Children were taught filial piety (hiếu), to obey and respect and honour their parents. Children were made to feel keenly that they owed parents a moral debt (on) so immense as to be unpayable. A child is supported to try to please his or her parents all the time and in every way, to increase their comfort, to accede to all their wishes, to fulfil their aspirations, to lighten their burden of work and of worry, and to comply with their wishes in all matters, great or small...The parent-child relationship was at the very core of Vietnamese culture, dominating everything else.

Interestingly, in this Vietnamese five relationship moral guide, the relationship between friends is included but not in hierarchically-structured relationships. This equal type of relationship can be seen in Vietnamese classrooms where “students were taught to consider each other as brothers and sisters where they were expected to help each other, to provide each other with mutual academic assistance and emotional support” (Mai, Terlouw & Albert, 2012, p.139).

In terms of the effect of Confucianism on Vietnamese education, Confucianism is an important factor in determining the roles and conducts of its stakeholders (Huu, 2005; Marr, 1981; Nguyen, 2011, Nguyen, 1995). Nguyen (2013, p.45) explains the
application of the five hierarchically-structured relationships to the roles of Vietnamese teachers and students as follows:

Analogous to the hierarchy of five relationships, students are inculcated with a fixed set of attributes such as 'respecting the teacher, respecting the knowledge'. In the classroom, they are expected to be recipients of knowledge and strictly follow what the teacher expects them to do. Meanwhile, teachers' roles are assumed to be the source of knowledge, the knowledge transmitter and the moral guide.

Nguyen (2013) points out that the expectation for teachers to be both intellectual and moral guides to students is because Confucianism focuses on cultivating both morality and intellectuality in order to develop students as a full person. On one hand, teachers are to be strict in order to gain respect as the authoritarian figure in the classroom. On the other hand, they also are to care for their students as individuals. In some cases, their genuine caring extends beyond academic aspects in the confines of the classroom to their students' life and well-being. Thus, the respect that students have for their teachers remains for life (Kennedy, 2002; Mai & Hall, 2016, Nguyen et al, 2006, Scollon & Scollon, 1995).

In the 21st century, where Vietnamese higher education has been reformed to suit contemporary globalism, Confucianism continues to influence the way Vietnamese learn. For example, education is highly respected and regarded by Vietnamese parents as dedication to the children’s future since education can help their children gain power, wealth and status (Hien, 2012; Ratliff, 2008). These days, it is still common that “Vietnamese students are to fulfil their filial piety duties, submitted to their parents' choices of university and future career” (Nguyen, 2013, p.46). Vietnamese students also are to fulfill their moral duty of respecting their teachers. According to Nguyen (2013) “every year, 20 November is officially dedicated to honour teachers. It is a day to express gratefulness, especially for alumni to visit their past teachers.” Images of teachers in modern poetry and songs of “a teacher who has lifelong commitment to teaching, a surrogate parent who can expect to be admired, respected and appreciated” (Mai & Hall, 2016, p.4).

Not without criticism, the relevancy of Confucianism to the needs and trends of the
modern world has been questioned, especially with regard to education which is considered to be the key to national development. The main criticisms include; Confucianism limits the creation of new things, self-improvement in Confucianism is mainly in moral practice and the mode of Confucian evaluation is heavy on examinations (Hai, 2011; Tung, 2015).

In the 21st century, within the modern society in which the Vietnamese are living, there have been advocates and opponents of Confucianism. While the advocates see the need to maintain Confucian values since they have merit in maintaining a moral society, traditions and cultures, the opponents find Confucianism slows down the country's acceleration toward industrialization and modernization.

3.2.2 The creation of a French higher education system in Vietnam

In 1887, France expanded its colonial empire to the Indochina regions, such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (Huong & Fry, 2004). During the French colonial era, France restructured the Vietnamese school system and abolished the Confucian system in an attempt to establish the colonial imperative more effectively (Huong & Fry, 2004; London, 2011). The lasting legacy of the French system was to put an end to centuries of Chinese traditional education based on informal local schools established by individual teachers who tutored groups of students of various ages and levels in the literary classics. By contrast, the modern system introduced by the French system separated students by discipline, age and level of study within large bureaucratic institutions administered by the state (Ziguras et al., 2017).

The first higher education institution established by the French was the school of Medicine in 1902, followed by the University of Indochina founded in 1906, both in Hanoi. Like the earlier feudal rulers, the French also imported a pre-existing educational system in its entirety, including institutional models, a foreign language of instruction (French replacing Chinese), lecturers trained in France, and a European curriculum. The university had difficulty recruiting qualified students suitably proficient in French and consequently closed in 1908 after only 41 students completed the university's inaugural year (Tran, 1998). It reopened in 1917 followed by a succession of universities and colleges with content, scientific and technological programmes and training modelled closely on French colleges and universities of the
time. Traditional examinations in the Confucian tradition ceased between 1915 and 1918 (Tran, 1998).

The restructuring, which involved exclusionary, restrictive, and exploitative character, however, drew criticism and led to the rise of a new and increasingly radicalized anti-colonial sentiment. London (2011, p.9) describes the situation as follows:

Indeed, Vietnamese struggles against French education policies were critical the development of anti-colonial sentiment. Ironically, French colonialism contributed not only to the demise of Confucian institutions, but also to the rise of a new and increasingly radicalized anti-colonial intelligentsia, members of which would ultimately overturn French rule.

According to Ziguras et al., (2017) French rulers in the early Twentieth Century left their mark on Vietnamese higher education with the establishment of a modern higher education system. While much of the content of higher education has changed since, the institutional form of Vietnamese higher education today would be immediately recognisable to a French academic of the 1920s.

3.2.3 The creation of a European socialist higher education system in Vietnam

The Communist Party of Vietnam took control of higher education in the North from 1945 and the South from 1975, restructuring the unified system in line with the Soviet model (Kelly, 2000; Welch, 2010). Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam's future national hero, was the main figure who established a new political ideology and also a new education ideology from the Soviet Union (London, 2011). Ho Chi Minh studied in both the traditional Chinese system and the French education system in Vietnam before moving overseas. He became more immersed in socialist internationalism during his 30 years abroad where he was educated within Communist organizations in France, the Soviet Union and China (Ziguras et al., 2017). Ho Chi Minh was the main figure who declared Vietnam's independence over France in 1945 and the reunification of North and South Vietnam in 1975. He believed that education was the way out of foreign domination (London, 2011 p.11). He wrote about the very important role of learning as follows:

Whether the Vietnamese mountains and rivers will attain glory and whether the Vietnamese land will gloriously stand on an equal footing with the
powers in the five continents, this depends to a great extent on your studies...(cited in Huong & Fry, 2004, p.306).

London (2011, p.11) points out that “anti-colonial politics fuelled an interest in education.” Indeed, it was not only Ho Chi Minh who realised that education was the key to building the country's strength during the independence struggle. After declaring Vietnam's independence in 1945, “the Viet Minh and sympathetic forces provided literacy training to some ten million previously uneducated Vietnamese” (Woodside 1983, p.401). There were also other scholars who made demands for more inclusive educational institutions (London, 2011).

The Soviet Union's influence on Vietnamese higher education was profound with the standard features of socialist centrally planned systems being applied to an expanded range of institutions (Ziguras et al., 2017). After the nation's unification and the embrace of Socialism and Communism, a single unified system of education and Marxist-Leninist related subjects such as Ho Chi Minh Thought, History of the Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist Political Economy and Scientific Socialism were mandated for study by all students in universities across the country (Morgan, 2005). Textbook, curricula and teaching methods were also imported from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) often known as the Soviet Union. Furthermore, industry-specific universities were created under the management of a wide range of government departments to meet sector-specific workforce requirements as part of planning for national workforce development. National research institutes were created outside of universities (Tibbetts, 2007).

One of the main characteristics of Marxism-Leninism study is the emphasis on raising socialist morality (Morgan, 2005). According to Morgan (2005) there are two different types of morality taught in Vietnam, traditional morality and socialist morality. Traditional morality is taught predominately in primary schools focusing on character and personality building, while in secondary schools, socialist morality, and citizenship is taught. Comprehensive Marxist-Leninist related subjects, such as socialist ideologies and principles are taught in higher education. Morgan (2005) points out in a comparison of moral education as taught in three socialist countries, China, Cuba and Vietnam that, for Vietnam “in higher education, the ideas of inculcating socialist thoughts and socialist principles are as important as building intellectual ability” (Morgan, 2005, p.
395). Noteworthy, as socialist morality emphasises collectivism and acceptance of hierarchy, it shares similar values with Confucianism.

As can be seen, the Soviet Union's influence on Vietnamese higher education was profound. However, Vietnamese higher education has since undergone a tremendous change after the collapse of the socialist systems of the Soviet Union followed by the rise of the market economy. Since economic renovation was implemented in 1986, it has been bringing many changes to the country and this includes higher education reform and internationalisation as we will see in the next section.

3.2.4 Economic transition during the adoption of internationalisation

Vietnam is described as “a country with great but unrealised potential” (Huong & Fry, 2004, p.301). The prospects of the country, in terms of economic and intellectual capabilities, rely significantly on improvements to its university system (Huong & Fry, 2004). In the transition to a mixed economy, the Vietnamese government has sought to reform higher education to serve the nation's strategy of modernisation and industrialisation of the economy (Ziguras et al., 2017). According to Ziguras and Pham (2014, p.172) Vietnam's view of higher education was in line with “international agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and these agencies have been influential in advising the Government of Vietnam at critical phases of policy development.” Development of transnational education is expected to improve local graduate competency profiles to meet the skills required by the labour market. Some graduate skills demanded by the growth of economic globalisation in Vietnam include problem-solving, work planning skills, communication and presentation skills, and teamwork (Hong, 2011).

In 1986, when Vietnam's the economic renovation was introduced, many changes in higher education were implemented. These included the shift from a central state planned system to one which encompassed increased levels of privatised higher education and transnational education and the goal of having a modern higher education consistent with a knowledge-based economy by 2020 (Huong & Fry, 2004). The new law announced under Resolution 14 is also known as higher education reform agenda. Resolution 14 is aimed as follows:

By 2020, to put root and branch reform of national education toward
standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration; to improve the quality of education comprehensively, including education of morals, life skills, creative ability, ability to perform practical skills, foreign languages and information technology proficiency; to meet the demand for human resources, especially highly skilled positions, for national industrialization and modernization and formation of a knowledge-based economy; to assure social equality in education and lifelong learning opportunities for everyone, to systematically create a learning society (Nghi, 2010, p.52).

Radical reform, however, came with great challenges. The USSR established the foundation of many aspects of Vietnam education including specialisation in Mathematics and Science (Huong & Fry, 2004). However, the Soviet based education system of specialisation and ideologically oriented social sciences was considered incompatible with the free-market economy (Hayden & Lam, 2010; Huong & Fry, 2004). The Soviet higher education's model of elite research-only institutes discourages the growth of a research culture in Vietnam's higher education institutions (Hayden & Lam, 2010). As a result, according to Harman and Bich (2010), the Soviet model isolates researchers in national institutes from training activities and the real demands of national social and economic needs (Harman & Bich, 2010). In terms of teaching, the Soviet model is more teaching centred which is described as not encouraging deep learning through interactive modes with less emphasis on student learning and more on didactic-style teaching (Harman, 2005b; Harman & Bich, 2010; Hayden 2005b; Lam 2005a; the World Bank 2007). Another issue came from the teaching method that emphasises rote learning indicated by UNESCO after a yearly examination of Vietnamese teaching and learning. As a result, UNESCO (2000) “suggested that Vietnamese students need to be trained with new methods so that they can be provided with the new working skills such as activeness, cooperativeness, creativeness and argumentativeness” (Tran, 2000, p.14). Since there was an enormous gap in the transformation to a knowledge-based economy, the first decade of higher education reform was slow to accommodate the needs of modern education. It was a period of trial and error, experimentation and searching for an appropriate direction (George, 2011).
The Vietnamese government, like most others across the region, sees internationalisation of universities as a necessary condition for achieving national progress through fostering greater engagement with the global economy (Ziguras et al., 2017). According to Tran, Ngo, Nguyen and Dang (2017, p.1900) “within this internationalisation agenda, policy borrowing and learning from the world has been identified as one of the main pillars of internationalisation of higher education in Vietnam. The new law announced under Resolution 14 shows the Vietnam government's interest in transnational education as a means to achieve the goal of having modern education. The policy is described as follows:

The development of a more internationally integrated higher education system, involving more international commitments and agreements, improvements in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (especially English), and the development of conditions favourable to increased foreign investment in the higher education system (Harman, 2005, p.3).

One of the planks of Vietnam's higher education reform strategies since 2005 has been an emphasis on SCL (Harman & Bich, 2010; Hong, 2011). Resolution No. 14 prompted Vietnam's higher education institutes to move from passive to interactive teaching modes in order to enhance deep learning and problem-based learning (Harman & Bich, 2010). The education minister asserted that “Learning by rote needs to be eliminated from all school levels and replaced with student-centred” (Thanh, 2000). This statement clearly represents the adoption of pedagogical approaches that are globally dominant.

There has been a growth of internationalisation and privatisation in the higher education sector, especially in joint programs. According to Nhan and Nguyen (2018) the joint programs are generally in a form of an import-oriented approach to adopting 'whole-package' Western programs and standards. Foreign providers are in charge of managing curriculum, monitoring academic performance and awarding degrees while local institutions are in charge of infrastructure, admission, and administration tasks (Le, 2016; Phan, 2017). The growth of transnational education in Vietnam became prominent when the first fully foreign owned university, RMIT International University Vietnam, a branch campus of an Australian university was licensed and the regulatory framework for foreign investment in education was promulgated (Nguyen, 2013). Australia is the largest foreign provider of education in Vietnam followed by the United
Kingdom (Ziguras & Pham, 2014).

While Vietnam is still in a state of transition, adjusting to many contradictions and complications, there have been some concerns over the free market economy and the concept of globalisation of education on how they might affect Vietnam's distinctive values and culture. Huong and Fry (2004), for example argued that the free-market economy had weakened important national values such as traditional morality associated with CHC and socialist morality. Mai and Hall (2016) and Pham, (2016) have expressed concerns regarding the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing, arguing that imitating a Western pedagogical style will not serve the country well since inappropriate ways of implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning. Mai et al. (2012) also express a concern that, under the pressure of financial loans and the continuing need to modernize, Vietnam is rapidly reforming its education system without much attention to the possibility of false universalism, the belief that a practice that originated from elsewhere can be “cloned” with similar results. Tran et al., (2017, p.1900) point out that “one of the key concerns is around the nature of [policy] borrowing, whether it is passive, selective or creative borrowing and its impacts on the development of higher education in the country as a whole.”

The Vietnamese government believes that these tensions can be managed, encouraging the higher education sector to produce university graduates who demonstrate the required skills for the market-economy and, at the same time, preserve Vietnam's essential and distinctive culture and values (Huong & Fry, 2004). These tensions are particularly acute in international programs in Vietnam which are taught in English using overtly international teaching methods.

3.3 Challenges in implementing of SCL in Vietnam

SCL has been a crucial part of Vietnam's higher education reform strategies since 2005. As stated by the education ministry, “learning by rote needs to be eliminated from all school levels and replaced with student-centred learning...” (Cited in Thanh, 2010, p.25). However, there have been many obstacles slowing down the adoption of SCL. Some writers have expressed disappointment about the level of change. Factors that hinder the implementation of SCL are: exam-centred education, hierarchical
relationships, textbook-driven curriculum and infrastructure conditions and resource limitations (Hong, 2011; Pham, 2016; Nguyen & Williams, 2016; Thanh, 2010). More or less, these factors correlated to and are influenced by Confucianism. These are outlined in the following subsections.

### 3.3.1 Exam-centred education

According to Biggs (1997, p.18) “examinations are norm-referenced and fiercely competitive in virtually all CHC systems.” This emphasis on examination, which is a form of summative assessment, shapes CHC students' perception of learning. CHC students seem to focus on receiving high grades rather than innovative learning activities especially when they are unsure as to how the innovative learning can contribute to their grades (Kwang, 2004). In the case of Vietnam, as it has been referred to previously in this chapter, Confucianism has influenced on the Vietnamese education system, in particular where norm-referenced examinations have been employed to demonstrate scholarly distinction (Luong, 2015). Until now, exam-centred education still has deep roots in the Vietnamese education system. This is still the case even after the higher education reform in 2005 where the Ministry of education and Training (MoET) issued the decision requiring student assessment to be more aligned with constructive learning approaches (Luong, 2015).

The dominant form of assessment in Vietnam has been summative examinations such as multiple-choice, oral vivas and short-answer questions (Luong, 2015). This summative form of assessment is being described as 'assessment of learning' (Black & William, 1998). The following interview with a teacher illustrates the situation of exam-centred education in Vietnam where summative assessment is dominant and employed as a means of assessing how well learners have acquired knowledge and skills:

> Normally I teach all necessary knowledge for the unit in my classes, and then I assess them in the mid-term exam and in the end-of-unit exam [...]. I expect my students to memorise the knowledge in the unit [...]. Through engaging with the exam question, I wish my students to show they have achieved the knowledge that I have conveyed (Luong, 2015, p.80)

SCL, or constructive learning, on the other hand, employs formative assessment. As opposed to summative assessment, formative assessment is known as 'assessment for
learning' which aims to improve learners' learning through teachers' feedback which can be given during learning activities such as discussion, dialogue and reflection. To be able to provide effective feedback, learning activities should allow interaction between teachers and learners (Black & William, 1998). Biggs (1996) identifies that, in order to make constructive learning successful, there is a need for a 'constructive alignment' between intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and student assessment practices. A study of Luong (2015) points out that the exam centred education is not well aligned with a higher education reform aiming for constructive learning. Luong (2015) indicates that without 'constructive alignment' the reform of having modern education by 2020 would not be effectively completed.

There have been increasing concerns about exam-centred education as it leads to many issues affecting the Vietnam higher education reform. A study of Pham (2016, p.17) shows the implementation of SCL was constrained by a system in which “students' performance on examinations is prioritised and pedagogical practices need to cater for this priority.” In this context, both teachers and students are under a system where their performance is evaluated based on the students' examination results. As such, both teachers and students might not be keen on adapting their teaching and learning style to match with SCL since it is not aligned to the kind of knowledge that could help students perform well on examinations.

Although exam-centred education contributes to students' academic success in achieving high test scores, education experts and even parents started to question whether the exam-centred education is still relevant to the 21st century of education and the real world of work. For example, a news report from VietNamNet Bridge (2015) found that, in 2014-2015, many schools in Vietnam, especially in urban areas, reported having 80-90 percent of students receiving the title 'excellent student'. This “Bệnh thành tích”, translated as “achievement syndrome” (London, 2011, p.28) makes educational experts skeptical. An expert said “I am afraid that with the exam-oriented education, we will produce generations of students who always stay in the passive mode and only try to learn to pass exams” (VietNamNet Bridge, 2015). For example, a father of an 'excellent student' is proud of his daughter's achievement of the high test scores. He admits, however, that he cannot be proud of his daughter's life skills (VietNamNet Bridge, 2015). Another example is from a teacher who sees that student assessment
needs to go beyond 'assessment of learning' to 'assessment for learning'. The teacher explains:

So far, the learning purpose has been targeted for higher scores rather than for improvement in our higher education. I think that learning for achieving the scores is an understandable purpose, but it does not mean everything. If learning is merely for achieving high marks, it does not challenge the students' thoughts and it diminishes the students' attempts. Also, grades do not assist students to realise their own strengths and weaknesses. I believe students' assessment must help students to learn through guidance and feedback (Luong, 2015, p.71).

Besides the factor of Confucianism influences on exam-centred education, there are other factors that slow down student assessment reform. First of all, teachers, who have been expected to implement the change, do not always receive the support they need from those in the upper level. The following example illustrates the issue:

A teacher received complaints from neighbouring classes that his students were too noisy. He was then advised by the headmaster that “people look at the number of students that pass the national exam, not at how they learn. Therefore, stop it! (cited in Mai, et al., 2012).

Vietnamese teachers also found they were not receiving the professional development they needed to implement the student assessment reform (Luong, 2015, p.122). A teacher's comment below illustrates the issue:

Currently, my university is encouraging the staff to make more changes but we are not provided with sufficient professional development. A few years ago, the MoET [Ministry of Education and Training] held some short training courses and workshops in the form of projects. Few years later, these projects expired and then the MoET did not organise any other professional development in terms of teaching and student assessment innovation...(Luong, 2015, p.122)

Finally, the issue of infrastructure conditions and resource limitations are the obstacles preventing teachers changing from summative to formative assessment. A teacher
describes a situation:

[…] There are also too many students in a classroom (approximately 50 to 60 students), and the training curriculum is heavy in theoretical knowledge. Thus, for some units I barely have sufficient time to go through all materials […] I know that if the students submit their written essays or assignments, I should have carefully provided them with timely feedback on their performance. However, with these constraints, I am unable to carry out this function well (Luong, 2015, p.125).

Up to this point, it can be seen, exam-centred education does not match well with SCL where constructive learning and formative assessment are emphasised. The main obstacles slowing down the change of student assessment from summative to formative includes; Confucianism influences, inadequate support and on-going professional development provided to teachers and, finally the issue of infrastructure conditions. These issues need to be taken care of since students' attitudes and perceptions toward learning are developed significantly from educational approaches such as goals of education, assessment methods and feedback mechanisms. As explained by Kember (2000) students will adopt a surface approach if that is what the course and assessment require them to do or if that approach enables them to achieve the set learning outcomes.

### 3.3.2 Textbook-driven curriculum

A textbook-driven curriculum has been a dominant part of Vietnamese education. Within the Confucian tradition, knowledge is respected and should be transmitted. More or less, the teacher's role is to transmit the knowledge in the textbooks to students. This belief, however, does not really go well with the SCL approach which emphasises knowledge construction and promotes students' creativity (Pham, 2013).

Besides the Confucianism influences, a study by Phan, Lupton and Watters (2016) finds that higher education curriculum development and the emphasis on textbooks is the result of a top-down approach in which objectives were set, contents were chosen and curriculum frameworks were prescribed and controlled by MoET. More than a decade since the higher education reform in 2005 took place, Vietnamese higher education curriculum is still often described as theoretical based, content overloaded and textbook
teacher-centred to SCL is unlikely to be totally completed. Such a combination leaves little room for SCL and constructive learning to grow as can be seen from the following example:

It was still textbook-based and the teachers dominated the process. The teachers followed the same format in every lesson: explaining and illustrating the new lessons, setting exercises, leading the student to complete the tasks in the textbook, guiding the pace and content of each activity and finishing lessons. When working in groups, the students were often to review those sections they had learned and had been explained by the teachers with the main purpose of helping them memorise the text better...(Pham, 2013, p.72).

Another reason that may cause teachers to hesitate to break through the practice of textbook-based teaching and learning is that the reputation of Asian teachers, including Vietnamese are often measured by their students' success on textbook-based exams (Pham, 2013). Teachers tend to use the 'right answer approach' instead of allowing students to work it out for themselves to ensure every student understood the lessons accurately and could provide the correct answers on the exam (Pham, 2013). Pham (2013) addresses the negative effect of a textbook-driven curriculum to student learning as:

The teachers explained they need to limit the time spent on students' group work and questions because they must complete the curriculum to prepare the students for upcoming exams. No matter what and how the teachers taught, they needed to complete the textbook because all exams were based on these textbooks (Pham, 2013, p.74).

Thanh (2010, p. 27) raised a concern that such curricula leads to a “didactic spoon-feeding” approach where “students are limited in developing their deep approach or thinking critically as they process through the program.” Up to this point, it can be clearly seen that the textbook-driven curriculum approach leave students with no choice but to study from the textbook or memorise the knowledge from the textbooks in preparation for the examination. If this loop is continued then the goal of changing from teacher-centred to SCL is unlikely to be totally completed.
3.3.3 Hierarchical relationships

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the hierarchical relationship in Vietnam has been influenced by Confucianism. Within the Confucian tradition, teachers take an authoritarian role and are the source of knowledge and wisdom. Students are expected to display an unquestioning acceptance of what teachers teach (Nguyen & McInnis, 2002). In this Confucian heritage culture where teacher-centred approaches are employed, the quality of learning depends on the excellence of teachers (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, the principle of SCL values mutual respect within the student-teacher relationship and teacher responsibility for student empowerment (Attard, 2010). Due to the conflict of values between the two pedagogical approaches, teachers and students are hesitant to adapt to SCL.

A common issue arises due to the difficulty for Vietnamese teachers and students to follow the approach that seems to empower students and detracts from the teacher's authority. A study by (Luong, 2015, p.81) shows teachers still performing using the authoritative teaching style:

The lecturers must have high prestige in knowledge, have respect from their students, and must be a good example for the student to follow […]. They should have power and authority in the teaching and assessment process.

There is a proverb describing the traditional role of Vietnamese teachers as “one does not dare step on a teacher's shadow” (Thanh, 2010, p. 31). These sets of values and beliefs about the role of the teacher make both teachers and students hesitant to change. Specifically, this approach could put teachers at the risk of losing face among their students. Thanh (2010, p.28) concludes that:

As such, the principles of student-centred approach that allow students to begin developing their knowledge with the students themselves, then exchange information within the group to get collective knowledge which may exceed the knowledge of their teacher, and finally can be able to bring the teacher's knowledge into question seem unrealistic. It seems really hard for Vietnamese teachers to lower their role from a 'king' to a facilitator who moves from group to group to observe and motivate learning.
This hierarchical relationship not only affects the way Vietnamese teachers adapt to SCL but it also affects Vietnamese students. For example, keeping quiet behaviour is considered an appropriate behaviour as can be seen from the proverbs, “think seven times before speaking out”; “one time self-denial means nine times goodness” (Mai, et al., 2012, p.148). Students keep quiet in class as a way to show respect to their teachers, as Nguyen (2002) states:

Since keeping quiet in class is to show respect to teachers as well as to create a productive learning environment, being talkative, interrupting, bragging, or challenging the teacher are not typical of Vietnamese culture. Such behaviour is strongly criticized and avoided.

Hierarchical relationships have also been influential on Vietnamese university management style. As described by Luong (2015, p.4), “teachers are subject to the authority of, and must be respectful towards, their education managers, just as students are subject to, and must be respectful towards, their teachers”. Marginson (2011, p.595) notes that “centralised authority is a tendency that is typical of educational management in countries with Confucian traditions, deriving from the importance attached in these countries to maintaining a social and institutional hierarchy.” In contrast, Attard et al., (2010, p.9) recommend a flat hierarchy within higher education institutions for the following reasons:

...given that SCL in and of itself requires a higher level of cooperation between all institutional levels, it pre-supposes that the hierarchy within higher education institutions is rather flat. SCL therefore favours a more collaborative approach within institutions, allowing for more representation of both students and staff within the relevant governance structure.

The change from teaching-based to learning-based approaches requires coordination of strategies at the departmental, institutional and governmental level (Hong, 2011, p.253). In looking at the institutional level on how SCL has been implemented in Vietnam, the problems come from rigid management of a traditional bureaucratic management structure which has a direct effect at the faculty level (Hong, 2011, p. 251). The problem is described by Hong (2011, p.245) as follows:

In the [Professional Oriented Higher Education Project] PROFED project, a
bottom-up process of educational change, starting from lectures and faculties, achieved a certain momentum. However, organisation and management rigidities at the level of university administration have jeopardized and continue to jeopardize the PROFED project and its prospects of success. Unlike elsewhere in the world where academic professional experts (professors) are the foundation of universities, Vietnam's universities are based on an administrative hierarchy.

Hong (2011, p. 253) recommends that, in order to make the reform successful from the bottom up (faculty level), it needs the university administration to change from controlling and commanding to a supportive, quality-conscious and responsive management approach. A study by Luong (2015, p.128) also argues that the institutional hierarchy system and exercise of authority in Vietnamese universities are not supportive of student assessment reform. An example from his study describes the situation:

I see that the Head of Department and university leaders expect their staff to listen and implement their orders. I believe that the educational leaders need to listen to and welcome different opinions from their teachers to make change happen, but the opposing ideas or opinions are often excluded […]. Thus, many lecturers tend to show a surface compliance to their leaders.

Luong (2015, p.36) recommends that to change from a 'testing culture' to a 'learning culture', “higher education in Vietnam needs to be seen as complex adaptive systems that accommodate the dynamism and interconnectivity of all the elements in the organisation and the broader system.” At this point, it can be seen that the rigid hierarchy authority of higher levels and subservience of lower levels have been inhibited innovation in the teaching practice of SCL. It is not easy to change, however, since it is dealing with social formality and morality of respecting authority that has been rooted in Vietnamese culture for centuries.

3.3.4 Infrastructure conditions and resource limitations

The World Bank (2007) is an organisation that supports the knowledge economy and SCL in Vietnam. One of its Quality Improvement Grant (QIG) schemes is to “set up new education centres using international consultants for introducing modern teaching ideas and methods in the move from passive to interactive learning” (Harman 2005b,
p1-2). According to Harman and Bich (2010, p.82), funds “granted to Vietnam by the World Bank for quality improvements via QIGs in universities have gone largely into building or upgrading classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other educational facilities.” However, there still have been some issues related to large class size and inadequacy of online materials resources such as e-libraries that slow down the implementation of SCL.

A typical class size of a Vietnamese classroom is around 50-70 students (Luong, 2015; Thanh, 2010). Besides the effect of large class size on student assessment as previously mentioned, Thanh (2010) illustrates that the issue of large class size does not allow teachers to assign students to work in small groups since there would be many groups working simultaneously and teachers would not have enough time to monitor each group. Thanh (2010, p.26) believes that this situation is not really conducive for Vietnamese teachers to adopt SCL as stated below:

This places Vietnamese teachers in a circumstance in which they have no choice, but have to adopt low level teaching strategies such as lecturing. This is the only method which makes them feel that they distribute knowledge to all students fairly. As a result, teachers become the only ones talking and instructing.

Another example is from a study of Luong (2015, p.125) showing the difficulty in facilitating student learning, let alone facilitating SCL:

I have to teach several large class sizes with 40 or 50 students, for the compound classes, it is up to 100 to 150 students, thus it is hard for me to fully manage the classrooms and assess the students' learning in an effective way.

In contrast, in Western classes the number of students is much smaller (Thanh, 2010) which would allow teachers to apply SCL approaches more effectively. Thus, without Vietnamese universities taking steps to reduce class sizes, the implementation of SCL is unlikely to be effective.

The inadequacy of online material resources, especially e-libraries in Vietnamese higher education is another factor slowing down the implementation of SCL (Thanh, 2010).
Attard et al., (2010) points out that e-library resources enable students to access information in out-of-classroom settings and become more self-directed, independent learners and assume greater control over their own learning.

In summary, these online material resources are needed for SCL facilitation since learning does not only occur in the classrooms. Online material resources enable students to learn in their own time at a place of their choice and prepare for their study. Furthermore, these online material resources can be integrated into face-to-face teaching.

3.4 Adaptation strategies

In the previous section we saw that of all the challenges that slow down the adoption of SCL, cultural factors are the most difficult to manage. This section reviews Vietnamese studies on the strategies recommended for educators to help them deal with factors hampering the implementation of SCL in Vietnam institutions. Teacher support, intercultural perspectives, culturally appropriate pedagogy and hybrid approaches are found amongst important strategies recommended by educators. Reviewing each study enables me to see benefits of the strategies as well as limitations of study areas for further investigation.

3.4.1 Support for teachers

In the previous section, we can see that Vietnamese teachers have been under pressure to change their teaching practices from teacher-centred to student-centred. In many cases, they have not received adequate or appropriate training that could allow them to effectively implement the SCL approaches (Luong, 2015). Moreover, they have not been given academic freedom to accommodate the change since they operate under a rigid hierarchical authority (Hong, 2011; Luong, 2015). There have been studies recommending that teachers should be given adequate and appropriate support including professional development, authority and academic freedom to accommodate the change (Attard et al., 2010; Luong, 2015). The following studies represent how effective supports could help teachers improve their implementation of SCL.

Thanh (2010) identifies that imposing principles of SCL to teachers, and expecting them to change without providing adequate training, is likely to cause rejections.
Instead, teachers should be provided with experiences that makes them willing and able to change. Thanh (2010) recommends providing professional development programs for teachers as a way to help them become aware of the disadvantages of the teacher-centred approach and appreciate the advantages of the student-centred approach. This is important since, once teachers are aware of those factors, they can then influence students to change their approach to learning.

Pham (2013) addresses the point that a basic one-off training workshop provided at the beginning of each intervention that simply teaches the teachers the new practice of SCL did not guarantee effective outcomes because it is often inadequate in preparing the teacher for reality. Instead, Pham (2013) recommends that several workshops should be organised during the implementation process. Importantly, the workshops should aim to keep teachers interested in carrying out the reform, for example, by giving teachers opportunities to discuss with their managers the difficulties facing them and together develop techniques that could help teachers adjust their practices in a culturally appropriate manner. For this type of workshop, teachers require frequent negotiations among and mutual support between teachers and people at different levels that could help teachers improve understanding, perception and practice of SCL.

Last but not least, Phan et al., (2016, p.11) indicate that one of the directions that can enable institutions to approach the higher education reform effectively includes institutions providing academic freedom to their teachers to accommodate the change of textbook and curriculum reform. To be specific, this research emphasises “establishing a platform or a forum for professional dialogues and conversations about curriculum, and for adequate training for those who are involved.”

In summary, the support recommended by Vietnamese scholars is aimed at avoiding situations in which SCL is simply imposed onto Vietnamese teachers. Once teachers have been supported and empowered, these scholars argue, they are more likely to appreciate being treated in a more equal manner by people from the upper levels. Subsequently, this positive experience could influence the teachers to do the same with their students. As such, the culture of a top-down managerial approach and rigid hierarchical authority could be moved toward a culture of mutual support which simultaneously fits well with the Confucian values of collectivism and the SCL values where equal relationships and mutual support are emphasised. However, if in order to
change the culture of teaching, first the culture of the organisations has to be changed, this opens up a whole set of challenges which will be difficult to deal with since Vietnamese institutions are quite hierarchical. There is also a risk that the 'empowered' teachers might decide to teach in a very conventional way because it is what they know and what is easiest for them.

3.4.2 Helping students to develop intercultural perspectives

As mentioned in section 3.3, Vietnamese students have been under pressure to change their learning style from teacher-centred to student-centred. In cases where SCL has been imposed upon students with little support to help them develop appropriate skills and the right mindset, students could be placed under even more stress. There have been studies in the cross-cultural teaching and learning context recommending teachers to move away from the practice of imposing a new learning culture onto students. Instead teachers should be helping students to develop intercultural perspectives that could help their students effectively adapt to the new learning culture (Bodycott & Walker, 2010; Wang, 2008).

In searching for literature on developing intercultural perspectives for Vietnamese students, there is only one study found to be relevant. Ho (2011) investigates intercultural teaching and learning in tertiary English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Vietnam. The study points out that culture and culture learning is not emphasised in the current curriculum frameworks and in national education policy. In order to equip Vietnamese students for an increasingly multicultural world, the author stresses that students need to have intercultural competency. In this study, one of the benefits shown was that the students in the intercultural class were able to better articulate ethnorelative awareness and attitudes towards their home culture and the target culture. It also indicated the important benefit of intercultural teaching and learning as it cultivated the learner's affective capabilities which are often overlooked in the EFL classroom. The author emphasises that intercultural competence is a life-long task and Vietnamese students need to put more effort into developing their intercultural competence in the classroom and beyond in order to be effective living in a globalised world. This study enables me to see that there is more room for the intercultural approach to grow; it is not limited to language study of EFL classrooms but also exists in cross-cultural learning and teaching in international higher education programs.
where the issues of cultural tension are obvious.

3.4.3 Culturally appropriate pedagogy

There have been concerns amongst Vietnamese teachers regarding the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing. The argument is that imitating the west-based pedagogical style will not serve the country well since inappropriate ways of implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning (Mai & Hall, 2016; Pham, 2016). There has been debate about the appropriateness of simply imposing Western educational approaches onto established traditions of learning and teaching.

Mai et al., (2012) recommend a strategy of culturally appropriate pedagogy where it takes into account cultural factors and responses arising from two educational environments. The authors investigated the adoption of Western style cooperative learning (CL) in Vietnam and found that the Western style of CL is different from Vietnamese authentic traditional CL. This study shows a culture related learning issue that probably causes Vietnamese students to be less participative in the Western style of CL, especially for face to face group discussion in class. This study recommends a strong need to identify and incorporate indigenous practice in the process of education reform, otherwise it may lead to a “pseudo” version of methodology where it may end up satisfying an administrative goal rather than a means of fostering learning. Finally, the culturally appropriate pedagogy of CL should be in a true hybrid form of the ultimate mix of both authentic traditional CL and the Western-based CL. In terms of further research, the authors point out more research should be conducted to prove the validity of the implication on hybrid forms of CL.

Pham (2016) investigates the effective implementation of student-centredness by exploring the culturally appropriate pedagogical space in Vietnamese higher education classrooms using activity theory. This research attempted to find out how a group of “lecturers and students adapted their pedagogical practices, taking into account both traditional practices and contemporary influences, to make student-centred pedagogies more feasible and effective in their classrooms” (Pham, 2016, p.3). The finding of the study shows that, “hybrid practices helped students improve their learning outcomes, especially to enhance their complex knowledge” (2016, p.1). This study also found that
even in the case where students' performance in examinations is prioritised and pedagogical practices need to cater for this priority, hybrid practice can help students gain the high-order knowledge they need. This study affirms the merit of the third space concept and encourages the teacher who is the most important factor in determining the success or failure of the reform to “negotiate with various actors within the systems to create this third space to sustain and nourish the reform” (2016, p.18). Pham (2016) however, acknowledges that the study had some limitations. One of the limitations was that the teacher participants were not familiar with basic student-centred learning principles and activities since the researcher did not provide sufficient professional development preparation in SCL practices to the participants. Another limitation was due to generalisation of the findings since this study was conducted with students studying only in the Art discipline. The researcher indicates that more studies are required to investigate the extent that findings of this study that can be usefully applied in a range of contexts. In sum, Pham's study provides evidence to support the third space. However, with the limitations of research that was conducted on teacher participants who were not familiar with basic SCL principles and activities, I realise there is a need to conduct similar research at institutions where teachers are more familiar with the approach. This could possibly lead to more insights into how effective hybrid practices could be initiated. With regard to the issue of generalisation of findings, I find there is a need to conduct research with a discipline that is offered widely in Vietnam to allow a better generalisation of findings.

The above studies indicate challenges and solutions in implementing SCL to students at local universities. However, little is known about what hinders or supports the implementation of SCL at international universities that are partnered with, or owned by, a foreign provider. Most research done by transnational educational providers mainly focuses on quality assurance, regulation issues and cross-border mobility (Nhan & Nguyen, 2018, Ziguras, 2001). Less attention is paid to particular issues regarding the implementation of SCL, let along any investigation of the intercultural, hybrid or third space approaches. This gap in literature indicates a need to examine the implementation of SCL in international universities to find new insights and evidence to confirm and inform effective and appropriate practices in this cultural context.

3.5 Conclusion
This chapter has examined foreign influences and the integration of SCL into the Vietnamese higher education system and identified gaps in literature by reviewing the transition of Vietnamese higher education since Doi Moi. Though SCL has been a crucial part of Vietnam's higher education reform strategies since 2005, there have been many obstacles decelerating the adoption of SCL. Some writers have expressed disappointment about the level of change (Hong, 2011; Pham, 2016; Nguyen & Williams, 2016; Thanh, 2010). I have investigated the situation and found factors that impede the implementation of SCL. These factors are due to: (1) exam centred education, (2) textbook driven curriculum, (3) hierarchical relationship, (4) infrastructure conditions and resource limitations. Amongst all the challenges, cultural factors are the most difficult to manage. In particular, there have been concerns amongst Vietnamese teachers regarding the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing and the argument is that imitating the west-based pedagogical style will not serve the country well since inappropriate ways of implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning (Mai & Hall, 2016; Pham, 2016). Many studies recommend moving away from the practice of imposing SCL on teachers and students but instead providing relevant and effective training and support to them to effectively adapt to the new learning culture. Teacher support, intercultural, culturally appropriate pedagogy and the hybrid approach are found amongst important strategies recommended by educators.
Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Overview

In chapter 3, I reviewed literature investigating the implementation of SCL approaches to Vietnamese higher education in 2005. Many studies have shown obstacles slowing down the adoption of SCL in Vietnamese universities (Hong 2011, Luong, 2015, Phan et al., 2016, Thanh, 2010), but little is known about what hampers or supports the implementation of SCL at international universities that are partnered with, or owned by, a foreign provider. This chapter outlines the methodological framework, data collection and data analysis used in this study to investigate the experience of SCL approach in international universities. Furthermore, this chapter explains strategies used for establishing validation of the investigation. Lastly, it illustrates the strategies used to ensure privacy, confidentiality and ethical conduct in the research process.

4.2 Research context

This section frames the research context by further describing the methodological approaches of prior research reviewed previously in chapter three. This helps to position my study in relation to established methodological practice related to my topic and describes the precedents for my study. The following table shows the studies from the earliest to the most recent. Information from these studies will also be referred to in other sections of this chapter.

Table 4.1: Previous studies relating to educational reform and implementation of SCL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title of Study/ Author [s]/ Year of Study</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Methods/ Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implementing a Student-Centred Approach at Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions: Barriers under Layers of Casual Layered Analysis Thanh, P.T.H. 2010</td>
<td>This study aims to determine effective strategies to make a student-centred learning approach more adaptive in non-Western countries.</td>
<td>This study applies Casual Layered Analysis as a framework to examine learning and teaching approaches at Vietnamese educational institutions and the implant of Western approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>An Investigation of Intercultural Teaching and Learning in Tertiary EFL [English as a Foreign Language] Classrooms in Vietnam</td>
<td>This study aims to investigate intercultural teaching and learning in tertiary EFL classrooms in Vietnam.</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cooperative Learning in Vietnam and the West-East educational transfer.</td>
<td>This study aims to investigate the adoption of Western style cooperative learning in Vietnam</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data collected from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student-centredness: Exploring the culturally appropriate pedagogical space in Vietnamese higher education classrooms using activity theory</td>
<td>This study aims to investigate how a group of Vietnamese lecturers and students adapted their pedagogical practices, taking into account both traditional practices and contemporary influences, to make</td>
<td>Design-based research methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | student-centred pedagogies more feasible and effective in their classrooms. | 1) analysis of students' performance on midterm and final assignments  
2) observations of student and teacher interactions during small group activities as captured on audio tapes  
3) analysis of students' problems and views about their learning in the course posted on online discussion forums.  
4) interviews with individual students selected from the three classes. |
|---|---|---|
|5 | **Understandings of the higher education curriculum in Vietnam**  
Phan, T.N., Lupton, M. & Watters, J. J. 2016 | This study aims to explore the understandings of curriculum expressed by senior staff, academics and students at a Vietnamese university.  
**Qualitative, Interpretive Approach**  
**Data collected from:**  
A Vietnamese University  
**Participants:**  
Senior administrators = 3  
Academics = 15  
Students = 21 |
|6 | **Changing views of teachers and teaching in Vietnam**  
Mai, H. N. T. & Hall, C. (2016) | The aim of this study is to contribute to discussions about the implementation of educational reform in Vietnam through consideration of an action research project that focused on introducing constructivist pedagogies to Vietnamese teacher education students.  
**Action Research Methodology**  
**Questionnaires**  
**Two main activities:** designed to provide opportunities for the student teachers to work together in an informal, supportive and discursive environment.  
**Data collected from:**  
A central teacher training institution in Vietnam  
**Participants:** |
The studies above align with my study in four key ways. First, all are Vietnamese institutions with teachers who are relatively new to SCL. Second, several examined teachers' views and experiences using interviews, observations and surveys. Third, a few examined students' experiences. Fourth, several looked at the institutional policies. Finally, four of them examined the preparation of staff and students. However, the shortcoming is that none investigated explicitly 'international' universities and none of the studies is a comprehensive study of the whole institution. Notably, none of them employed a case study methodology.

The above studies guided me on how I should combine four key ways of the previous studies to paint a more rounded picture of institutional experience on two particular campuses. The perceived shortcomings of the research methodologies mentioned above also guided me in ascertaining what should be done to add more findings in the study area.

### 4.3 Methodological framework and research questions

The constructivist theoretical perspective was chosen as a methodological framework for this study. My inquiry made knowledge claims based on the constructivist theoretical perspective which aims at “the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meaning socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern” (Creswell, 2003, p. 18). According to Crotty (1998) the constructivist theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance which underpins qualitative approaches. This study is in line with the constructive theoretical perspective in that it aims to describe this specific phenomenon in a real social setting where different cultures meet and seeks to understand how people experience and react to the phenomenon. It investigates the cultural scene naturally with an open mind for whatever findings emerge.

In investigating the situation, I am not interested in philosophical questions about what is best but, instead, in understanding the experiences of participants in educational environments where SCL is explicitly being applied in Vietnam. My research questions seek to understand various connected elements within a particular institutional case in
order to examine the way the different components of the institution shape experience.

Question 1 asks how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the universities involved in the study? This question intends to investigate the implementation of SCL at each participating university.

Question 2 asks how academics of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms? This question intends to find key insights from academics' experience in implementing SCL to Vietnamese students, particularly in regard to how they deal with the challenges of the cultural disparities.

Question 3 asks how students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms? This question intends to find key insights from students' experiences learning in the SCL classroom and analyse what enhances their engagement.

In learning from the experience of participants regarding the implementation of SCL through the above questions, this study will contribute additional and insightful evidence into the body of knowledge that increases our understanding of the issues in cross-cultural learning environments and how to effectively handle them.

### 4.4 Case study methodology

Case study methodology was employed since it suits the aim, research questions and the perceived shortcomings of other research methodologies in the study area mentioned in section 4.2. Put simply, this case study is described as “in-depth and detailed explorations of single examples (an event, process, organization, group, or individual) that are an instance drawn from a class of similar phenomena” (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 91). In this study, a case study approach was employed to gain in-depth and detailed explorations of the implementation of SCL in the context of international higher education in Vietnam where the two educational cultures, SCL and CHC interact. Case study methodology, in general, seeks “to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.61). Likewise, this study seeks to understand the phenomenon of the implementation of SCL in considerable depth in a small number of
sites, and understand the experience from various viewpoints. Case study methodology allows me to examine the way the different aspects of the educational institution shape experience of the implementation of SCL.

As stated in section 4.3, 'how' questions have been set out to explore how academics' and students' experience is shaped by the institutional context in each case. Yin (2014) points out that a case study suits to the purpose of answering questions about 'how' or 'why' a contemporary set of events occurs wherein a researcher has little or no control. Thus this thesis employs case study research since it fits in with the type of research question employed.

A major strength of case study data collection is “the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Yin, 2014, p.119). Typically, case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, including documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2014). This strength of the case study data collection methods influenced my decision in selecting case study for my research because the use of multiple data gathering techniques at each research site enhances the trustworthiness of my study and facilitates closer analysis of the research question (Chalapati, 2007). Another strength of case study is their use of multiple sources to obtain multiple perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 92). This aspect of the case study matches with the aim of this study in obtaining multiple perspectives from students, teachers, learning advisors and teaching advisors.

Aside from the above strengths of case study, this method was chosen because it is one of the qualitative research methodologies that is used extensively to investigate educational change (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006; Zainal, 2007). As pointed out in Table 4.1, none of the previous studies on this topic in Vietnam have employed a case study methodology. Consequently, this thesis employes case study research since it suits with the perceived shortcomings of other research methodologies in the study area. Furthermore, Stake (1995) highlights that case studies in the educational context are appropriate to researchers who are willing to put aside their presumptions while learning to understand the situation and have a sincere interest in seeking to understand how individuals function in their ordinary context. In a similar way, this study seeks to understand the situation through the experience of participants with an intention disregard presumptions while investigating the phenomenon and be open-minded for
whatever findings occurred.

Both the main strength and the main limitation of case studies is that it focuses on the particularities of the specific case. Erickson (2018) provides an example of a characteristic of the case study in that, just like your childhood neighbourhood, case studies look closely at a slice of life. As such, “conclusions from a case cannot be applied directly to another case because no two cases are identical” (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p.92). Lessons learned in one case, however can tentatively be applied to another population or set of circumstances believed or assumed to be sufficiently similar to the study sample that findings apply there as well (Kennedy, 1979, p.665 cited Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p.92). With the above point in mind, this means a well-designed case study is needed in order to increase the generalisation of findings. Huberman and Saldana (2014) examining multiple cases have the advantage of increasing the generalisability of case study research. Yin (2014) points out that the evidence from multiple cases, as in this thesis, is often considered more compelling and more robust than from a single case. However, a weakness of the multiple-case study is that it requires extensive resources and time, which is often beyond the means of a single student or independent researcher (Yin, 2014). Considering the main strength and the main limitation of case studies, I have decided to undertake two cases studies rather than one.

4.5 Case study sites

The comparable case selection strategy was chosen to select the cases. Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014, p.32) described comparable case selection as a strategy used for “selecting individuals, sites, and groups on the same relevant characteristics over time.” In this study, I selected sites based on three criteria. Firstly, participating universities had to employ SCL as an explicit feature of their 'international' pedagogical approach. This criterion was set based on the aim of this study in investigating the implementation of SCL in international universities. Secondly, the universities need to offer programs in business administration because these degrees are widely offered across universities in Vietnam and examining the same field of study would enable more reliable pattern matching across cases. Thirdly, the language of instruction was limited to English since this is a defining feature of nearly all 'international' programs in Vietnam and allowed me, a foreigner, to communicate with participants in English without the need for an interpreter during the data collection.
I approached six universities that met these criteria and two agreed to participate. They were well matched with the set criteria of this study. The first is one of several tertiary education providers in Vietnam that was established to offer international programs. The second is a Vietnamese private university which delivers some programs through international partnerships.

For the purpose of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to identify the participating universities. Although both universities met the three criteria, one distinctly different attribute is their country of origin. Therefore, throughout this study, they are referred to as 'Foreign University' and 'Local University'.

### 4.6 Data collection

This study was designed to answer research questions by examining different aspects of institutional experience in these two universities in order to obtain a rounded picture. In this study, the different questions that I asked required different methods of data collection. Interview, observation and documentation were chosen as the data collection methods for this study. By using different means to collect data, my study employed triangulation. According to Patton (2015, p 316) the logic of triangulation is “based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations, because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill.” In other words, the use of triangulation contributes to verification and validation of qualitative analysis through convergence of information from different sources (Patton, 2015).

This thesis followed the logic of triangulation by gathering data from different sources: (1) interviews conducted with teachers, students, teaching advisors and learning advisors, (2) focus group interviews with students, (3) observations of classes, learning workshops, teacher induction, student orientation, (4) reviewing of pedagogical approach and values of the universities, teaching and learning materials of the class observed, teaching materials and schedules for learning skills workshop, student and teacher orientations.

Triangulation being seen as an ideal approach, Lacey and Luff (2009) however, argued that the effective use of triangulation is not simply about the use of different sources but
the way the researcher effectively draws the analysis of different forms of data together. I was mindful of this as I collected and analysed the data. In the following subsections, I will further elaborate data collection methods and process.

4.6.1 Interviews

Interview was chosen as it was necessary to get an insight into how students and teachers think and perceived about their experience. Furthermore, it helped to answer the research question, how students and academics of the universities involved in this study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms? According to Rossman and Rallis (2017) in-depth interviewing is a typical characteristic of qualitative research. Interviewing helps to understand individual perspectives, deepen understanding of events, experiences and context. Interview is suited to case studies where researchers seek multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of interest (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). For this thesis, multiple perspectives are needed as a range of similar or contradictory responses from participants is useful for establishing an understanding of the situation of the implementation of SCL.

Berg and Lune (2012, p.108) categorizes interviews into three types: (1) standardized (formal or highly structured) interview, (2) unstandardized (informal or non-directive) interview, and (3) semi-standardized (guided-semistructured or focused) interview. Of these, semi-standardized interview was chosen for this study because this approach allows the interviewers “to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p.112). This suits my study because my questions were developed to help elicit responses around the topics covered by my research questions, so they require some structure, but also leave room for new information to emerge that I may not have envisaged. Semi-standardized interview has a little more flexibility than the alternative. Flexibility is useful in this context of my thesis because interviews will evolve as I move forward.

Although interview is suitable for this study, it does have limitations. Alshenqeeti (2014, p.43) argued that “interviewees will only give what they are prepared to reveal about their perceptions of events and opinions. These perceptions, however, might be subjective and therefore change over time according to circumstance.” For a similar reason, Patter and Hepburn (2005) question the appropriateness of using interviews as
the only means of collecting data to study social life. Another limitation of interview is that it is time-consuming in terms of both data collection and analysis. In section 4.6.5 I will further elaborate the interview procedures conducted for this study and how I dealt with these limitations in my study.

4.6.2 Focus groups

Focus group interviews were employed to gain various perspectives from different students who experience the same situation. Rossman and Rallis (2017, p. 166) pointed out that the goal of focus group interview is for the group to generate new understandings or explanations as individuals react to and interact with others. Research focus group is an interview with a group of 7-10 people or as small as 4 people per interview (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Conducting an interview with several people at the one time helps increase the number of participants and simultaneously saved time in comparison to conducting one on one interviews.

Focus group interviews were necessary for my research because by having more than one student reflect on the learning situation, they students enabled me to explore unanticipated topics which arose during the group's discussion (Berg & Lune, 2012). Focus group interviews complemented the one on one interviews as they help to suggest a dimension of the original problem that any one individual might not have thought of (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Focus group interviewing offers some advantages. It does, however, have restraints. Stewart and Shamdasani (2015) argued that the result obtained in a focus group may be biased by a very dominant or opinionated member or, alternatively, more reserved group members may be reluctant to talk. Furthermore, the open-end nature of responses obtained in focus groups often makes summarisation and interpretation of results difficult. Finally, “the researcher may bias results by knowingly or unknowingly providing cues about what types of responses and answers are desirable or seeking to achieve group consensus on particular topics” (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015, p. 44). In section 4.6.6, I will further elaborate the focus group interview procedures conducted for this study and how I dealt with restrictions of focus group interview in my study.

4.6.3 Interview and focus group participants
Groups of participants were selected in order to examine how different groups of people experience the implementation of SCL in their institution. The groups of participants were: (1) teachers, (2) learning advisors, (3) teaching advisor, and (4) students. Overall the criteria were set broadly to allow flexibility for recruitment.

For teachers, there was one criterion, that they had worked at least one year at the universities. Those who have more than one year of experience are more likely to have immersed themselves into the particular teaching situation and therefore were able to gain a holistic view related to the situation of the implementation of SCL at their universities.

As for the learning advisors who deliver learning skills workshops to students, this group of academics is useful because they are dealing directly with the issues of teaching and learning. The requirement was that they had worked at least one year at the universities.

Teaching advisors from the teaching support department were also required to have worked at least one year at the universities. This cohort is important because they are in contact with teachers on a regular basis. It is, therefore, helping them to gain a holistic view of teaching issues at the university.

Two sub-groups of students were selected. One sub-group was taken from students of every academic year. Recruiting students from every academic year helps to gain various perspectives from different students who experience the implementation of SCL at their universities. The other sub-group was taken from students who studied in the classes of teachers who were interviewed and whose classes had been observed.

4.6.4 Recruitment of participants

To recruit teachers, learning advisors and teaching advisors for interview, the snowball sampling technique was chosen as a strategy to find respondents that match the set criteria. According to Atkinson and Flint (2001, p.1) snowball sampling is a process of “identifying respondents who they are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents”, its main value is in “obtaining respondents where they are few in number or where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact.” For each university, recommendations for potential academic participants were sought from the Head of
University down to Head of Department or Senior Lecturer level. With full support, they gave me the contact details of potential participants. I then sent a plain language explanatory statement to each potential participant to invite them to participate in my study. After that, I followed up with them in person or via email to answer questions they had about the aims and procedures of the interview. This process worked well because it allowed both sides to have two-way communication. Furthermore, this process not only permitted me to see if the potential participants matched well with the set criteria of my study but to see whether they were really interested in my study. This aspect is important as, the more interested in the topic they are, the more meaningful and open the discussions will be during the interview.

I recruited students from various academic years through the snowball sampling technique by asking teachers or students who have been interviewed to recommend other students. For the group of students who studied in the class of teachers who were interviewed and whose class had been observed, I invited them face to face by coming to their classrooms. I asked permission from teachers to come to their class to invite students. In order to make sure that there was no dependency relationship pressure for students to participate in this study, teachers were not involved in the recruitment of students nor in delivery of the invitation letters. For example, the invitation took place at the end of the class after the teacher had already left the room.

From both universities, a total of 51 participants were interviewed. The following table presents a breakdown of the numbers of participants interviewed at each university.

Table 4.2: Numbers of participants interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Learning Advisor</th>
<th>Teaching Advisor</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 (Interview) + 4 (Focus groups)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9 (Interview) + 12 (Focus groups)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study I employed saturation or redundancy sampling as my sampling strategy. Patton (2015, p.271) defines saturation or redundancy sampling as “analyzing patterns as fieldwork proceeds and continuing to add to the sample until nothing new is being
learned (especially with snowball or response-driven sampling).” In my case, half way through my data collection at each site, I started to notice a repetition of findings gradually emerging and reached a point where not many new findings were found. When I believed that my study reached data saturation, there was no significant need to recruit more participants for interviews.

4.6.5 Interview procedure

In terms of the interview procedures, before conducting an interview, I had a brief conversation with participants to establish rapport with them. I also explained the aim of my research and reminded them about their rights as research participants. I then gave the participants a consent form to read and then sign if they agreed to participate. After the interviews, I scanned the signed consent forms and emailed them to the participants for their own record (Rossmam & Rallis, 2017).

During the interviews, I used probing questions when participants did not give very clear answers or when they mentioned something interesting and I wanted them to elaborate. For example, I used the “uh-huh” probe and head nodding techniques in making affirmative comments, like “Uh-huh”, or “I see”, to encourage a respondent to continue with a narrative. Sometimes, I used the “tell-me-more” probe to indicate to the respondent that I was interested in what they were saying and wanted to know more. I also observed their nonverbal behaviours, such as hesitations or smiles, as these factors indicated whether they felt comfortable in answering the questions. I paid a lot of attention to body language and reactions whilst conducting interviews with students since I was aware of their culture and that it might affect the way they answered my questions (Patton, 2015).

Yin (2014, p.106) indicates that one of the weaknesses of interview is the situation where the “interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear.” In cases where I was not sure whether they just gave me what they thought I wanted to hear, I asked them to provide some examples. For example, in order to make students feel comfortable in speaking out with due consideration to the Vietnamese’ proverb “think seven times before speaking out” (Mai, Terlouw & Albert, 2012, p.148), I informed them that they will not get into trouble or cause someone else to get into trouble since participants identities will not be disclosed and pseudonyms would be used. Another way in which I
tried to make students feel comfortable was to create a rapport at the beginning of the interview sessions by asking general questions before asking in depth questions. The duration of a typical interview conducted in this research is for 1 hour.

4.6.6 Focus group interview procedure

The focus group interview has its own distinct nature, thus, in this study, certain interview procedures were conducted differently from individual interviews. Firstly, in the recruiting process, students who agreed to participate were requested not to disclose what was discussed during the focus group interviews to third parties in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. The number of questions for the focus groups was reduced to be less than individual interviews in order to ask the main questions within a one-hour time frame. In terms of the interview process, I started the interview asking basic questions to get a group talking and the participants comfortable with each other (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). This is an important process that needs to be conducted.

As mentioned previously in section 4.6.2, the result obtained in a focus group may be biased by a very dominant or opinionated member or more reserved group members who may be hesitant to talk. I managed this by using various approaches to deal with situations that arose. For example, when I noticed a dominant opinionated member who made excursions into the other areas of discussion, I steered the conversation back to main area of discussion and let other students have their say. I also ensured that each student had their turn to express their opinion to the group for further discussion. Sometimes, I simply waited for a response to allow those who were a little slow or uncertain to formulate their ideas (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). At other times, I used the group's words and ideas to formulate questions and further explore unanticipated topics as they arose during the group's discussion. The duration of a typical focus group interview conducted in this research is for 1 hour.

4.6.7 Direct observations

Observation is necessary to answer the research question; how is student centred learning implemented in the universities involved in the study? Observation allowed me to see for myself how each teacher and academic implemented SCL or provided training about SCL to their students. Direct observations and participant-observations
are commonly used in case study research (Yin, 2014). Direct observation was chosen for this study to observe the natural setting of the 'case' in real time (Yin, 2014). Participant-observation was not chosen because the approach may require researchers “to assume a variety of roles within a fieldwork situation and may actually participate in the actions being studied” (Yin, 2014, p.115).

Since my aim was to understand how SCL was implemented and experienced by participants in its natural setting, my preferred role was to attentively observe the situation rather than becoming involved in the situation being observed. Another reason that direct observation was chosen was because it can be useful to complement other sources of evidence. For example, direct observation provided “the chance to learn things that people would be unwilling to talk about in an interview” (Patton, 2015, p.333). Bernard, Wutich and Ryan (2017, p.70) described the advantage of direct observation as “when you want to know what people do, rather than what they say they do, nothing beats watching them.” I conducted structured observations to observe how each teacher and academic implemented SCL or provided training about SCL as part of their role.

4.6.7.1 Observation procedures

According to Creswell (2016, p. 118) observing involves:

Locating a site, developing a protocol for recording information, focusing in on events, looking for activities that help inform the central phenomenon, determining the appropriate role as an observer, recording “description” and “reflective” field notes on the observation protocol, and slowly withdrawing from the site by respecting and thanking those observed for their time and your presence at the site.

My observation procedures followed similar steps to the above. Firstly, after I gained permission to access the two universities, I obtained permissions from Presidents of the universities to observe classes and permission from each teacher and academic who accepted to be observed.

Field notes were employed to collect data during observation. Field notes refer to “the researcher's notes resulting from doing fieldwork” (Yin, 2014, p. 239). Atkinson and
Hammersley (1995, p.142) stated that field notes are always selective in that “it is not possible to capture everything and there is a trade-off between breadth of focus and detail.” Likewise, my field notes focused on the recording of main points such as how the teachers implemented SCL, how students engaged with the class activities and the interaction between them. I developed a protocol for recording observation notes in the field (field notes), including in this protocol both “descriptive” (e.g., notes about what happened) and “reflective” (e.g., notes about my experience, a reflection of my feelings toward what I observed) (Creswell, 2016). It was done to ensure that there was no confusion between what happened and how I felt. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2018) keeping a record of self-reflection on decisions and justifications is another way of enhancing the credibility of the research as it also helps to spot a researcher's possible biases (Ary, et al., 2018). The following table presents my class observation protocol including descriptive and reflective notes.

Table 4.3: Observation Protocol for Class Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Descriptive Notes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reflective Notes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Information of Class Being Observed:</strong> Course Name, Room Number, Date and Time, Duration of Class, Duration of Observation, Number of Attendees, Classroom Layout and Set Up, Classroom Facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research questions:</strong> 1) How is student centred learning implemented in the universities involved in the study? 2) How students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of observation:</strong> What students do and note how they are motivated and engaged and learn from the teaching materials and class activities. The roles of students in the learning process will be observed, including how teachers and students interact and how students interact with each other.</td>
<td>A reflection of my feelings toward what I observed. E.g., classroom rapport, learning atmosphere, body language of both teachers and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging issues that occurred during the class observation</td>
<td>A reflection of my feelings toward the emerging issues that occurred during the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The observations were achieved in a way to avoid undesirable outcomes such as students behave differently from what they usually do in class. According to Creswell (2016), when researchers are focused on a sensitive topic, individuals might behave differently if they are aware of the true focus. In my case, despite the topic not being sensitive, students might still behave differently from what they usually do in class. For example, they could engage more or less than usual knowing that they were being observed. To minimise the possibility that students might behave differently, I firstly let the teacher introduce me to the students and I then introduced the purpose of study and my observation role. I emphasised that my role was only to observe the class without involvement in any teaching and learning activity. Importantly, I explained to them that this observation was not aimed at evaluating their learning performance nor their teacher's teaching performance. Another challenge in conducting observation was that even data collection through written field notes can generate distraction and distrust for participants so, as a result, care must be exercised if disruption is to be avoided. To minimise disruption of the flow of activities of class observation, I sat at the back of the class and took field notes quietly without any participation in nor disruption of class activities.

Another challenge in writing field notes was that the longer the duration of the observation, the more chance there was for data to accumulate so that is becomes difficult to record them all (Ary, et al., 2018). For this study, the class observation took around 90 minutes as that is the duration of a typical class. In order not to miss important activities occurring during the class observation, I wrote in detail and in complete sentences to capture what I seen. However, when there were many things happening at the same time I took brief notes and then, immediately after the observation, I completed my notes to ensure that I had captured important points whilst they were still fresh in my mind. The same approach was used for the reflective notes, I wrote the reflective part of my personal feelings and impressions immediately after the observation was completed.
There are other methods that can be used to collect data from observation, such as still photography or video, that are useful in the recording of what actually happened and for their ability to be shared for others to see. Despite this, they were not chosen. First of all, photography could be even more distracting than taking notes during observations. Knewstubb (2012) describes how taking a photograph during observation can be a disturbance:

Photography is a very visible way of collecting data. Being an observer in a situation is distracting in itself. Being an observer with a camera pointing at people I found even more disruptive. Taking photographs often caused a disturbance in the situation. The click and the light from the camera made the participants very aware of the fact they were being observed.

Video-recording, where the position and focus of the video recorder are fixed, does not provide as much disturbance as when a hand held camera is used. However, participants could still feel uncomfortable knowing that their behaviours were being recorded and that they were identifiable in the video. This factor could really affect the way they act. For example, students might not ask or answer questions because they did not want to be recorded in the video.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the observations were planned to be conducted after teachers and academics already had been interviewed in order for me to see the connection between what they said in the interviews and what they actually did in real time. From the outset, I intended to observe one session for each person which was estimated to be around six to seven observations per university. I also attempted to observe relevant student events where possible. The numbers and types of session for observation were changed slightly after I consulted with the teachers and academics of both universities regarding the potential sessions to observe. The following table shows the number of observation achieved at each university.

Table 4.4: Number of observations achieved at each university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Learning Skills Workshop</th>
<th>Teacher Orientation</th>
<th>Student Orientation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Foreign University, I found more sessions available for observation than I had expected. For example, I observed three teacher orientation sessions instead of one session. In contrast, Local University had fewer sessions available for observation. The unavailability of the observation session at Local University was due to an uncontrollable factor since the university did not have any formal teacher orientation in place. With student orientation, since it was offered in Vietnamese, I as a foreigner did not understand the language, therefore was unable to observe the event.

4.6.8 Document review

Document review was chosen to answer the research question, how is SCL implemented in the classrooms of the universities. Documentation can take many forms such as personal documents, announcements, administrative documents, news clippings and online articles (Yin, 2014). In this study, documents were collected in order to provide specific details to corroborate information from interviews and observations. Trarenou, Donohue and Cooper (2009, p.125) pointed out an advantage of documents that “[it] can be used for triangulation of data, helping to counteract the biases of other methods and supplement sources of information.” Another advantage of collecting documents for this study is that it allowed me to gain information at my convenience. This type of data collection method, however, has limitations. Creswell (2016) pointed out some limitations such as: information may be protected and unavailable to public or private access, it requires the researcher to search out the information in hard-to-find places, materials may be incomplete, the documents may not be authentic or accurate. I was mindful of this, thus, I sought documents that were authentic and accurate. As for the other limitations, my search was for general information so there was no need for me to search for documents from hard-to-find places or documents that were protected and unavailable to public or private access.

The documents I sought, were related to: (1) pedagogical approach and values of the universities, (2) teaching and learning materials of the class observed, (3) teaching materials and schedules for learning skills workshop, student and teacher orientations. I looked around for documents related to the pedagogical approach and core values of the universities because it allowed me to analyse whether there was consistency between
I found the pedagogical approach and core values of the universities displayed on the universities' websites. Teaching and learning materials of the classes observed were sought because they allowed me to develop a better understanding of the implementation of SCL by the teachers of the classes observed. I asked permission from all teachers from both universities whether they could provide teaching and learning materials. Their preference, however, was to provide verbal explanations instead. Finally, teaching materials and schedules for learning skills workshop, student and teacher orientations were searched for similar reason as for the teaching and learning materials. Documents for the learning skills workshops were provided by the learning advisors at Foreign University. The documents were used in preparing interview questions and planning observations with participants. Finally, documents for student and teacher orientations were acquired with the exception of teacher orientation at Local University. The unavailability of the document was due to an uncontrollable factor since the university did not have any formal teacher orientation program in place. The following table shows the documents collected for each university.

Table 4.5: Summary of documents collected for each university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Pedagogical Approach/Core values</th>
<th>Lesson plan, teaching material</th>
<th>Teaching materials/ program schedule for learning skills workshops</th>
<th>Student Orientation</th>
<th>Teacher Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign University</td>
<td>Information on the university website</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Program schedule for learning skills workshops</td>
<td>Poster, Leaflet</td>
<td>Program schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint slides for the workshops</td>
<td>Information on the university website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local University</td>
<td>Information on the university website</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Information shared on Facebook, Twitter and Zingme (Social)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data” (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Creswell (2016, p.153) identified that the general procedure of data analysis involves: reading through the data closely to gain understanding, then begin the process of coding the data, finally grouping similar codes together to build evidence of support for broader categories of information, called themes. The data analysis of this study followed the procedures shown in the following figure.

Figure 4.1: Data analysis procedure following the general procedure of data analysis (Creswell, 2016)

My data analysis began with the process of familiarising myself with the data by close reading through text data such as interview transcripts, field notes and documents collected from both universities. Reading over the text enabled me to become familiar with the contents and recognise the main patterns of perceptions, opinions and experiences regarding the implementation of the SCL approach. After the reading stage, I then moved to a coding stage. Coding in qualitative data analysis is a process of determining what is important in a text passage and assigning a code label to it (Creswell, 2016). I employed NVivo 10 software for qualitative data analysis to code themes and issues that emerged from data. After some important data had been coded, I
then started to group similar kinds of coded data together in conceptual categories. Once I had finished coding the themes of each of the universities, I then coded themes that existed across both universities for similarities. Throughout the coding process, I used four analytic thinking approaches as described by Saldana (2015, pp. 22-23) as follows:

(1) deduction-you have an idea of what you are looking for, (2) abduction-examining the possibilities and selecting those you want to pay attention to, (3) induction-discovering what is going on in what you see and hear, and (4) retroduction-reconstructing what happened.

For example, I started coding knowing what I was looking for, such as how SCL was implemented in the classroom and how teachers and students experienced the implementation of SCL. I used abduction to examine the possibilities and the selection of those I wanted to pay attention to, such as what worked well and what did not work well in the implementation of SCL. I also employed induction analysis to discover what was happening, such as the mismatch of expectations between students and teachers. The following presents a summary of codes of this study.

Table 4.6: Summary of codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Codes</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning motivation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning background</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural understanding</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support needed for students</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support needed for teachers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What worked well</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did not work well</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation challenges</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation strategies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch of expectations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously stated in this chapter, this study was designed to enhance the credibility of the research outcomes by using triangulation. Lacey and Luff (2009, p.27) pointed out an effective way of using triangulation in the data analysis process where “...the analyst has used triangulation in this way and has effectively drawn the analysis of different forms of data together demonstrates rigour, rather than simply the use of
different sources”. Likewise, for this study, I did not simply describe the data collected from different sources but synthesised the data from different sources as a means of helping me make sense of that data. The following demonstrates some evidence of how data have been triangulated to enhance the credibility of the research outcomes.

Table 4.7: Triangulation of different sources of data across two universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Triangulation of sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In class experience/what works well and does not work well</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in class observations with the themes found in interviews conducted with teachers and students of the observed classes of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in the implementation of SCL</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in interviews conducted with different groups of participants including teachers, academic advisors and teaching advisors of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning support needed for students to adapt to SCL</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in interviews conducted with teachers, academic advisors and students with observations of the learning skills workshop and student orientation of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for teachers to adapt to students' learning style</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in interviews conducted with teachers and teaching advisors with observation of teacher orientation of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch of expectations</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in interviews conducted with teachers, academic advisors, teaching advisor and students of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural understanding</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found from interviews conducted with teachers, academic advisors and teaching advisors of both universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning motivation</td>
<td>Comparing the themes found in class observations with the themes found in interviews conducted with teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The above examples demonstrate that I became involved in the triangulation of data which required iterative analysis. It was time consuming, but it was necessary to enhance the credibility of the research outcomes by using triangulation.

4.8 Ethical considerations

The level of risk for participants involved in this study was classified as 'low risk' by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee. According to RMIT University, Human Research Ethics Procedure (2019, p.2) describes 'low risk research' as “research in which the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort”.

This study followed ethical procedures during the data collection process, data analysis and in writing the research. Creswell (2009) suggests that during the data collection process, researchers need to respect the participants and the sites for research. My study followed this ethical aspect from the very beginning. Ethical procedures during data collection involve gaining the agreement of individuals in authority to provide access to study participants at research sites (Creswell, 2016). As aforementioned, I gained agreement from the presidents of both universities to provide access to study participants at research sites. During my data collection, I collected data with respect to the sites and participants. I planned my data collection process carefully to minimise disruption of the flow of activities at the research sites. For example, during class observations, I sat at the back of the class and took field notes quietly without any participation and disruption of class activities. Interviews and focus groups were kept short and run in situ to reduce inconvenience for participants. No photographs were taken, nor were the class activities video recorded, in order to minimise distraction or making them the class uncomfortable knowing that their behaviours were being recorded.

I developed an informed consent form which identified important information about the research and research participants' rights. An informed consent form was given and explained to all participants. All my research participants acknowledged the aim, their rights and agreed to participate in the research by signing the form before they engaged in the research.
My study protected the anonymity of the universities and participants by using pseudonyms. The offshore campus of the Western university is referred to as 'Foreign University' and the local international university is referred to as 'Local University'. Participants' individual identities were not identifiable. In addition, to prevent inappropriate release of their personal information, I created a list of codes of participants to be used in filing and labelling of data. The codes were used in the transcription of audio recorded interviews and other documentation.

I am currently working as a lecturer at Foreign University. In order to avoid conflict of interest and power-dependency relationships between myself and the participants, the participants of this study are not teachers and students of the department in which I am teaching.2

4.9 Conclusion

Compared with previous studies on this topic, the research design of this study makes four major contributions. First, these are institutional case studies whereas most other studies were on a smaller scale. As a result, this study contributes comprehensive findings about the way the different components of the educational institution shape the experience of the implementation of SCL. Second, this study examined the lived experience of multiple participants whereas the previous studies looked at teachers or students. Multiple perspectives gained from multiple participants contribute useful findings for establishing an understanding of the situation of the implementation of SCL. Third, in this study a wide range of types of data are examined whereas previous studies have used far fewer. The multiple data gathering techniques I used at each research site enhances the trustworthiness of my study and facilitates closer analysis of my research questions. Fourth, no previous studies examined the relationships between the different aspects of an institution in a similar way to my study. Therefore, this study contributes additional and insightful evidence into the body of knowledge that increases our understanding of the issues in cross-cultural learning environments and strategies to effectively handle them.

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2 This paragraph will be removed from the thesis prior to publication so as to not identify the university.
Chapter Five: Understand students' passivity, extrinsic motivation and adaption to independent learning

5.1 Overview

In a cross-cultural context, students often experience difficulties adapting to the new learning environment where cultural barriers are involved (Biggs, 2003; Leask & Carroll, 2013; Sanderson, 2006). Students could face more difficulties, as discussed in chapter two, if teachers do not truly understand the students they are teaching and only require their students to adapt to the new approach without providing the needed support (Hoare, 2006; Stein, 2017; Walker, 2000). Gaining an understanding of students, thus, is the first and important step that needs to be achieved if educators aim to make their classes truly student centred.

This chapter is the first of three chapters presenting results of this study. It presents the data from interviews and focus groups with students. Student participants were asked about their backgrounds and their understanding of how they are taught in high schools. The interview were designed to examine the backgrounds of students to gain insight into who they are and to what extent their backgrounds affect their learning experiences of SCL. These interview questions are related to other interview questions asking students about their transition experiences, adaptation challenges and support needed. In addition, this chapter also responds to my third research question asking teachers and academic staff about how students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section, 'situational passivity', presents a theme of students' reflections on their experiences at high school in which students seem to externalise the causes for their passive learning based on the assessment and the teachers, rather than their innate characteristic as learners. The second section, 'parental influence and pressure', presents the theme emergent from interviews with students and teachers about students who were obligated to follow their parents' advice on education and how the pressure of the obligation affected their learning motivation and performance. The final section, 'what it means to be an independent learner', reveals a theme that students are aware that they cannot rely on teachers as much as when they
studied in high school. Nevertheless, when asked to describe their roles as learners, including how they self-study, their answers presented the students' unclear understanding of their role as a learner in the SCL approach. The three themes are important since they provide a solid foundation and insights that help in understanding the layers of complexity that contribute to students' perceptions, learning motivations and adoption of SCL approaches, especially in relation to self-study and independent learning.

The findings are useful in the analysis of other relevant findings in subsequent chapters. For example, findings about students' backgrounds are employed in analysing findings in chapters six and seven as to what extent students' backgrounds affected their learning experiences and what appropriate strategies should be employed to help them move forward to greater autonomy. Finally, the findings also support the mutual engagement approaches as the way forward in dealing with the cross-cultural issues.

5.2 Situational passivity

In this section, student participants' reflection on their high school experience is provided. To begin with, the majority of students come from a teacher-centred learning environment where their perceptions toward learning and behaviour are developed. Interviewing students of the two universities about their background helps to understand the layers of complexity that contribute to students' perceptions, motivation and approach to learning. The findings of this chapter support findings of the studies reviewed in chapter three indicating that Vietnam education is still very much teacher-centred, and focused on being structured around exam assessment and a textbook driven curriculum. Most student participants reflected on their experience at high school and described the educational system in terms such as “learn by heart even when not understanding”, “learn by heart to pass the exam”. In particular, one student noted:

I think like most ordinary students out there, I did not have many creative ways to study because in secondary school, most of our subjects are about getting good scores. We must learn by heart and write everything exactly as in the textbook. So, we must learn by heart a lot and do a lot of assignments and do a lot of exercises, but the teacher will give an exercise that is very similar to the one in the exam and then we will do it similarly, it is to
memorise how it is done.

Another similar example of a traditional teaching style a student experienced in high school:

It is a traditional school with Vietnamese teachers and we learn in the traditional learning style. We don't have any activities in class, just sit there and teachers stand and talk and write a lot and then we also copy [what teachers wrote on the board].

The terms such as “learn by heart even when not understanding”, “learn by heart to pass the exam”, “learn by heart and write everything exactly in the textbook” mentioned above by students, can be categorised as “rote learning”. According to the Cambridge dictionary (2019) rote learning refers to learning something in order to be able to repeat it from memory, rather than in order to understand it. According to Concordia University (2019) when rote memorization is applied as the main focus of learning, it fails as a building block to critical thinking. An example of rote learning is an education system where “teaching to the test” referring to a standardized test is the norm and where rote learning is frequently employed by teachers to prepare students for the test (Concordia University, 2019). There is a connection between rote learning and passivity, as according to Michel, Cater & Varela (2009) the passive learning process is described as “students passively receive information from the professor and internalize it through some form of memorization (Michel et al., 2009, p.55). There is a long discussion about whether 'Asian' learners are rote learners, and whether they learn superficially or deeply (Biggs, 1990 and 2001; Kember & Gow, 1990, 1991; Kember, 2000). In this current thesis, most student participants reflected on their experience in high school and described their learning style as “passive learner”. For example, a student described a passive approach to learning practiced by himself and his peers as:

The students were very scared and afraid of the teacher so they have to follow like, she told us to do A, B, C, D and we have to follow A, B, C, D, we don't have the right to say like C, B, A and the other things, so we have to follow everything.

Another example of a student who describes his passive learning approach in high school:
The teachers come to class, they write on the board, they tell us about the theory, the homework, assignment. We rarely had the right to raise our voice [...] except when the teachers asks for the answer.

The findings above support Kember's (2000) explanation that students will adopt a passive approach if that is what the course and assessment required them to do or if that approach enables them to achieve the set learning outcomes. However, in literature, Asian students including Vietnamese have been frequently referred to as 'passive learners' in an innate characteristic sense that they like to be spoon-fed, are happier to learn by rote and lack the ability to learn actively (Harris, 1997; McKay & Kember, 1997; Tran, 2013). This way of labelling students falls into Biggs' level 1 of teaching across cultures where it focuses on stereotyping. Exploring studies in cross-cultural teaching and learning, I have not come across any specific term that expresses a contextual influence rather than innate characteristics. Therefore, I developed the term “situational passivity” to describe the learning passivity of students as a result of the passive learning approach employed by teachers or institutions. This term shifts the focus from blaming students to the situation that cause passivity. The term also aims to indicate that students can change their approach from passive to active if they are in a situation that favourably accommodated such change.

Most student participants I interviewed looked back and saw passive learning as ineffective. For example, a student said:

I don't like the teaching style, you know that in high school, teachers tend to follow the traditional style,...teachers tend to teach the knowledge and want students just sit there and listen. They don't have the chance to show their opinion, their knowledge about the problem. They just follow their teacher and they don't use creative thinking, critical thinking ...so what they learn about knowledge is just knowledge from one side, not two sides. So, I think it's not effective.

Another example that demonstrates a common experience expressed by many student participants:

I think it's like most of the Vietnamese schools, just a very traditional one. You see that the teacher comes to class, teaches the lesson, writes the
lessons on the board and then we have to write down. So, this kind of learning is kind of passive and the hour of studying is very boring. So I am not actually enjoying that kind of study.

The above examples represent a common experience shared by many student participants. It is not clear, however, whether students who saw teacher-centred learning as ineffective, felt at the time that it was not a good way to learn or, in hindsight, that is what they think now because of what they have since been exposed to at university. All in all, the interesting insights we can draw from these student participants is that they seem to externalise the causes for their passive learning (the assessment, the teachers) rather than internalising passive learning as an innate feature of Vietnamese culture. It can, therefore, be assumed that students would be amenable to SCL approaches if they are in a situation that enables and supports them in doing so. In the next chapter, we will further investigate the two universities' strategies used in supporting students in adopting SCL approaches and any obstacles they face in doing so.

5.3 Parental influence and pressure

Aside from students' experience at the high school, students also explained how their home life including their relationship with parents, helps form their experience in a university setting. Students from the two universities were not only found to defer to teachers' authority but also were obligated to follow their parents' advice on education. Many student participants chose universities and study discipline based on their parents' preferences. To begin with, a student participant reflected that she simply followed her father’s decision on where to study. She said “...my father...he did attend some events [university open day], so he just got the idea that I have to study here so I just followed his advice and his idea.” The implication here is that her father was the main decision-maker in the selection of a university for her and she seems to be very obedient as she followed her father's decision unconditionally. This reflects what Hien (2012) described, a Vietnamese culture where “a good child is one who does what adults tell him or her to do and follows rules set by adults.” This finding is in accordance with studies reviewed in chapter three indicating that 'duty' of putting parents' interests in front of their own, known as filial piety, is one of the most important CHC morals (Charlotte, 2004).
Teachers of both universities recognised the issue of parental influence as one of the challenges in the implementation of SCL and raised concerns about how the issue affected students' learning, motivation and performance. Teachers pointed out that students who, under parental influence, were struggling with the pressure of studying something that they were not interested in, therefore became passive learners. This appears to correspond with statistics reporting that Vietnam ranks eighth among 65 participating nations in terms of the level of parental pressure (Asadullah & Perera, 2015). While parental influence is normal practice in Vietnam, for students coming to universities that employ SCL, they are more likely to face even more pressure from their parents to gain high marks to make their parents proud, even though they are still adapting to SCL. This pressure could result in demotivating students to learn actively.

One way that parents assert influence is in the choice of degree or course. A manager of Learning Support Department at Foreign University estimated that there could be upward of 50% of the students not studying the course of their own choice. This was because the parents were making the choice for them and meant pressure for the students who were forced to study hard for degrees that they are not passionate about. His explanations are significant since they indicate the cultural issues that both students and academics have to deal with. He said:

...the massive issue that we have is a situation where you've got Vietnamese parents which, you know, to put them all in one group, are quite traditional, particularly the demographic of students we've got here, they tend to have come from fairly wealthy family backgrounds, so their parents got their own businesses, and particularly for the boys, they're expected to take on their businesses or to play an integral role in that business and Dad has said, right you're gonna do accounting. [...] you know they might want to do advertising and so, more often than not, you're probably got majority of students, maybe, we don't know the numbers, but there could be upward of 50% of the students in the class studying something they're not even interested, remotely interested in and you see that in, when we talk to other students services departments, student advisement and careers, there are students who take that really seriously to a point where they need to go and see a counsellor because they're scared to tell their father that they wanted to
study whatever out of commerce or business because they feel like they're going to let their family down.

It seems possible that the above findings are due to parents making an investment in their child's education in order to push ahead their own agenda and destiny, especially for the sake of prosperity of their family businesses. While it seems to make sense for parents to get their child to study in business related program, given it would provide their child with knowledge and qualifications to run the family business in the future, however the parents could overlook their child's passion in pursuit of their own preferred career path that might not necessarily be related to their parents' expectations of them. Furthermore, in case their child still has no idea of what to do in the future, instead of just getting their child to study something based on the parents' preference, they should first help their child to find out what they really want to be and do in the future. The finding also relates and can be explained through the existing literature about the influence of CHC on life and education in Vietnam indicating that in order to gain power, wealth and attain an upper range in social hierarchy, education is considered the key (Hien, 2012; Ratliff, 2008). As can be seen, in this case education is not an end in itself but merely a means to some other end which might not be something that students really want to pursue.

Local University was also found to face similar issues relating to influences that students believe they must respect their parents but don't want to do the work because it is not in their own interest. A teacher explained how the pressure affected students' motivation:

However, for some students, they study here, it's not because of they want to study here but because their parents want them to study here. For these cases, it's very difficult to encourage them to study harder.

The idea presented here that students who don't do degrees in their chosen field find it hard to be motivated. To put it another way, this issue of learning demotivation being caused by parental influences was expressed by staff at both universities. For example, at Foreign University, a teacher raised a case where a student failed a course twice because he had been forced by his parents to study a program in which he had no interest.
Some students, like yesterday, I had a long chat with one student. He failed the statistics course of mine last semester and he said to me that this is the second time he fails [the course] already. He just feels it is too abstract to him or something like that and he said economics or statistics in general another course he also failed, some other courses he also failed twice. And he said that actually he doesn't like to study business he just like the IT or computer something but then his father forced him. So, he registered the BIS, Business Information System, meaning a mix between business and IT. With the IT courses, he can understand well and he can perform well but economic courses, he cannot study that.

This example reflects Vietnamese traditional values and the long existing concept of Confucian extreme adult-centredness which expects from young children absolute respect for and submission to adults (Hien, 2012). This weight of duty to parents placed on students’ shoulders appears to be a normal practice and is passed on from one generation to another. It, therefore, becomes something that students feel they must bear, and several recounted such experiences. A student at Local University shared his experience in that he ended up studying at the university because, in the first place, he could not get into a university offering a medical degree. He then had to choose to study business for his family instead. The student’s reflection is as follows:

   It's really difficult and I have only one choice to study about business, my family have their own business at my hometown as when I study business, I want to earn experience, the skill to come back there and run it [on] my own and to help my family to expand the business, not at my hometown and to expand it here to Ho Chi Minh City...

The reluctance of some students to be involved in the succession of the family business may be explained by what Phan (2004) found for the children of family business owners in Vietnam, “the succession is not as attractive as it was for their parents due to more job options made available to choose by the expanded access to tertiary education, the urbanization, and the changes in industrial structure” (2004, p.30).

Up to this point, the multiple perspectives from participants I have presented in this section indicated that this group of student participants are facing great pressure to
study something that they are not truly interested in. It indicates that many students in this context have an extrinsic motivation to learn, in particular, when their purpose in learning is not mainly driven by their own curiosity to pursue new knowledge but for other reasons influenced by their social and cultural backgrounds. While in practice, we cannot spot the cause of the extrinsic motivation of each student in the classroom, it should be kept in mind that, in this context, there are more students whose learning motivation could be demotivated by their parents' expectations of them rather than in a Western context where students are encouraged to be independent and have more freedom to pursue their own interests inside and outside the classroom. The challenge for teachers in this context is to find strategies to motivate students to learn passionately. In chapter seven, we will learn from the two universities their strategies in motivating students to learn and if there are any obstacles in doing so.

5.4 What it means to be an independent learner

As discussed in section 5.2, student participants came from a teacher-centred background and, upon their arrival at the participating universities employing SCL, they enter unknown territory where there are many things for them to learn and adopt. In order for students to adjust themselves effectively, they should first be clear on what is expected of them. Generally speaking, students probably don't know what they don't know, thus the universities and teachers need to guide them through the important SCL approaches, otherwise they might end up following a mistaken path.

In the case of the student participants, especially at Foreign University, many of them misunderstood the concept of self-study and independent learning. Findings reveal that students are aware that they cannot rely on teachers as much as when they studied in high school. However, when asked to describe their roles as learners, including how they self-study, their answers presented the students' unclear understanding of their role as a learner in the SCL approach. This issue of students not knowing how to self-study cannot be taken for granted because one of the important goals of student-centred learning is to create “engaged and independent learners” (Black 2007, cited in Meyer at al., 2008, p.19). In this section, we can gain insight and understanding of students from what they don't know about self-study.

To begin with, some students incorrectly associated the idea of not attending class as
evidence of being more mature, active and having the ability to self-study. As an example, a sixth semester student at Foreign University stated “...right now I become more active so sometimes I spent less time to be in class.” Another student at Foreign University studying in his final semester shared a similar perception in relation to self-study and class attendance:

...normally I don't attend the class so... I still can guess what the course is about and I can do the assignment and I can do the final exam quite. So I don't know because maybe it requires us to self-study more....

Noteworthy, this perception toward self-study is found only at Foreign University where there is no attendance marking policy. No examples of the same issue were raised by participants at Local University where students are required to meet the minimum number of class attendance hours in order to sit for the exam. The above findings from Foreign University indicate that the student participant was not likely to be informed about the concept of “freedom to learn”. According to Grow (1991) students in the dependent stage, without proper guidance, will not be able to make good use of the “freedom to learn” because they lack the necessary skills and understanding of the approach. In this case, students were associating the idea of freedom in not coming to class as evidence of being a grown up, active and independent learner. No doubt, freedom in learning goes hand in hand with the Western style of education where students are empowered to take charge of learning and make their own decisions. Foreign University, in this case, introduces their students, right from the start, to the concept of freedom in learning such as no attendance marking policy, even when most Vietnamese students are not yet familiar with the concept. However, it could become a disadvantage for students if they have not been given enough guidance on how to put the freedom in learning to good use. This emerging issue from Foreign University is similar to the study of Tutwissoot (2012) which examines the issue of learner autonomy in English learning in Thailand. Tutwissoot specified insights with Thai students who are not familiar with the concept of the freedom dimension of learner autonomy and therefore needed some structures to follow. He stated:

Fostering learner autonomy in the freedom dimension requires the understanding of all stakeholders in the pedagogical context. Learners should be free, to an appropriate degree, to take charge of their own
learning. In the traditional classroom, learners are used to being told what to do. When faced with a new learning situation that provides for more freedom, some learners may be confused and need some structures to follow. It is not that learners do not value the freedom; they are simply not familiar with the freedom to make decisions about how they will learn (p.37).

The above statement accords with an example from a student at Foreign University. The student pointed out that Vietnamese students need to be guided about self-study otherwise it could cause frustration and negative effects on student learning. The student shared his opinion regarding the frustration caused by not knowing how to self-study effectively as follows:

If students didn't have the self-study attitude from the high school, they might find the gap between [Foreign University] and Vietnamese school and that make them feel hard to follow the lecture, follow the school, follow the lessons. And I heard some of my friends they did give up because they couldn't follow, because they don't know how to self-study efficiently. And I think that may be a challenge.

Furthermore, I learned from the above example that many students do not know what they do not know. Although some of them might be keen and attempt to adopt the SCL approaches, without clear guidance, they might end up making poor decisions. The following example of a seventh semester student at Foreign University, reflected a common experience shared by many of the student participants in that students were keen to be independent learners but didn't know where to start. A seventh semester student said:

...also being active means you have to take care of anything by yourself, you cannot have a person who like a spoon feed you or something so many times you may feel lost, You may wonder why, you may wonder if you are doing this right or wrong, you have to re-do it, means it's time consuming, means that you've waste lots of time doing something wrong and then you have to do it again.

Without becoming too judgemental on what the student did at this stage, I try to
understand what the student thinks that influences her approach of attempting self-study without seeking teacher assistance. It could be assumed that this student does not like to be passive or perceived by others as passive since her statement indicates that she sees asking help from teachers as signifying that one is a passive learner or a spoon-fed student. The student takes pride in being able to learn by herself, despite getting lost and wasting time in redoing work.

Having explored students' understanding of SCL approaches, I learnt that we cannot expect students from a teacher-centred background to come with a complete understanding of what SCL is and quickly adapt to SCL. A recent study concerning the self-study of Vietnamese university students found similar results, in that about 60 percent of 300 surveys students believe self-study plays a very important role in their university education, but only 2 percent of the students knew very well how to plan their self-study (reported in VietNam News, 2014). Thus, without proper guidelines, students will take action based on their interpretation of what self-study is. In chapter six, we will examine how SCL approaches, especially self-study and independent learning, have been introduced to students at each university. This aims to find out what more can be done to increase students' understanding of the concept which I believe is the first and most important step before students can become effective independent learners.

5.5 Conclusion

Findings from this chapter answered interview questions about students' backgrounds, their understanding of how they are taught in high schools and to what extent their backgrounds affect their learning experience of SCL, such as self-study and independent learning. Findings indicated that many student participants saw teacher-centred learning as ineffective. We don't know, however, if it was their preference at the time. Findings indicate that the educational system and learning outcomes affect the passivity of students. However, in literature, Asian students, including Vietnamese, have been frequently referred to as 'passive learners' in an innate characteristic sense that they like to be spoon-fed, are happier to learn by rote and lack the ability to learn actively (Harris, 1997; McKay & Kember, 1997; Tran, 2013). This way of labelling students falls into Biggs' level 1 of teaching across cultures where it focuses on stereotyping. Exploring studies in cross-cultural teaching and learning, I have not come
across any specific term that takes situations of learning that cause student passivity into account. Therefore, I developed the term “situational passivity” to describe the learning passivity of students as a result of the passive learning approach employed by teachers or institutions. This term shifts the focus from stereotyping to the situation that causes their passivity. The term also aims to indicate that students can change their approach from passive to active if they are in a situation that favourably accommodates such change.

Another interesting insight we can draw from these student participants is that they themselves seem to externalise the causes for their passive learning (the assessment, the teachers) rather than internalising. It can, therefore, be assumed that these students would be amenable to SCL approaches if they are in a situation that enables and supports them in doing so. In the next chapter, we will further investigate the two universities' strategies used in supporting students in adopting SCL approaches and any obstacles they face in doing so.

The findings also indicate that many student participants chose universities and study discipline based on their parents' preferences. Teachers of both universities recognised the issue of parental influence as one of the challenges in the implementation of SCL and raised concerns about how the issue affected students' learning motivation and performance. The multiple perspectives from participants indicate that many students in this context have an extrinsic motivation to learn, in particular, when their purpose in learning is not mainly driven by their own curiosity to pursue new knowledge but for other reasons influenced by their social and cultural backgrounds. Practically, we cannot spot the cause of the extrinsic motivation of each student in the classroom, but it should be kept in mind that, in this context, there are more students whose learning motivation could be demotivated by their parents' expectations of them than in a Western context where students are encouraged to be independent and have more freedom to pursue their own interests inside and outside classroom. The challenge for teachers in this context is to find strategies to motivate students to learn passionately. In chapter seven, we will learn from the two universities their strategies in motivating students to learn and if there are any obstacles involved.

Finally, in this chapter, findings reveal students are aware that they cannot rely on teachers as much as when they studied in high school. However, when asked to
describe their roles as learners, including how they self-study, their answers presented the students' unclear understanding of their role as a learner in the SCL approach. In this chapter, we gain insight and understanding of students from what their ignorance about self-study. The important insight from the above is that some students appreciate the freedom to learn but they are simply not familiar with the freedom to make decisions about how they will learn. Thus, without proper guidelines, students will take action based on their own interpretations of what self-study is.

All in all, findings of this chapter reiterate the importance of one aspect of SCL which is centred around a clear understanding of students by teachers. Findings from this chapter serve as a useful starting point to help understand students background and how they adapted to self-study and independent learning.
Chapter Six: Induction programs for new comers

6.1 Overview

Providing a quality induction program to new students and teachers is beneficial according to many experts and is common practice in many institutions (Kearney, 2011, Kessels, 2010; Pham, 2013), especially in contexts where there are issues arising from cultural disparities. As discussed in chapter five, new students need training support considering they are still in their transition phase and trying to make sense of new expectations of them as learners in an SCL learning environment. As indicated in chapter two and three, teachers in an intercultural setting require guidance for developing cultural awareness and appropriate pedagogical skills.

This chapter aims to discover how the participating universities prepare their new students and teachers for the implementation of SCL. For new students, the analysis of academic skills development workshops includes how the learning and teaching expectations were being described or whether mismatches of expectations between students and teachers were being informed to new students. This chapter also responds to findings presented in chapter five through further clarification on how learning expectations about self-study and independent learning were introduced to new students. This will assist in understanding what strategies need to be employed to help students move forward to greater autonomy. For new teacher induction, the strategies employed in teacher induction programs offered at the participating universities will be analysed to see whether the training is adequate, relevant and what else might be needed in order to equip teachers with cultural awareness, mindset and skills of intercultural approaches.

The analysis on how the participating universities prepare new students and teachers for SCL responds to the research question (1) how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the participating universities. This chapter begins with a description of the induction program for new students offered at each university. It consists of sub-sections about student orientation and academic skills development workshops. This section reveals insights arising from observations and interviews with academics about what SCL learning strategies and practice the universities expect their new students to employ and how well students have been trained to adapt. The next section examines the teaching
induction program for new teachers conducted at each university. It consists of subsections for each university on their induction program and strategies. This section reveals insights into what SCL teaching strategies and practice the universities expect their new teachers to employ and how well they have been trained to deliver them.

6.2 Induction program for new students

Generally speaking, providing support to new students through an induction program is considered a good practice as it allows students to get familiar with the university approach to learning (Leask & Carrol, 2013; Pham, 2013). In chapter two, studies recommended that students studying in cross-cultural contexts be trained on intercultural construction skills to help them adjust to a new learning style different from their own (Leask & Carrol, 2013). In particular, intercultural construction skills such as reflective and introspective skills are useful for students to raise self-awareness about the way they learn, and to evaluate their current knowledge, attitude and expectation in relation to the new learning cultures to which they are required to adapt.

Given that one would expect that providing a quality induction program to the new students would be clearly beneficial, in this section strategies employed in induction programs offered at the participating universities will be analysed. This section responds to the research question about (1) how SCL is implemented at participating universities. This has been achieved through an investigation of how Foreign University prepares new students for SCL approaches. The analysis includes how the learning and teaching expectations were being described or whether mismatches of expectations between students and teachers are being informed to new students.

This section begins with an analysis of the student induction program to university learning offered at the participating universities. The student induction program is the first to be analysed given it will help us to understand from the beginning how learning expectations are communicated to new students. It then moves on to analyse academic skills development workshops to see how the learning expectations are further communicated to new students. This is to discover what learning strategies and practices the university expects its new students to employ, how well students have been trained to adapt and what is the challenge in offering the workshops. This subsection also responds to findings presented in chapter five through further clarification.
on how learning expectations about self-study and independent learning were introduced to new students.

6.2.1 Student induction to university learning

The first day at university is the start of a new journey in the students' life. It is a day filled with excitement and their expectations of what awaits them on their new journey. Students arrive with certain expectations that they have formed in their minds about what their universities would be like. These students' prior expectations have been formed through everything that they have seen or heard about the university, including from their parents, high school teachers, friends, the media or advertisements promoting the university.

This section draws upon observations of student orientation sessions and analyses of documentation including posters, leaflets, PowerPoint slides for the workshops and information on the university website to understand how the learning and teaching expectations were being described to new students.

The following sub-sections examines how each university introduced an aspect of SCL to their new students during student welcome events and induction. Analysis of a connection between the event and SCL aspects is also given in order to understand how the event could possibly help students prepare for the new approach. This section responds to the research question about how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an investigation of how these universities prepare new students for SCL approaches. Foreign University will be presented first followed by Local University.

6.2.1.1 Foreign University

Foreign University, overall, makes student induction available for students at two levels; university and program. At the university level, the student induction is open for new students from all programs where the main focus is to introduce the university services. At the program level, each program arranges a session of approximately one hour where students are invited to meet with the head of the program and faculty members. This level of induction is arranged mainly to allow students and teachers to meet and greet.
From the information available on the university website and on flyers promoting student induction, both image and message indicate a informal opportunity for students to get to know the campus and quickly adapt the university environment with both academic and outside-class activities.

In observations of student induction at university level, I found the main focus of the event was about introducing the university's support services to students in order for them to quickly adapt into the university environment. The student induction was held over one and a half days packed with enjoyable games and activities mainly to introduce university services. The official opening of the event was held in a lecture theatre with a capacity of around 300 people. The theatre was packed with students and staff members, mostly from the Student Services Department.

After the Executive Director of Student Services gave a short, welcome speech to students, an academic staff member of the Student Services Department presented a session with the title 'an egg to an eagle'. During this 30-minute talk, the speaker gave an overview of university life and how an education can transform someone from an egg to an eagle. In this metaphorical story, an eagle egg represents new students. Student induction at Foreign University represents the moment when the egg is hatches and the eagle is born. A mature, graceful and powerful eagle represents the desired Foreign University graduate who has excellent attributes such as leadership and vision, the same as the eagle's attributes of being one of the world's largest birds with eyes that have a clear and long-distance focus.

The speaker urged students to reach their full potential in learning. She showed some images of the eagle egg, and how it transforms to become a mature, graceful and powerful eagle. Once in a while, she posed questions to students but those questions were not for them to really answer out loud. Rather, they were intended for the students to contemplate for themselves their goals in education and how they could become an eagle. An interesting point from the talk is its implication that successful learning is not only measured by the academic achievement but also the transformative experience that the university offers to them. As can be seen, the topic of 'an egg to an eagle' was meant to be inspirational for self-actualisation, which is one of the SCL's goal (Naude, Bergh & Kruger, 2014). I also found a connection between SCL aspects and the 'an egg to an eagle' talk since, in the talk, students were also encouraged to take a main role of the
active learner in that they need to take charge of their own learning by mapping out their own journey from the very beginning. As previously mentioned in chapter five, students come from a background where they are usually being told what to do, thus urging them to identify and pursue personal goals is a good start.

After the talk, many activities involved games and competitions. For example, there was a game lasting for two hours described as; “to get deeper understanding of the university facilities and services”. This activity was organised by student services and volunteer students. There were also other games organised in the booths of student clubs and university services.

Overall, the way the university emphasised interactive activities, rather than getting students to sit and listen to the information, is an indication of an active learning style where students need to learn by interacting with others. Besides, information that is provided through games and competitions allows students to experience learning that can be fun and engaging, unlike in the traditional classroom discussed in chapter five where students are required to sit and passively listen to the teacher. All in all, students who attended these events could get an impression of what their university life would be like through activities that the university created for them. Importantly, activities run by student services and volunteer students also indicates to students that the teacher is not the only source of learning and support they have.

6.2.1.2 Local University

Local University, every year in October, arranges an opening ceremony for the new academic year and also to welcome new students. In this section, my description of student induction is based on information provided in English on the university website, which is also shared by the university on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Zing Me (a social network catering specifically for Vietnamese).

The university arranged a large-scale opening ceremony for approximately 3000 new students in a sports hall packed with many inspirational speeches and activities. The ceremony began with a welcome speech from the president of the university, signalling that the new students are now a very important part of the university. The president
expressed her appreciation to the new students and their parents in choosing the university. I found it is interesting that the university also invited parents to join the student induction and showed appreciation to them. It reflects that the university is aware of parental influences on students' choice of university. This finding reinforces the finding in chapter 5 that indicated parental influence on education.

The president then encouraged students to adhere to the university's values which are not only about learning diligently but also studying actively and creatively as well as improving independent and critical thinking. After the president's speech, the deans and deputy deans of the faculties presented their particular programs and encouraged students to try their best at learning in order to find a good career. Right from the start, the president, the deans and the faculties clearly expressed the university's values, learning expectations and culture to the new students. I found Local University has done well in explicitly introducing their new students to the learning expectations. Clearly, the university's expectations of active learning, independent learning and critical thinking match with SCL principles. As previously mentioned in chapter five, students come from a background where they are usually being told what to do, so clarifying to them the need to be active and independent learners is a good start. However, it seems with the large numbers of students to welcome, Local University has limited options in enabling students to learn about active and independent learning through interactive activities as is the case at Foreign University.

During the opening ceremony, the university raised donations for a final year student who was seriously ill. The university invited the new students to donate. The invitation for donations was well received as it raised a large amount of money. I found a connection between the collectivism value with the donation. This shows that Local University would like to nurture the spirit of collectivism where individuals receive support from the group. This creates the sense of a family university where students are treated as family members and they care for each other. One more connection I found is that the donation activity links with another Confucianism value that focuses on developing the students as a full person, both morally and intellectually (Marr, 2000, p.773).

Local University also runs a student induction program called “week zero”, which is held in the week before semester starts. Although I was not able to observe, a teacher
explained the program of week zero in an interview. During week zero, new students have the opportunity to listen to very important people from the university and outside guest speakers. Then they have a few days in their faculty where the faculty members discuss with students important matters such as how they should study, what the learning spirit is and the learning style or learning approach that students need to know. In addition, the university arranges a lecture series for new students entitled “what is the reason for learning?” Based on what was said by a teacher in the interview, this type of first lecture has been a traditional activity at Local University where the university invites scholars from outside, including from abroad, to share and exchange ideas on various topics with students as a means of giving students an eye-opening experience. I found the lecture series; “what is the reason for learning?” for new students is interesting because it helps students to develop an understanding of the learning approach employed at the university.

In summary, students' induction at both universities introduced some aspects of active and independent learning to their students. The way each university introduced itself and some aspects of SCL were different. Foreign University has a short talk followed by active learning, exploration, play, in small groups while Local University has a long lecture to accommodate large numbers of students. At this stage, we cannot say which university's approach is more effective in providing student induction. Nevertheless, we can perceive each university's characteristics through their student induction. Foreign University presented itself as active, ambitious and fun through interactive activities while Local University presented itself as warm, supportive and ambitious through the message from the president and activities such as fund raising for a seriously ill student. Findings from this section will be used with findings from other sections to gain a clearer picture of how the universities implement SCL.

6.2.2 Introduction to independent learning

I observed a workshop called 'first semester students' at Foreign University run by an academic advisor of the Learning Support Unit (LSU). The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the Student Services Department, including LSU and important topics such as expectations, responsibilities and independent learning. I observed this workshop in order to discover what learning strategies and practices the university expects its new students to employ, how well students have been trained to adapt and
what challenge are faced in offering the workshops. This section responds to my first research question about how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an investigation of how Foreign University prepares new students for independent learning.

Observing this workshop allowed me to see that pre-existing perceptions towards independent learning that new students brought with them did not fit very well with university's expectations of students' learning. To illustrate, the main discussion topic of the workshop was about 'expectations, responsibilities and independent learning'. First of all, students were asked to work in small groups for a few minutes to answer the following questions: (1) what do you expect from the university?, (2) what do you expect from the lecturers?, (3) what do you expect from the classes?, (4) what do you expect you will perform? After the group discussion, the academic advisor asked students to share their answers with the class. In general, students were aware that they needed to take responsibility for their own learning such as preparing for classes and doing homework. However, when asked to talk about the concept of independent learning, students could not discuss much. Their answers mainly associated the concept of independent learning with an individual's effort and responsibility in doing tasks on one own. As they put it, “doing homework”, “taking notes”, “do research”, “going to a library”, “study by yourself” and “giving more work to yourself”. I found their answers only covered one aspect of independent learning, the taking of responsibility for one's own learning (Boud, 1988). In fact, independent learning concerns many aspects in which “students having an understanding of their learning, being motivated to take responsibility for their learning and working with teachers to structure their learning environment” (Meyer et al., 2008, p.2). In other words, scholarly conceptions of independent learning are not all about students' ability to do the task on their own but also about students being able to self-assess their own learning, being self-motivated to learn and collaborating with their teachers.

As can be clearly seen, new students arrive with an incomplete understanding of what independent learning is. However, the academic advisor did not provide very clear directions and feedback to students. For example, when a student said independent learning means “giving more work to yourself” and “study by yourself”. He responded by saying the answer was not quite accurate. The discussion about independent learning
ended here as the academic advisor rushed to the final part of the workshop on how to use and manage Google email accounts. It seemed to me that the rush to cover all the learning topics in the workshop was a missed opportunity to help the students develop their understanding of independent learning.

Grow (1991, p.126) developed Staged Self-Directed Learning (SSDL) model, that recommends “how teachers can actively equip students to become more self-directed in their learning.” The model recommends that in order to help students to move toward to greater autonomy, first the teachers need to identify where current learners are in terms of self-directedness, then match educational activities/sessions to the level and finally, facilitate their progression to the next higher level. Over the past two decades, many educators and researchers have used the model of SSDL to describe a process for helping learners negotiate aspects of the self-directed learning process (Lindner, Dooley & Williams (2003); Murad, Coto-Yglesias, Varkey & 2010; Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012). Grow categorises SSDL into four stages. These are, in ascending order; dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed. Learners at the dependent stage are unable to take charge of their own learning and are dependent upon the teacher to provide direction for them. Learners at the interested stage are interested and making an effort to be independent learners. At the involved stage, students have the ability to be independent learners but are not fully confident. Finally, at the self directed stage, students have the ability, the willingness and the confidence to be independent learners (Grow,1991; Hersey & Blanchard, 1996).

Using Grow’s SSDL model to identify the self-directed stage of these new students, I found they are in the dependent stage because, as reported in chapter five, they have come from a teacher-centred learning environment, often have extrinsic motivation to learn and do not often have clear goals for what they want to achieve. When they enter a university that employs SCL, they need to learn and adjust to many new things. In this case, in their first semester, they would still be at a dependent stage in the sense that they need the teacher to give direction and support them to learn new skills. Hence, this is not to label students from a teacher-centred environment as enduringly dependent, in this case, their dependency is situational as they are adjusting to the new approach. In accordance with Pratt (1988, p.168) some students are temporarily teacher-dependent because “they lack either relevant knowledge, skills, and experience or the motivation
and self-confidence to pursue educational goals.” Thus, what is important would be how teachers provide different types of skills supports to students at different stages to help students move to the next level. Grow recommends that the teacher should use different materials and approaches for the different self-directed stages. For those students in the dependent stage, use coaching and the insight method. The coaching approach involves teachers providing introductory material, drill and immediate feedback. The insight approach requires students to begin from “insight into who they are and what they want or need to learn. Examples of the insight method such as developing critical awareness of one's life situation, needs, and goal-setting” (1991, p.129). While the usage of the coaching method can be dropped when students move to a higher stage, the insight method can be continually used in the higher stages to help students to further develop a deeper self-concept, more confidence and a greater sense of direction. For example, students in the involved stage still benefit from making conscious use of learning strategies (Grow, 1991). Grow's insight method is in line with intercultural construction skills such as reflective and introspective skills which are useful for students to raise self-awareness about the way they learn, and to evaluate their current knowledge, attitude and expectation in relation to the new learning cultures to which they are required to adapt. Grow recommends that the teacher should use different materials and approaches for the different self-directed stages. For those students in the dependent stage, use coaching and the insight method. Using Grow's lens to analyse Foreign University's independent learning workshop that I observed, it seems as though the university made it very clear that students are expected to be independent and active, but that the detail of what might be involved was lacking.

There is a common challenge in orientation about how much detail to include at what stage. The independent learning workshop I observed is possibly one occasion in an 'on-boarding' process that might extend over several weeks and comprise these universality-level events as well as program and course level introductions. As such, it is not my aim to judge the effectiveness of the workshop, rather it is to provide an overview of how independent learning was introduced to students of Foreign University.

6.2.3 Learning skills workshops

Foreign University offered an ongoing series of learning skills workshops such as critical thinking, analytical skills, reading and writing skills aiming to prepare students
for SCL approaches. I interviewed two staff from LSU in order to discover what learning strategies and practices the university expects its new students to employ, how well students have been guided to adapt and what challenges LSU faces in offering the workshops. This section responds to a research question about how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an investigation of how Foreign University prepares new students to learn in SCL environment.

Both the academic advisors mentioned that managing students learning expectations is the most challenging and has an impact on the effectiveness of the workshop they provided to students. One academic advisor described his frustrations when asked about what he found to be the most challenging aspect in giving learning support to students. He said, “first of all, it is about students' expectation. They are looking for the answer. We are looking for preparing [learning] strategies.” He further addressed the issue students expect LSU to help them get the correct answer for their assignments.

The mismatch of expectation leads to an issue of low attendance for workshops catering to specific learning skills for SCL approaches. He provided an example where most students chose to attend workshops that they think are highly related to examinations and assignments.

...any classes of test preparation will be fully booked. But for the first one or two weeks in introduction weeks, it is empty, I mean, you check attendance rate. You can see the tendency. They just reflect that.

A manager of LSU expressed his concerns that the mismatch of expectations led to negative impacts on LSU's strategy aiming to get as many students as possible to attend workshops to provide them with academic support. He added that “we tend to operate on head count” as he was always mindful of the possibility of the upper management coming in to check on student attendance numbers. This is quite challenging for LSU because, on the one hand, at Foreign University, it is not compulsory for students to attend classes or workshops. Thus students can choose whether they want to attend class or not. On the other hand, LSU was under a pressure from upper management to get many students attending the workshop. With the pressure of attracting students to attend the workshops, LSU tried various strategies. According to one academic advisor, one of the methods that the LSU uses to attract students to the workshop was by
tailoring the workshop titles to make it obvious to students that the workshops are about helping them get high marks, otherwise students would not be interested. He illustrated:

In the first semester … we named the workshop as 'improve your academic writing'. Nobody came. A second semester, we named it 'improve your assessment performance in the writing assignment'. A lot of students came. That's one example. Second example is if you talk about how to critically analyse literature, nobody came. But if you tell students, I am going to demonstrate to you, HD and DI examples from previous semester, they will come.

I found, that the academic advisors using their understanding about students' learning backgrounds and expectations for tailoring the workshop titles, fell into Biggs' level 2 of teaching across cultures, in which teachers adapt their teaching approach to match with the learning culture of students. According to Biggs (1997) the technique is not a real teaching principle that can significantly contribute to students' learning. Biggs (1997) points out that level 2 teaching remains a deficit model of education given that it focuses on what the teacher does in accommodating students with little or no emphasis on the learning outcomes. Without becoming too judgemental on what the academic advisors did at this stage, I try to understand what they think influences their approach of tailoring the workshop titles. It could be assumed that in order to help the students learn differently, the educators have to also adapt their offering in response to students' desires. While it is effective in the short-term in increasing the number of students coming to sessions through the key performance indication on which the team's effectiveness is being judged, the danger is that it does not help students to learn how to be independent learners by showing them tricks to get more marks, as it were. But it could be that this is more like mutual engagement approaches and the academic advisors are just tweaking the title to draw students in, and then once they have got them they help students develop their independent learning skills, but in a way that is designed based on these students' needs and desires.

Academic advisor reflected the dilemma in the implementation of SCL to students from a teacher-centred background and the difficulty in managing students' expectations that teachers at Foreign University and he also faces. He explained that he faced the

3 These are the top grade bands in the grading scale used at Foreign University.
challenge of teaching the way students want to be taught, or the way SCL theory tells him to. He admitted that, with the pressure from students, he adapted his teaching style to match with students' expectations and preferences, despite knowing it is not student-centred. He illustrated:

You know, they [students] get baffled when the lecturer will say, there's no right or wrong answer, you know, it's the process of getting there and whatever you come up with, that's good enough and that's baffling for them I think and so I think for new teachers, you know, they were coming from Australia and expected their classes to be all student-centred, stuff like that. They would get drained and worn out very quickly and probably throw their hands in the air and leave as quickly as possible. So, I think probably from the lecturer's side, there's a tendency to go, you know what, what the hell, I'm just going to give to them how they're used to it because it is so much easier. And I know that myself, I've done it before. I said ok, look, this is the answer, this is what it is. But, you know, what are the goals, what's the objective of our university? Do we want to create students who can go out into the workforce and problem-solve themselves or just to be able to say yes to their boss?.

From the situation he described above, we can see he was struggling pushing “a square peg into a round hole” and facing a choice of either adapting to an existing culture or imposing one's own on the students. Both approaches are ineffective because they are not beneficial for students' learning developments. In chapter two, studies recommended educators and universities in a cross-cultural context develop a 'third space' which is described as where hybrid and transformed practices from different cultures can be formed (Flessner, 2014; Pham, 2016). Given LSU staff are facing a dilemma of either adapting to an existing culture or imposing one's own on the students, 'third space' should be a better solution and more beneficial for teaching and learning experience. This is because 'third space' offers opportunities for the transformation of conflicts and tensions in cultural disparities into rich zones of learning.

6.3 Foreign University's new teacher induction program

Teacher induction is a process of initiating new teachers into their new roles, both as
teachers and as members of the organisation (Kessels, 2010). I observed Foreign University's teacher induction program in order to analyse strategies employed at the university to see whether the training is adequate, relevant and what else might be needed in order to equip teachers with cultural awareness, mindset and skills to teach in a cross-cultural context. This section responds to a research question about how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an investigation of how Foreign University prepares new teachers to teach Vietnamese students with SCL approaches.

The observation allowed me to see the university's emphasis on introducing teaching techniques to new teachers. For example, the teaching advisor discussed and provided guidance to new teachers on teaching techniques such as making eye contact, how to develop a good rapport with students, how teachers should divide the class into groups/pairs and what is the right apportionment between teacher's talking time and student interaction. In general, new teachers seemed to find these skills useful. However, as found in chapter five, in this context there have been issues about cultural disparities that affect the way students learn and teachers teach, thus training new teachers on the teaching techniques seems to be the bare minimum.

The teaching advisor introduced constructivism, one of the main principles of SCL, to new teachers. The teaching advisor used a picture of a mug and jug to generate a discussion on how it links to constructivism principles. Teachers discussed the picture as representing the old-fashioned way of thinking where a teacher poured knowledge into students without realising students had existing knowledge that could be built on. The emphasis on constructivism falls into Biggs' level three of teaching. As discussed in chapter two, Biggs' level three is based on the universality of the learning process. However, for this level, what students are and what teachers do to adapt one's teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning culture of students are not the concerns.

In one of the sessions I observed, the teaching advisor initiated a discussion about the challenge in getting students to learn through the constructive approach. The discussion led to the observation of Vietnamese learning culture where “Vietnamese students are spoon-fed” and regard the “teacher as a god.” The teaching advisor seemed to lack the language to explain the impact of the learning environment on behaviour and therefore new teachers' expectations risked sliding back into suggestions about innate
characteristics. As discussed in chapter five, the term “situational passivity” could be another option that teachers can refer to when discussing “passivity” as it shifts the focus from the innate character of students to the learning passivity of students as a result of the passive learning approach employed by teachers or institutions. The idea of using the terms “situational passivity” is consistent with studies in chapter two recommending that teachers teaching in a cross-cultural context use the mutual engagement approach since the way students and teachers interact is shaped by the social context, rather than innate characteristics. We need to understand that the new context that we are creating is also shaping how students respond and change over time.

The concept of “face” in Confucian heritage cultures was brought up in the teacher induction session through an activity where the teacher advisor asked new teachers to discuss how teachers should handle student errors. From the social psychological perspective, “face” is the evaluation of one's public image after an individual reflects on his/her own actions in certain social circumstances (Kwang, 2011, p.270). The discussion in this session was very brief and no deeper discussion was generated by the teaching advisor about how knowledge about “face” can be used to help students achieve learning outcomes. This discussion about “face” provided a basic cultural awareness to new teachers and falls into Biggs level two which focuses on what the teacher does in adapting their teaching approach in a culturally-specific way to match with the learning culture of their students. Nonetheless, merely introducing the cultural knowledge about “face” is not adequate for the new teachers to develop mutual engagement approaches such as in developing the culture of knowing through interaction. Hicks, Kohler & King (2005, p.24) recommend that, in order to help teachers adopt an intercultural approach, “intercultural construction should be integrated into orientation and academics work; that is, connected to their discipline and tailored to their needs rather than offered in a generic form.” This thesis agrees with the recommendation above since, without integration, teachers cannot truly improve their intercultural mindset and skills.

6.4 Local University's guidance for new teachers

Interviewed participants stated that no induction for new teachers was offered by Local University, therefore I sought to understand how Local University provided guidance to their new teachers solely through interviews and without the benefit of observation.
This section responds to a research question about (1) how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an investigation of how Local University prepares new teachers to teach Vietnamese students with SCL approaches.

Teachers at Local University face difficulties in meeting the university's expectations of them in facilitating SCL approaches. The teaching advisor acknowledged that some teachers misunderstood the concept of SCL.

... some people they misunderstand the concept too. They just think student-centred learning mean let the student do everything, they just stay there, do nothing. That's wrong perception.

This statement is consistent with studies in chapter three indicating that teachers in Vietnamese local universities have been under pressure to change their teaching practices from teacher-centred to student-centred. Unfortunately, when they have not received adequate or appropriate training, they misunderstand the concept, and this negatively affects the way they teach.

The teaching advisor stated that some problems arose from the teacher's unwillingness to adapt to SCL since it required them to spend more time developing teaching materials for SCL approaches in comparison to the lecture style. He said:

They think that it's easy to give lecture and then the class finish. To design many things for students to do, it's annoying. It takes some time and effort to do. So people tend to do easy things.

The above problem of the teacher's unwillingness to adapt could be explained by Thanh's (2010) points that imposing the principles of SCL to teachers, and expecting them to change without providing adequate training and support, is likely to cause rejection. Instead, teachers should be provided with experiences that make them willing and able to change. Thanh (2010) recommends providing professional development programs for teachers as a way to help them become aware of the disadvantages of the teacher-centred approach and appreciate the advantages of the student-centred approach. This is important since, once teachers are aware of those factors, they can then influence students to change their approach to learning.
A teacher expressed a desire for having formal teacher training where teachers can truly benefit from collaboration between teachers. She stated:

I guess observing other classes that have good examples, more teacher exchange, share what works in their class and some more communication, I guess. I mean teachers, we meet each other, and we complain about the students [...] but sometimes it needs to exchange teaching method. So, I think we could benefit from a more systematic training.

I asked the teaching advisor what plan the university has for providing training for new teachers given he realises the need of the training. He explained a future plan to run a new teacher induction program and what will be covered:

I think we [will] try to initiate first kind of induction which we call 'new faculty orientation session'. During which we will kind of teach them, of course discussion, it's like a real classroom [...] and we teach them so that they are well aware of the teaching practices at [Local University], what I expected for them to do as a lecturer here. Something like that.

I asked the teaching advisor how the university informed new teachers about teaching expectations without a teacher induction program in place. He said the university focused on recruiting teachers who matched the job criteria and the university's teaching practices. In the recruitment process, applicants were not only being interviewed but were also required to conduct a teaching demonstration to show their teaching skills. The teaching advisor further explained that when new teachers entered the university, Human resources department provided new teachers with documents and then discussed teaching practices with them rather than having a formal teacher induction process.

From his statement above, I have assumed that the university expected their new teachers to know how to implement SCL so there was no need for a new teacher induction process. Furthermore, the new teacher induction could appear to the new teachers as “teaching fish how to swim”. The phrase describes “the self-sufficiency of those who know better how to do everything than the experts” (Muehl et al., 1999, p.18). Furthermore, as discussed in chapter three, because university teacher training is not widespread in Vietnam, it is not surprising that Local University did not see the
need to have one. This is different from Foreign University, where staff induction and professional development have become widespread on the home campus and across the national system.

I asked him what made him change to the new direction and why he thinks this proposed teacher induction program is important. He gave his rationales behind the new direction:

[…] We think that it is necessary because also that we took feedback from the lecturers. Some senior lecturers here, they gave a remark that our faculty haven't received any formal orientation that support them, that help them to teach well. So we take their remark into consideration and now we develop the new faculty orientation in the sense to help them to teach better and we receive the comment, remark from the students and we concluded that it's our fault. We haven't provided enough support to new faculty. We provide them with teaching demo. We discuss with them briefly, orally about the best practice, but it is not enough.

The fact that Local University see the need for a staff induction process suggests that they have recognised that there is a problem with the current approach. The teaching advisor explained his future plan in incorporating training subjects about SCL approaches to new teachers.

We should develop documents, give them to read, after that we should discuss with them. We teach them. We demonstrate to them what active learning class is. For example, we should demonstrate to them what is a flipped classroom. How we can make classroom more interactive, something like that. Talk about that in a formal session rather than just read the materials. So, that's why we are working toward it because we think it's a good thing to do.

The teaching advisor stated that there is more room for the university to improve on the implementation of SCL and new teacher induction as he planned to follow “best practice carried out in other universities.” Although the idea of following best practice
conducted somewhere else sounds good in principle, it might not be the only solution in helping teachers improve their implementation of SCL in this cross-cultural context. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, teachers working in a cross-cultural context should also develop the cultural awareness, mindset and skills of intercultural construction. Given most teachers and the board of management of Local University are Vietnamese, they are more likely to understand Vietnamese culture and background, thus the university can provide guidance to their teachers to build on the cultural awareness they have and use that to help students adapt to SCL approaches.

6.5 Summary

This chapter investigated how the participating universities prepare their new students and teachers for implementation of SCL and how well they have been guided to do so. For student induction, both universities introduced some aspects of active and independent learning to their students. The way each university introduced itself and some aspects of SCL was different. Foreign University has a short talk followed by active learning, exploration and play in small groups, while Local University has a long lecture to accommodate large numbers of students. At the moment, we cannot say which university's approach is more effective in providing student induction. However, we can perceive each university's characteristics through their student induction. Foreign University presented itself as active, ambitious and fun through interactive activities while Local University presented itself as warm, supportive and ambitious through the message from the president and activities such as fund raising for a seriously ill student. Findings from this section will be used with findings from other sections to gain a better picture of how the universities implement SCL.

As for academic skills development workshops, I learned that the workshop should be arranged to be relevant to the student self-directed stage and skills needed. Grow's methods of coaching and insight is recommended as they are likely to help students understand the concept and help them to learn to set up their goals, be self aware and critically reflect on the way they learn. The insight method is in line with intercultural construction skills such as reflective and introspective skills which are useful for students to raise their self-awareness about the way they learn, and to evaluate their current knowledge, attitude and expectations in relation to the new learning cultures to which they are required to adapt.
Analysing Foreign University's new teacher induction program and Local University's guidance for new teachers, I found that both universities expect their teachers to implement SCL approaches. However, there seemed to be little guidance given to new teachers on how the cultural aspects in a cross-cultural classroom should be handled. My observations of Foreign University's new teacher induction program indicates that Foreign University focuses on introducing teaching techniques for facilitating constructivism. This is a good start; however, it may not be adequate given the challenges in implementing SCL in this context require teachers to also have the cultural awareness, mindset and skills of intercultural approaches.

The teaching advisor of Local University stated that there is more room for the university to improve on the implementation of SCL and new teacher induction as he planned to follow “best practice carried out in other universities.” Although the idea of following best practice conducted somewhere else sounds good in principle, it might not be the only solution in helping teachers improve their implementation of SCL in this cross-cultural context. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, teachers working in a cross-cultural context should also develop the cultural awareness, mindset and skills of intercultural construction. Given most of the teachers and board of management of Local University are Vietnamese, they are more likely to understand Vietnamese culture and background, thus the university can provide guidance to their teachers to build on the cultural awareness they have and use that to help students adapt to SCL approaches.

Taken all together, whether it be an induction program for new teachers or new students, it seems that support needs to extend across time and be developmentally sequential, appropriate to learners and different phases.
Chapter Seven: SCL Classroom

7.1 Overview

Chapter five and six explored the students' background and transition into the university setting whereas this chapter considers the ongoing issues during the course of learning and teaching. Analysing students' backgrounds allowed me to understand that many students in this context have an extrinsic motivation to learn, in particular when their purpose in learning is not mainly driven by their own curiosity to pursue new knowledge but for other reasons influenced by their schooling, social and cultural backgrounds. Findings indicate that, with students from such a background, the main challenge in this context is how the university and the teachers use appropriate and effective strategies to help students to adjust to the main role in the learning process.

This chapter aims to discover how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the universities and how academics and students experienced the implementation of SCL in their classrooms. This chapter addresses all three research questions. These are: (1) how SCL is implemented in the classrooms of the universities involved in the study, (2) how academics of the universities involved in this study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms, (3) how students of the universities involved in the study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms. Findings from these three questions assist in understanding what works well and what does not work well in the implementation of SCL. It brings together key findings based on class observations, focus group interviews and individual interviews with various groups of participants. The chapter reveals insights and underpinning factors that were found to have triggered students' interest in learning.

The chapter consists of five sections: (1) an overview of teaching and learning principles employed at participating universities (2) student resistance to SCL, why bother?, (3) contextualisation, (4) harnessing collectivism for active learning: Co-competition, (5) the affective dimension of SCL.

The first section, an overview of teaching and learning principles employed at
participating universities, responds to a research question about (1) how SCL is implemented at participating universities. This has been achieved through an examination of what SCL looks like in practice. It begins with an overview of the key features of teaching and learning at these universities followed by a description of the classroom environment of both universities. Finally how assessment is carried out.

The second section, student resistance to SCL, why bother?, examines issues of student resistance occurring at both participating universities. This section responds to the two research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) students experience the implementation of SCL in the classrooms. This has been achieved through an examination of the issues in the implementation of SCL occurring at both participating universities. This section begins with findings about student resistance to SCL followed by how teachers responded to it.

The third section, contextualisation, responds to two research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) students experience the implementation of SCL. This has been achieved through an investigation into the challenges in the contextualising of learning content to students in this context. This section begins with insights found from students' interviews regarding how they are engaged with learning content that is related to real-life local examples. The discussion then moves on to discuss teachers' viewpoints and experiences in using real-life local examples to facilitate students' learning as well as the challenges involved in contextualisation of the learning content.

The fourth section, harnessing collectivism for active learning: Co-opetition, examines the concept of co-opetition which was found in the class of a Vietnamese teacher at Local University. Unexpectedly, this study found a hybrid approach, 'co-opetition', that has not been previously documented in cross-cultural teaching literature. Especially in Vietnam, no research on co-opetition in education has been found. Finding about co-opetition is surprising given the concept was found to help solving a problem where students would not likely be motivated to participate in a class activity that required individual students to compete against their peers for an individual gain because it could cause their peers to lose face in front of others. This section responds to two research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) students experience the implementation of SCL. This has been achieved through an investigation of what is happening in the class of a Vietnamese teacher at Local University which was found to be using co-opetition.
This section begins with a discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of the cooperation and competition approaches. This is followed by how those approaches can be combined together in a way that enhances the benefits while minimising the drawbacks of each approach. Finally, the implementation of co-operation in a classroom is analysed.

The fifth section examines the quality of the affective engagement between students and teachers. Affective engagement is a recurring theme that emerged from the findings. It indicates that empathic understanding, caring for students, and student empowerment bring a climate of joy and passion to SCL classrooms. This is an important theme because, as discussed in chapter two, SCL consists of cognitive, social and affective dimension (Cruickshank et al., 2012, IOWA, 2012; Naude et al., 2014). Among all three, the affective dimension has been overlooked. This is because most instruction in higher education is focused on developing students' cognitive and social constructivism skills rather than bridging the gap between the inward and the outward dimensions of teaching and learning (Greene, Kim and Korthagan, 2013; Reeves, 2006; Sperber, 2005). There are studies raising concerns that the affective dimension has gradually disappeared from the teaching and learning domain (Greene et al., 2013). Intrator and Kunzman (2006) pointed out that many teachers become out of touch with their students' emotional learning needs and lack the compassion to teach students with empathic understanding. Findings from interviews with teachers and students, and class observations of this thesis, added more evidence to support the idea that the affective dimension of SCL is important for students in their adaptation to SCL. In this section, findings about the affective dimension is examined to see how it has impacted on teachers and students' experience. This section responds to two research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) students experience the implementation of SCL. This has been achieved through an examination of the affective dimension employed at both participating universities.

7.2 An overview of teaching and learning principles employed at participating universities

This section responds to a research question about (1) how SCL is implemented at participating universities through an examination of what SCL looks like in practice. It begins with an overview of the key features of teaching and learning at these
universities followed by a description of the classroom environment of both universities. Then, how assessment is carried out. Foreign University is presented first followed by Local University. The sequence of appearance is based on alphabetical order.

7.2.1 Foreign University

SCL is the teaching and learning approach employed at Foreign University, as indicated on its website. I learned more about the university's approach to SCL from a teaching advisor who has been working in the Learning and Teaching Department for eight years. In the interview, he gave an overview into the adoption of SCL, keys features of teaching and learning, assessment methods, educational technology to enhance SCL, and evaluation of teachers' teaching.

Foreign University is a strong advocate of SCL. The university incorporates SCL to cover main aspects of its teaching and learning. The teaching advisor described the role of the teacher in the classroom in relation to SCL as “teachers are aware of maximising students' taking time or students doing things in order, for the lesson to be more memorable, to be rooted in them in discovering than just being told.” Furthermore, he explained that the teachers are to be facilitators of students' learning by encouraging them to interact with each other rather than the teacher as the centre in the classroom. He said:

What the teacher is doing is encouraging students to talk to other students and ask for an explanation from the students, so that's very student-centred in terms of feedback because once that's done and it's heard that everyone's asked each other where they've gotten, then can move on rather than the teacher giving them the answer.

The teaching advisor stated that Foreign University employs constructivism. He is aware that Foreign University students need to adjust to constructivism as they are not really used to this approach. He recommended teachers take students' background and learning difficulties into consideration and find strategies to help students adapt to constructivism. He pointed out that the localising of learning materials to suit students' learning needs is working well here as it allows students to construct knowledge from what they already know. He explained:
The materials have to suit the learning needs, so the materials have to be localised. They have to use the examples that Vietnamese 18 to 20 year-olds would be able to talk about. For example, in business statistics they might gather data about what students purchase here in Vietnam and then use the data to demonstrate a point in statistics. We start with the known, what students already know, and then build on top of that, the unknown. It's called the constructivist approach and that works well here.

I asked the teaching advisor how SCL is promoted at Foreign University. He gave, as an overview, that Foreign University has designed the course delivery to enhance the implementation of SCL. He explained:

The university has been using a lecture/tutorial style called the three Ps. The first P is the producer or is the lecture, the last P is the tutorial which is practice. So practice is there and the middle P is prepare so this is the blackboard online stuff which after the lecture, students should log on and have a look at exercises.

From the teaching advisor's explanation above about the relevancy between 3P and SCL, it seems that Foreign University consider that students need to take accountability for their own learning through learning, preparation and practicing, whereas, the teachers' role is to facilitate students' learning. The advisor elaborated on how the teachers should facilitate students' learning:

We look at all aspects of the course delivery and if we're looking at the seminar style we ask lecturers to think about balancing theory and practice. So, in the course of the 90 minutes seminar, we'd expect them to possibly give an input on new theories, new to the students, that is, and followed by practice to see if the students can put this input into practice and that should be in a Vietnamese context and then a review of the practice which, hopefully is more student centred, not simply the teacher asking groups to give feedback to the teacher but perhaps requiring groups to report to other groups.
The university also emphasises the use of technology to enhance SCL. The teaching advisor pointed out that the university is moving toward blended learning in which part of the course might be accessible online and part of it might be face to face teaching. There are also a number of other education technology aspects, such as grade center, which has come from the university's home campus. The teaching advisor stated that there will be more education technology employed in the future such as a lecture capture program called Echo360 which allows a lecture to be recorded. The lecturer can be then be posted online so the student can self-access afterwards. The student is able to play the lecture, stop and review when required, and follow it at a speed that suits them.

Foreign University plays attention to the classroom environment to facilitate SCL. Class sizes are limited to 30 students that teachers can manage classrooms more effectively. I observed a classroom at Foreign University; it is equipped with modern equipment such as a computer for teachers along with a projector screen and glass-boards at the front and rear of the classroom to facilitate learning activities. Tables and chairs are set up for students to sit in groups. Generally speaking, the set up of the group table style can facilitate SCL learning activities better than in teacher-centred classrooms.

Class sizes larger than 30 students are usually run in a theatre with lecturing style for an hour or two. The teaching advisor stated that teachers should be mindful of student's background and adjust their approach to support student learning. He stated:

...in the case that teachers are only lecturing without consideration of the nature of the students who are 98% second language users, teachers require adaption of that style to take account of the fact that they need to pause and review.

The teaching advisor explained that some large classes still needed to be run lecture style. The university responded to the issue of reduced interaction in large classes by purchasing personal response equipment for students to answer teacher's questions on a projector screen. Students just need to click the button on the device to answer the question. This way teachers are able to check whether students understood the content. Foreign University follows the same classroom rules as the university's home campus, including policy of not checking class attendance. This policy is an example of student-
centredness because they can choose how and when to engage. Inspite of that, as discussed in chapter six, this no attendance checking policy made it difficult for learning advisors to induce students to attend workshops designed to introduce learning skills for SCL. This is an indication that not all SCL approaches could be successfully adopted in this context.

In terms of assessment, students are assessed through examinations and assignments. The combination of these two types of assessments is commonly employed to evaluate student learning in many universities. I found a key insight from a British teacher where he pointed out that extra attention should be paid to the type of assessment used for students in this context since it can be used to motivate students to take an active approach. He illustrated:

Some of the motivation comes, again I come back to the way that we construct the assessments, for the student because they need to be active in the way that they are learning in order to get good marks in the assessments. You know, so, a significant proportion of what I teach, the significant proportion of the overall assessment comes from their active participation in projects, report work, plans, presentations. So, one source of motivation comes through, you know, motivation through, you are going to be assessed on this, so that in itself is quite a motivation for you to actively engage in the subject and you can't take a sort of a shallow approach to the topic, you've got to get more deeply involved if you are going to come out of this course with a good assessment. Yes, so there's something there about active engagement.

The British teacher, however commented on Foreign University's inconsistency in the way students have been assessed. He said:

I think, you know, we have to be consistent as a university in the way that we assess students in order to make that happen. My own personal view is that we're not, that we're not consistent in that. [...] I don't see a consistent approach in the way that we assess students to try to encourage and reward depth learning across the board. You know, some of the, the significant part
of the marks of some of the courses, two of the courses that I taught on, where we reward students based on answering multiple choice questions and I don't care how multiple choice questions are, you can't, you are not testing a deep learning and ability to critically evaluate through multiple choice. Some people said, oh yes we can design multiple choice questions to encourage that but I don't see that. That's my personal point of view.

Since what the British teacher said above represents only one person's view, I cannot judge the effectiveness of assessment methods of Foreign University. Having said that, I could see that there is a whole range of teaching and assessment styles in use at Foreign University, and that some are more student-centred than others.

Taken together, I have listed key features of SCL employed at Foreign University including practice-small classes, flexible engagement through ability to use technology and no compulsory attendance. I noted that there is a diversity of approaches, depending on the course design and teacher preferences.

7.2.2 Local University

SCL is a teaching and learning approach employed at Local University as indicated on its website. I learned more about the university's approach to SCL from a teaching advisor who also has been working as a Department Chair and Deputy Dean. He is in charge of academic affairs, quality assurance and provision of support to teaching and learning in the faculty. In the interview he gave an overview into the adoption of SCL, key features of teaching and learning, assessment methods, educational technology to enhance SCL, and teacher evaluation.

The teaching advisor described the role of the teacher in the classroom in relation to SCL as:

The lecturers are [required] to adopt several teaching methods and focusing on student by creating conditions, environments for students to learn by themselves, to promote their own learning, interaction, promote interaction with the lecturer, but at the same time promote independent learning, more assignments for students doing outside their class, individually or in group.
I asked the teaching advisor how SCL is promoted at Local University. His explanation was that, on the students' side, the university promotes this idea during student orientation week. On the teachers' side, he illustrated that:

We do this by setting a standard syllabus in which student-centred learning approach is appreciated, is emphasized...

What I think he means by 'setting a standard syllabus in which student-centred learning approach is appreciated, is emphasized,' it is not clear to me what this might look like in practice. The teaching advisor stated what Local University plans to do, which suggests to me that they are not doing much at the moment.

...we [will] try to provide more support in the new faculty orientation [in the future]. We [will] provide more support by giving them more documents, by asking them to participate in the new faculty orientation sessions or and constantly at regular meeting or department meeting, the Dean and the Chair remind them of teaching methods, of improving teaching quality by taking into account student purpose, student needs.

In terms of assessment policies, the teaching advisor explained that of Local University by saying that every course must have three components of assessment. He said that the university employed the “continuous assessment” approach by which he means “a system in which the quality of a student's work is judged by various pieces of work during a course and not by one final exam” (Cambridge University Press, 2019). The teaching advisor explained that in practice “continuous assessment” was employed in that “we don't make students take one or two examinations, only midterm and then the final but we ask them to do individual assignment or group assignment.” However, he expressed that, in reality, sometimes teachers did not follow the policy:

In policy we try to encourage lecturers to do this, to do that, provide them with support but in reality sometimes some lecturers they, just for their benefit, for their interest, they just focus on lecture only approach or they just give assessment on two components, midterm and final [examination].

The above issue concerning assessment is more likely to affect students' motivation to adapt to active learning. Kember (2000) indicates that students will adopt a surface
approach if that is what the course and assessment require them to do or if that approach enables them to achieve the set learning outcomes. The teacher advisor seemed to think that the reason behind the teachers not following the assessment policy was due to their low level of interest of individual teachers. At this point, I am assuming that the cause of the low level of teachers' interest in following the assessment policy could also come from other factors including the readiness stage of the university in implementing SCL. As discussed in chapter 5, the teaching advisor stated that there is more room for the university to improve on the implementation of SCL as well as new teacher induction. This factor due to unsettled of the SCL implementation policy and practices, could cause the lack of teachers' readiness in implementing SCL.

The teaching advisor said that he is interested in employing educational technology to enhance SCL and make students learn more actively. He has been trying to encourage other teachers to do so. He said:

Now we can integrate learning into the web, that kind of blended learning and we are, we appreciate that, and we try to promote that. Actually, we promote that by persuading the lecturers to have a look at the best practices done in other universities. Ok, I have developed kind of a combination, a combined materials about best practices in teaching at university and we disseminate this document to lecturers and we hope that they can, they have some awareness, they can put it in their daily teaching. Now we aware that this is a long process to persuade them to adopt educational technology, especially into their teaching.

However, he said that the university does not really have the technology, or an educational technology unit, to support some teachers' initiatives. He described the situation:

We have a department of information technology. It can help us with fixing the problem, internet connection or will install some specified equipment but we don't have special equipment for education. Some special equipment help us design student-centred learning and the lecturer they just, if they want to adopt, they want to apply student-centred learning techniques, they just do it on their initiative with their own ideas, it takes them a lot of time.
For the classroom environment, class sizes are limited to 30 students as they are at Foreign University. The classroom is equipped with a computer for teachers, a projector screen and whiteboards in the front of the classroom. Tables and chairs are set up for students to sit in rows. The seating arrangement suggests traditional chalk and talk which might not be an ideal classroom set-up to facilitate SCL approaches where students should interact with their peers more than listening and looking at the projector.

Classes of a larger size are taught in a big hall. The teaching advisor said that, for large classes of 100 students where a lecturing style is being used, SCL cannot really be applied. He explained:

Yes, sometimes we have to accept the variety a little bit. That means some courses of some 100 students level courses, lecture is the main part because they teach a crowd, a large class. Of course, there are methods to adopt student-centred learning for a large classes. But for that kind of class, actually we don't pay much attention. I mean we don't require too much from that 100 level courses class or for the class where the lecture is the main part. But for other classes, we appreciate and we encourage the lecturer to adopt student-centred learning.

The above limitation in facilitating SCL indicates that Local University did not use education technology to solve issues as Foreign University.

Attendance policy is being used at Local University. The teaching advisor explained that Local University encourages students to come to class in two ways, first is by checking attendance, “for 15 sessions a course and if students absent for 5 sessions or more, they will be forbidden from taking the exam”. The other way is by making coming to class interesting for students, including designing class activities in such a way that is interesting for them, like game and role plays.

Taken together, there are some similarities and some differences between the two universities. First of all, both universities publicised their use of SCL. Both of them stated challenges in implementation of SCL, such as teaching in large classes. While Foreign University employed educational technology in enhancing the implementation of SCL, Local University did not. For student assessment methods, both universities
employed examinations and assessments to evaluate students' academic performance. For Foreign University, students are assessed through examinations and assignments. The combination of these two types of assessments is commonly employed to evaluate student learning in many universities. I found a key insight from a British teacher where he pointed out that extra attention should be paid to the type of assessment used for students in this context since it can be used to motivate students to take an active approach. At Local University, which had an assessment policy designed to support SCL. There was an issue where teachers did not follow it due to their lack of interest. Nevertheless, another issue at local university, apart from teachers lack of interest in following the university's policies, could also be due to the unsettled nature of the SCL implementation policy and practices. This could be a demotivating factor in teacher readiness for the implementation of SCL.

7.3 Student resistance to SCL, why bother?

This section examines issues of student resistance occurring at both participating universities. This section responds to the research questions about (1) how teachers and (2) students experience the implementation of SCL in the classrooms. This has been achieved through an examination of the issues in the implementation of SCL occurring at the two participating universities. This section begins with findings about student resistance to SCL followed by how teachers responded to student resistance.

Chapter five shows the students' backgrounds of all students of the two universities I talked to who described their secondary education in negative terms, and preferred the learning style at their current universities. This is a good indication that both universities have done something well. Nonetheless, the issue of student resistance to SCL was raised by teachers of both universities. The teachers expressed their frustration with those students who still relied heavily on their teachers to provide knowledge and who blamed the teachers for not giving the answers to them. Both universities employ student surveys to evaluate teacher performance. However, students of both universities who don't appreciate or are resistant to SCL, provide negative comment to their teachers on student surveys. Surprisingly, some teachers taught according to what students wanted.

Teachers noticed student resistance from class participation and negative student
evaluations. For class participation, an Australian teacher at Foreign University shared an experience where he tried to implement SCL to students but they resisted taking the central role in the learning process. He said:

That is a bit of a challenge I think. In the sense of, sort of putting student centred learning, it seems like self-evident what you should be doing. Sometimes they just haven't got the maturity or the experience to be able to take such a central role in the process.

From the above explanation, the reason for students' resistance to SCL is that they are not mature and experienced enough. Another example from a Vietnamese teacher at Foreign University explained a situation where she became the subject of criticism for not feeding information to students. It seemed as though the teacher considers students to be lazy and unmotivated as she stated:

...They don't like that approach [SCL] much. They feel that they pay money but then they come and the teacher just give instruction and just ask them to work and don't feed them information when they go to class so they tend to blame the teacher if they don't work hard.

A Vietnamese teacher at Local University also reflected the same concerns as the above teacher at Foreign University over students' unwillingness to follow the approach. He said:

From the student perspective, especially the first or second year students because at high school, they are accustomed to teacher-centred approach. So it's difficult for them. They are just waiting passively for the input from the lecturers. So whenever we ask them to do something, to read at home, they don't do, they don't do their homework and they just [ask] why do you ask me to do this, why don't you just explain to us and we takes notes.

Another Vietnamese teacher at Local University reflected an issue of student resistance to take an active role of learner which makes it difficult to implement SCL.

If it wants to be completely the student centred, they need to do the reading, to learn and study by themselves and then in class they will be able to ask
questions that are interesting to them or ask questions about things, rather than me telling them, this means this, kind of feeding them word by word. I know that's not very student centred so I don't think that to implement completely student-centred learning is feasible. It needs to have student preparation. Yeah because if I say well, you know, study and they don't. Then I mean I try my best to motivate them using very different methods but some students are a bit...,they don't like this.

A factor that adds more frustration to teachers is when students, who do not understand the underpinning ideas of the SCL approach or their role as active learners, gave unconstructive feedback on the student survey. This issue caused negative effects on the teachers' teaching evaluations. An academic advisor at Foreign University expressed his point of view on the matter:

Lecturers have been hurt under the accountability system here, which is a student survey, which means if you don't fulfil students' expectations, your teaching scores will be low, which means lecturers are not in a good position to develop and facilitate students to transform from, we say, Vietnamese learning style to a more Westernised style of learning.

...good teaching from lecturers' side are different from students' side. Lecturers' performance is evaluated by students' survey. So, from lecturers' side, I don't think lecturers can take the risk of losing everything, kind of the hero in the revolution, you know, they can die for the idea. No, they don't want to do [them].

A teaching advisor at Local University provided a similar example to the above teacher regarding student resistance to SCL and complaints on the student survey.

I teach one course and I try to apply the flipped classroom, reverse classroom and my students they resist, they don't appreciate. They complain in the feedback that “why you ask me to do many things”. You don't do anything but of course they are wrong because they are not used to the new concept. Because in the class I talk, I think, I prepare more at home and in the class, I talk more. But I talk not to teach, not to give
lecture but I talk, I give them smart questions or give them some situations to discuss, some problems to solve and give them role-play to play and I ask them many things to do but they didn't do.

With the teachers' dilemma in dealing with student resistance in such circumstances, some teachers responded to the issue by giving the students what they want. To begin with, a teaching advisor at Foreign University found some new teachers have no patience to deal with student resistance and gave students the answers. The teaching advisor did not like the approach as he found it inconsistent with the aims of SCL and constructivism. A Vietnamese teacher at Foreign University admitted that, when she first arrived at Foreign University, she employed the teacher-centred approach because she did not know how to deal with student resistance and that was what students wanted. She said:

When I first arrived, I felt that I were still very traditional in teaching. I mean I still approach with teacher as the center. But then after [more] than one year I think it would be better for students to learn by themselves and I should facilitate or I should instruct them only but it is not easy to do. For me, I am changing, I am still trying to change myself for active learning approach for students to have active learning. But sometimes, I am also doubtful about that approach because my students they are very young. They are from high school. Transfer from high school.

A British teacher at Foreign University said that students haven't got the maturity or the experience to be able to take such a central role in the process. So, sometimes they need to be told the answers.

The findings of chapter six detailed the experience of an academic advisor of LSU at Foreign University who admitted that, with the pressure, he gave up and adapted his teaching style to match students' expectations and preferences, despite knowing it was inconsistent with the student-centred approach.

Through the above findings from this chapter, combined with findings from chapter six, we can say that dealing with student resistance to SCL is a real challenge in this context and cannot be overlooked. In subsequent sections, I will provide further investigation into the issue and strategies teachers employed which overcome resistance rather than
2000). The theory recommends that knowledge cannot be simply constructed through knowledge transmission from one person to another. Instead, an individual person needs to reconstruct his or her own knowledge by linking their existing knowledge with new knowledge (Biggs & Tang, 2007). As discussed in chapter five, students come from backgrounds where they were required to be recipients of knowledge and, as such, were not familiar with constructivist learning approaches. Thus, there is a greater risk that an internationalised curriculum, sometimes imported, may not resonate with students' experiences, and teachers may struggle to relate the new learning with the students' prior learning which lecturers are unfamiliar with.

Contextualised learning content to increase its relevancy to students' culture and specific profile, while maintaining equivalence with other offerings of the same course, is a good practice in transnational education (Woodley, 2008; Ziguras, 2007). It relies on teachers teaching offshore to contextualise meaningful learning materials to the learner. As according to Ziguras (2000, p.33):

“Face-to-face teachers are able to introduce a significant degree of local interpretation for imported education materials. Being in close contact with students, they are in a position to know how much local contextualisation these materials may require, and can achieve a balance in the use of various types of material according to students' level, interests, language skills, and so on”.

While Ziguras says this can happen, in practice it is not necessarily the case. In this thesis, all three foreign teacher participants at Foreign University mentioned challenges in contextualising learning content. Some challenges involved finding suitable local examples to contextualise their course materials. Noteworthy, the issue was only raised by Foreign teachers at Foreign University and not by Vietnamese teachers in either university. This is not a surprising finding given Vietnamese teachers would be able to
contextualise materials using local examples more easily than Foreign teachers. However, the challenge in contextualising learning content at Foreign University needs to be further investigated as it relies on teachers teaching offshore, including foreign teachers, to contextualise meaningful learning materials for the learner.

This section responds to research question about how students and teachers experience the implementation of SCL through an investigation of the challenges in the contextualising of learning content to students in this context. It begins with insights found from students' interviews regarding how students are engaged with learning content that is related to real-life local examples. The discussion then moves on to discuss teachers' viewpoints and experiences in using real-life local examples to facilitate students' learning, as well as the challenges involved in contextualisation of the learning content.

Insights from student interviews indicate that students are more intellectually engaged with learning content that is related to their local context. The students found local examples to be more relevant to them than examples derived from Western sourced textbooks. The following example of a student reflected a common experience shared by many of the student participants about the need for local real-life examples. He said:

If I were a teacher in that subject, I don’t want to talk more about the knowledge that already have [the knowledge contained] in the textbook because the students can read [the book] at home and in class. I want to give them a realistic situation in Vietnam and some important things. I mean something that I have to have [as] a Vietnamese citizen. I have to know. I want to share the story about that field and topics, about maybe the economic situation, the current economic situation in Vietnam, what the problem is, what advantages and disadvantages.

The student's statement above shows that he found learning through local real-life examples effective. His active learning is in line with the constructivism model which focuses on how learners learn by constructing their own knowledge through active learning methods (Cruickshank et al., 2012). In this case, local real-life examples allow him to learn actively rather than just reading from textbooks. The finding also implies that if the university overemphasises teaching with textbooks with limited integration
of local examples to contextualise the teaching content, students are more likely to apply a passive learning approach since they don't have much chance to actively discuss something based on real-life local situations that they can relate to.

From the total of eight academic classes of both universities that I observed, there was one class that employed current, real-life local situations that students can relate to and really care about, as well as being able to see how the knowledge can be applied to real-life situations. It is a loud classroom in a positive way since most students actively engage with the learning activities. This is important as discussed in chapters two and three, as it is quite challenging to get CHC students, including Vietnamese students, to engage in classroom discussions. Factors that are believed to influence the 'keeping quiet behaviours' include cultural aspects such as face saving and respect for teachers. There are also other non-cultural issues such as shyness and lack of motivation or interest in engaging in discussions. Thus, to get students to think out loud is already a challenge, let alone getting them involved in academic discussions.

The class that I mentioned above was about conflict management run by a Vietnamese teacher at Local University. The teacher used many real-life examples. The topics ranged from a day to day basis such as conflict at home with their parents, group work issues, academic issues to a transnational level such as conflict between Vietnam and China and the approach that Thailand, a neighbouring country of Vietnam, used to deal with conflict during the European expansion into Southeast Asia. For the general topics, such as conflict at home and group work, many students participated in the discussion since everyone had experienced it and had something to talk about. One student said that she found learning from a real life situation helped her to understand the theory. She said, “I think when the teacher gave us the real situation, it helps us to remember more than the fictional situation because I heard about it before and when the teacher teaches us about the theory I can understand more in the real situation and anything like that because when it's in your life we can perceive it more than in the book”. From what the student has said, a real life example helped them to learn from understanding not just remembering the theory. This student's statement is in line with Dewey's naturalistic and constructivist approach where “the student finds meaning through the interplay between experience and theory” (Naude et al., 2014, p.220).
The topic relating to the conflict between Vietnam and China, which had erupted just one and a half weeks before the class, received a lot of engagement from students in the same class, in a discussion about the conflict. Even though this topic and the questions that the teacher asked required a degree of critical thinking, many students still enthusiastically joined in the discussion of this topic more than with other topics. In the interview conducted after the class observation, I asked students whether there were any factors or activities that made them engage in learning, all of them referred to the topic about Vietnam and China. To illustrate, a student pointed out:

In today class, we have the activities to think about the Vietnam and China conflict so I have to discuss with my team mate about the conflict resource, emotional conflict and the conflict outcomes. I think the activity that she gave us is so helpful and assist me a lot to analyse the situation, to understand more about the conflict perception.

Likewise, another student stated that discussing the real-life local examples that she cares about assisting her to be a more active learner.

She [a teacher] showed the thing that we care which is Vietnam and China. That's what we care so that we can be active learner. I think that's it because if she can give us more about things that make us feel excited about so that is could be easier for us to be active learner”.

From the students' answers, it can be clearly seen that students learn actively when they discuss something based on current, real-life local situations that they can relate to and really care about, as well as if they can see how the knowledge can be applied to real-life situations. The finding above also indicates that the Vietnamese teacher has done this on a regular basis. Due to the fact that the teacher is Vietnamese, she can incorporate current, real-life local situations to suit the learning topics and students' interest more easily than foreign teachers. As found at Foreign University, all three foreign teachers mentioned that they faced challenges in contextualising learning materials.

An Australian teacher has been teaching at Foreign University for almost six years and
living in Vietnam for 10 years. Despite, being in Vietnam for a long time and possessing a good understanding of Vietnamese people and students, he sometimes faced difficulty in finding materials that suited students' learning needs. He said:

It takes a long time to put all together the slides and if you're going to use videos in class and you want them to have sort of either Vietnamese or an Asian flavour as opposed to all the other videos. It's hard to find. I'm going to have to do it when I start two more courses soon. So, that will be interesting but, yeah, it takes a long time but it is very important.

With the limitations in finding suitable case studies from Vietnam that suit the learning content, the Australian teacher once wrote a story to use for his class:

Yeah, I even wrote one once but it wasn't a case study, it was a story. That was the one where I set the exercise where I had the mother, the father. It was a family, four children and two parents and I made the story about a fishing family from Vietnam and the problems, because the subject is family business. We talk about how to pass on from one generation to the next.

His above examples were not generic examples that any foreign teachers would be able to find. Importantly, his usage of local examples were not just for him to talk about in brief but he must know the topic in-depth to be able to develop teaching materials and use them to discuss with students in class. He stated that because of his familiarity with Vietnamese people and culture, he was able to contextualise the materials and found local examples to use in his teaching, but he was not sure how other foreign teachers do it. He said:

I always wonder, I wonder how some teachers from another country who come to Vietnam, how do they do it? It must be difficult for them if you have no experience of Vietnam. I mean I'm sure you know the theory of your subject, whether your subject's advertising or PR or whatever. I'm sure you know that but I find it easier to use examples from Vietnam and I help the students understand that way. So, I don't know how somebody from outside, unless they're just teaching statistics or something. It must be harder
for them. Well, it would be really hard to do my style if you didn't know Vietnam because my style is about Vietnam.

From what he mentioned above, he implies that due to the fact that he has been in Vietnam for a long time, he knows a lot about Vietnam and he has an interest on Vietnamese current affairs. These factors enabled him to find local examples. He also cares about his students and spends his time contextualising learning materials even though it is not compulsory for him to do so. In practice, he said foreign teachers because of the challenges such as time constraints and a lack of familiarity with Vietnamese culture and current issues, “a lot of people just use the slides from [the home campus]”. His statements also indicate that Foreign University did not provide full support for teachers wanting to contextualise teaching material imported from the home campus. This is a drawback since the university should invest in the contextualisation of learning materials by allocating time for their teachers to carry out their tasks because the benefit would go to students who need support to learn well under the constructivism model. Furthermore, there would be not many foreign teachers who have the same qualities as the Australian teacher who could contribute in contextualisation in the way he did.

Another experienced foreign teacher has been teaching at Foreign University for almost seven years. She pointed out that one of the aspects of her teaching that motivated her students to participate in SCL and activities was about emphasising the connection between what they learn in the classroom and real world practice outside. She said “we link it to the real world, we are telling them this is what actually happened in companies, so what you are learning is not just theory, it is actually something practical, it is used”. She stated that the most challenging aspect of implementing SCL to her students is finding local case studies that were relevant to students' learning needs. She stated:

Finding a case study that is relevant to students, you know, that will first of all may keep their interest. Alright, it is a company that is contextualist to Vietnam, they can see why it is applied to them. They don't feel like that they are learning something from [country of the home campus] while it is not relevant to them. So, finding the right company, finding the right
situation. There is a lot of research. You know, finding, reading, always keeping up with news, what is the latest marketing things going on, how does it affect. So, all of that, which is, and of course, you can have a great article but you have to somehow link it to what you are doing in the class. So that to me, this the most challenging part. It is a research that goes behind the scene.

Her point about linking a great local article with in-class activities indicates that it is important to design some activities, lessons and materials out of it, not just use it as found. The issue of the time consumed in the contextualising of the learning content is consistent with findings from the Australian teacher discussed earlier.

Apart from foreign teachers who have been teaching for a long time, a British teacher, who has been teaching at Foreign University for about a year, also described his approach in demonstrating the practical application of knowledge in real life contexts to students in order to engage them in deep learning.

I try to engage them in the subject, to engage them in the field that they are studying in a way that they want to be actively involved in the class. I try to engage them, this is the subject that actually has many practical applications that apply to you in everyday life, not just as a student but marketing as a consumer, as a person in a society.

In accordance with what two other teachers described as the challenges in implementing SCL and finding relevant local examples for students, the British teacher described how one of his biggest challenges was about having a lot of examples from the Vietnamese context that related to students' own experience in order for them to learn the subject in depth. He explained:

From my experience in class, some of it comes specifically from a product area that I teach, product innovative management. One of the biggest challenges, actually, is having a big enough sort of bank of experience and examples in the Vietnamese context to relate some of that to students. So, if you say that, if you define student centred learning as in some way about the student's having a deep understanding of the learning objective, a desire
to go away and learn the subject in depth and then be able to come back and apply that in certain circumstances may be a challenge, can we give them enough relevant experience of something to really be able to grasp it and come back.

The challenge mentioned above the need to have a large bank of experience and examples in the Vietnamese context indicate that teachers need support from the university in developing a repository for local case studies and examples which are necessarily to facilitate teachers in contextualising the course content. Another important implication to be emphasised is that individual effort in contextualising the course content might not be sufficient and effective.

7.5 Harnessing collectivism for active learning: Co-opetition

Unexpectedly, this study found a hybrid approach, 'co-opetition', that has not been previously documented in cross-cultural teaching literature. The way co-opetition is used in the classroom is described as “collaboration within the group and competition between groups” (Yu, 2008, p.8). In Vietnam, no research on co-opetition in education has been found. In this study, this approach has been found to make learning culturally appropriate as well as catering to students’ interest.

I used the concept of co-opetition to analyse what is going on in a class of a Vietnamese teacher at Local University which required students to collaborate within their group and compete with the other groups. This section responds to research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) experience the implementation of SCL. This has been achieved through an investigation what is going on in the class of a Vietnamese teacher at Local University which was found to be using co-opetition. This hybrid approach helps in solving a problem where students would not likely be motivated to participate in a class activity that required individual students to compete against their peers for individual gain because it could cause their peers to lose face in front of others. Competition between groups, on the other hand, worked well in this context as it was found to strengthen the cooperation of group members toward a collective goal rather than individual gain.

In examining the use of co-opetition in strengthening learning interaction between peers and how it could make learning culturally appropriate and cater to students' interests,
this section discusses the benefits and drawbacks of the cooperation and competition approaches. This is followed by how those approaches can be combined together in a way that enhances the benefits while minimising the drawbacks of each approach. Finally, the implementation of co-opetition in a classroom is analysed.

Historically, the concept of co-opetition is not new. The term was first coined in the early twenty-first century to describe the concept of combining cooperative and competitive efforts (Bengtsson et al., 2010; Charlebois, 2008). The concept has been implemented in the business world for the result of strategic success where competing firms allow cooperation in some areas of the business in order to achieve better results (Charlebois & Massow, 2013). Charles (2005, p.99) describes benefits of co-opetition as follows:

Co-opetition combines the benefits of cooperation and competition, while minimising their drawbacks. Because students join cooperatively to compete as groups, not as individuals, most students engaged in co-opetition gain; high motivation and enjoyment, quantity and divergence of ideas, responsibility for self within group goals, efficient work production, better overall quality of work products and strong likelihood of synergy.

Cooperation and competition are different in terms of pros and cons and are mostly used in isolation to serve their specific purposes. In Asia, cooperative learning is compatible with the collectivist nature of Confucian values, such as respecting group harmony. By contrast, competitive approaches, which place the focus on individual gain, were found to create confrontation (Johnson, 1994; Johnson et al., 1991). According to Mai et al (2012) Vietnamese students are familiar with the type of learning that requires cooperation between peers as it is highly related to their collectivist society. Hofstede (2016) describes the collectivistic society as “people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty”. The way Vietnamese students learn together is consistent with collectivist values such as respect for group harmony and conflict avoidance between group members (Mai et al, 2012).

The values of co-opetitation have not been as well known as those of collectivism. Findings of this study indicate that the way students interacted with each other is still
heavily influenced by the collectivist values which simultaneously pose benefits and drawbacks on student interaction and cooperation. In terms of benefits, a Vietnamese teacher at Local University who has experienced teaching in the US stated that his students favoured group learning based on close relationships between friends. He gave an example of how his students contributed spontaneously to the group work meeting. He said:

They [students] love to participate in a group, they will sit out at the hallway, downstairs and anywhere they can find and I am amazed with that because that's different from the US. Because US is normally email or you just meet when ever you have the opportunity. Here, they would travel if it's rain or shine, whatever the weather out there, they would still, if they have a deadline or meeting that they already have for the day, they will go all the way out just to be there. So, I am pretty impressed with the kids here about the group meeting.

A collectivist value has its own merit in helping students to learn and support each other spontaneously. Nonetheless, it has some drawbacks. In this context, some drawbacks were found such as their tendency not to stand out and their 'keeping quiet behaviour' for the sake of group harmony. For example, Vietnamese teacher at Local University described students' hesitation to state an opposing opinion to their peers. She stated that, “within their own group, they don't force each other, they kind of agree with each other.” This hesitation in sharing ideas and their tendency not to stand out for the sake of group harmony not only limits their chances of learning but also limits the chances of others to learn from them. Naturally, this issue would be problematic in a student-centred learning classroom where active involvement from students is required in order for them to learn from each other.

In a similar vein to the teacher, two students at Foreign University also indicated that their collectivist values influenced the way they interacted with other students, especially their tendency of not wanting to be distinctive in order to maintain group harmony. In interviewing them, and observing their class, I found the two students to be active learners. In the observed class, these two students were noticeably very active in learning, they were the ones who frequently answered questions and asked questions to
their teacher. However, in a focus group interview conducted right after the observed class, they mentioned that they did not feel right to behave differently from other students by frequently answering and asking questions to their teacher. One of the students raised a cultural based behaviour which is about a reluctance to stand out from the crowd.

If, in a lecture, the lecturer asked me questions, I answered or I volunteered to answer first and after two or three questions, and just me answered the question and the other students just kept silent. I mean I will feel like I want to show off or something like that. Yeah so I don’t answer your [the teacher's] question any more.

The other student added “it’s mostly because of the pack mentality like how everyone doesn’t want to do anything and you don’t want to stand out”. He further explained:

The pack mentality of Vietnam people is so strong even when you want to do something but other don’t, you pretty much cannot stay out of this, you just have to like ok, I don’t want to talk because nobody’s talking, if I talk, I am gonna break this and it just not feel right.

In this context, pack mentality is a situation where students are influenced by their peers to adopt certain behaviours on a largely emotional, rather than rational, basis. When individual are affected by pack mentality, they may make different decisions than they would have individually (Suroweicki, 2004). According to the two students, their learning behaviours were influenced a lot by their peers. Their hesitation in sharing ideas and their tendency not to stand out for the sake of group harmony not only limits their chances of learning but also limits the chances of others to learn from them. Naturally, this issue would be problematic in a student-centred learning classroom where active involvement from students is required in order for them to learn from each other. Furthermore, this finding indicates that students would not be likely to be motivated to participate in a class activity that required individual students to compete against their peers for an individual gain which, in turn, could cause their peers to lose face in front of others.

A class at Local University used the co-petition approach. Observing this class enabled me to see that the approach not only engaged students in learning but also made their
learning culturally appropriate and catered to their interests. The class that I observed was concerned with the topic of Financial Statement Analysis where groups of students were required to present their analysis of case studies to the class for peer feedback. Before class, the presentation groups were required to email their case study to other groups. This way, all students could read and understand the general background of the case study before listening to the presentation. The interesting part was the Q&A activity conducted after each presentation where other groups were required to ask questions to the presenting group. Each group had ten minutes to find answers. The teacher reminded the group that if they could not answer the questions their marks will be deducted and other groups who could answer them would receive extra marks instead. This type of competition between groups to gain extra marks for the correct answers made this competition more real and challenging for them. Finally, the teacher asked students to give feedback to the presenting group.

During the Q&A session, students interacted very well with their own group. Each member of a group cooperated actively to find the answers. Furthermore, the success of competition between groups in this case is not for individual gain but for group benefit. This sits well with the collectivist society in that it will “place a higher concern for others and the placement of emphasis on the success of the group over one’s own success” (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Combining these two approaches helps enhance the benefits while minimising the drawbacks of the approaches as well as making learning culturally appropriate and catering to students’ interest.

What was found to enable the teacher to come up with the hybrid approach was a combination of many important factors. Firstly, the teacher was well aware of cultural sensitivities that affect the way Vietnamese students learn. Secondly, she has a strong will to improve her implementation of SCL. For example, she mentioned some difficulties in getting students to engage in active learning. With her attempts to improve her facilitation of the approach to her students, she made a special effort to improve her teaching by being critically reflective of her own teaching practice. She also observed colleagues' classes to learn what works well. She reflected on her experience “I have been a lecturer for nearly three years and the first time, I got [a] problem. It is hard for me to connect with my students and I tried all information that's relevant to the lecture but I had a chance to observe in some classes and I got some
knowledge and I imitated some good point to adapt to my class, my students”. In addition, she also self-studied to find new and interesting teaching tactics to use in her class and conducted research on in-class learning interaction. Thirdly, she did not only follow the international best practice employed at Local University but also looked for new ways to implement SCL to better suit Vietnamese students in this context. In another words, she endeavoured to push the boundaries.

Up to this point, findings show a positive result that there is a teacher who has understood very well their students' attraction to group engagement and has harnessed it to motivate and energise them in active learning tasks.

7.6 Affective dimension of SCL

As discussed in chapter two, SCL consists of cognitive, social and affective dimension (Cruickshank et al., 2012, IOWA, 2012; Naude et al., 2014). Among these three, the affective dimension is often overlooked (Greene, Kim & Korthagan, 2013, Reeves, 2006; Sperber, 2005). There are studies raising concerns that the affective dimension has gradually disappeared from the teaching and learning domain (Greene et al., 2013). Intrator and Kunzman (2006) pointed out that many teachers become out of touch with their students' emotional learning needs because they lack the compassion to teach students with empathic understanding.

This study found the quality of the affective engagement between students and teachers developed based on empathic understanding, caring for students, and student empowerment bringing a climate of joy and passion to SCL classrooms. In this section, findings about the affective dimension will be examined to see how it has impacted teachers and students' experiences. This section responds to the research questions about (2) how teachers and (3) students experience the implementation of SCL through an examination of how affective dimension impacted teachers' and students' experiences in this context.

7.6.1 Empathic understanding

Empathy is a crucial aspect of the affective dimension of education which is one of the components of SCL where the teacher creates a learning environment based on emotional values such as empathy, trust and respect (Avis et al., 2010). Empathy is an
integral part of interpersonal intelligence which is described as the “capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people” (Gardner, 2003 cited in Hunter, 2016). In this study, three out of the eight teacher participants shared similar qualities as above including creating a learning environment based on emotional values such as empathy, trust and respect and having an empathic understanding of Vietnamese students who come from a teacher-centred learning environment. Their empathic understanding helps them acknowledge the varied needs of students coming from different backgrounds and leads them toward being more understanding rather than judgmental towards students' learning behaviours.

An example of an empathic teacher was a Vietnamese teacher (1), who has been teaching at Local University for one year and at another local Vietnamese university for three years, and described his preferred relationship with his students as “I would like to be an advisor, a mentor to students, not just an instructor”. His statement indicates that he takes the SCL approach rather than a teacher-centred approach. I interviewed him and I found that he not only enhances students' learning through mentorship but also through his empathic understanding of students.

The Vietnamese teacher (1) explained that he understands his students' learning backgrounds which made him sympathetic to them. He said:

I had experienced that time as a student so I know and I sympathise with them. I understand what they experience so I try to let them know that when they move to university level, they have to change their style of study, not just listen and write down what the teacher say but they have to think and they have to contribute to the lecture by giving their ideas, by discussing with their friends and anything they can think that it's good for them.

The key point here is that the Vietnamese teacher (1) identifies closely with the subjective experience of his students and feels close to them. What might this be? The fact that he is Vietnamese and he still remembers what it felt like to learn in High School and could imagine what students need to go through in adapting to SCL.

Another Vietnamese teacher (2) at Local University had taught in the United States for eight years and at Local University for two years. He explained that he did not need to adjust much to the SCL approach because he is used to it. However, he has learnt to
adapt to his Vietnamese students' learning culture. He pointed out a behaviour of students that required him to initiate relationships with them. He said, “Vietnamese students are shy to speak out even when they have the knowledge to answer the questions. He said, “I know the culture in Vietnam. They are by nature they are shy, but once you open up to them, when they open up to you, they would share a lot of knowledge with you.” His remark shows that by understanding students and developing quality relationships with them, the teacher helps students construct knowledge from what they already know.

It is not only Vietnamese teachers who expressed empathy with students. A foreign teacher, who has been teaching at Foreign University for almost 6 years and living in Vietnam for 10 years, developed an understanding of Vietnamese people and students during that time. During the interview, he raised many interesting points that demonstrated his understanding of his students. For example, he answered a question regarding how he expects first year students to learn. He said:

> Sometimes, I guess I put myself in their shoes because although probably was a long time ago, it doesn't feel like a long time ago that I was in first semester but yeah, I guess I try and be a guide I think, you know, more than anything. Yes, I am their teacher but I want them to be able to do their best and I don't want them to make silly mistakes so I try to help them in that respect.

From his viewpoint, Vietnamese students are different to students from other countries and, as a result, urged foreign teachers to pay attention to cultural awareness. He said:

> I would say try and learn as much about the culture as you can. I would say be aware that, as I said, 22 year old Vietnamese are not the same as 22 year old Singaporeans or even 22 year old Thai even, you know, even though a similar area, it's not the same. Different culture with different experience. So be aware of that because I see a lot of new teachers come in and just start teaching as if they're [the university's home country] students. You know, they're not.

From the above statement, it can be seen that he was aware of the cultural differences. For him, the differences between students are not to be blamed and stereotyped but,
rather, seen as an opportunity for teachers to learn from the differences. His piece of advice to new teachers is consistent with one of the intercultural principles recommending the idea of 'assuming responsibility' by developing an ethical stance. This recognises that we and others have identities which are linguistically and culturally variable and this implies a responsibility to respect and seek to develop sensitivity towards multiple perspectives and needs. Clearly, the teacher's statement indicates to new teachers, especially those from a Western teaching background, to seek to develop sensitivity towards multiple perspectives and needs.

7.6.2 Caring for students

Caring for students is regarded as a humanistic value which is one of the dimensions of SCL (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). In general, “if you care about something, you feel that it is important and are concerned about it” (Collins Dictionary, 2019). In particular, caring behaviour includes listening to gain students' trust, engaging students in dialogue and acquiring knowledge about students' needs (Noddings, 2005). While the concept of care and caring behaviour are easily accepted and practiced by school teachers as they see the need to care for school students who are still dependent on them, the caring behaviour in higher education has received less attention by university lecturers. Given the general expectation for university students to be independent and have adult-adult relationships with their teachers, there has been a debate among educators over whether university teachers have an obligation to display caring behaviour. Some teachers even regard it as “unnecessary” and even “harmful” as “they did not want to coddle students, and that students should study independently without extra care from staff” (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014, p. 377).

I found three teacher participants who really care for their students. I selected the teachers based on their caring behaviour observed in class and the insights that emerged from the interviews with them and their students. Other teacher participants are likely to care for their students, however, there are no clear observable caring behaviours from them that I can draw on for an in depth analysis.

Interestingly, the three teachers are the same teachers who developed an empathic understanding of students as presented in section 7.6.1. In this section I will present insights from these three teachers on what caring behaviours they exhibited and why.
also learned from students how caring behaviour helped them engage in learning.

Noddings (2005, p.3) pointed out that caring teachers listen to individual students, as what 'John' needs may differ greatly from what 'Ann' needs, thus “caring teachers listen to John and Ann and help them to acquire the knowledge and attitudes needed to achieve their goals, not those of a pre-established curriculum”. The Vietnamese teacher (1) at Local University shared the same caring behaviour as what Noddings mentioned above. He pointed out that he was interested in knowing his students as individuals in order to help them learn more effectively. He said:

We need to figure out reason of each student because now the student is centred and we need to know each of individuals if they have any obstacles or not and what reason makes them silent in class.

As can be seen, he understands that the better he knows his students the better he can tailor the learning experience to the students' needs. In this case, even though the teacher is Vietnamese and already has a good understanding of his student's learning background, he still seeks to understand his students as individuals. In his class that I observed, I saw a good rapport between him and his students. He exhibited his caring through the way he praised students. For example, when he asked each group of students to choose a world leader to discuss, he praised students on their choices. He said, “some leaders I don't know. That means you know more than me”. He also praised students when they came up with similar answers to his prepared Powerpoint slides. He said, “similar to what you found, you should be proud of yourselves”. Finally, when he gave students five minutes to identify what leadership competencies are, and students were able to suggest many of them, he said to them that he had already anticipated that the students would be able to give him a lot of answers within five minutes. As discussed in chapter five, the adoption of the passive learning approach among Vietnamese students is situational rather than preference. Thus, when the teacher creates a supportive learning environment, and makes it clear to students that their efforts and contributions are seen and valued, they are more likely to be more active in their learning.

After the observation I interviewed three students from his class. The teacher's empathy with students' learning difficulties and his understanding of students' need for emotional
support was valued by his students. In a focus group interview with two of his students, they described the teacher using words such as; caring, nice and enthusiasm. When asked what motivated them to come to class, both students mentioned that the teacher's caring personality made coming to class attractive to them. Interestingly, the caring behaviours led to the student's behavioural engagement as a student indicated:

This subject is not really attract me but the way of the teacher teaches us. He's really care for the students. He creates a comfortable environment for us to learn.

Another student said she likes to come to class, because she appreciates the teacher's caring behaviour. She said:

The teacher created a comfortable atmosphere for students to come to class and we feel that we come here to get the knowledge and take back the knowledge from activities so we can improve our skills and ourselves.

What the student said above about coming to class to learn from activities indicates that she likes being intellectually engaged in the learning process thanks to the teacher. Finally, the words “improve ourselves” indicated that the teacher also helped the student improve herself as a person.

Two students mentioned that the Vietnamese teacher (1) also cared about the students' personal lives. A student noted that the teacher also paid attention to students' stress levels. The student gave an example where he once saw the teacher give a bottle of water to a student who appeared to become stressed over studying and the teacher emphatically told the student not to study too hard. This is also consistent with Noddings (2005) who points out that caring teachers can help students develop their morality such as caring attitude toward others by showing students “how to care, engage them in a dialogue about moral life, supervise their practice in caring, and confirm them in developing their best selves”. From this point, I found the affective dimension of SCL shares a common attribute with Confucianism. As discussed in chapter three, Confucianism focuses on cultivating both morality and intellectualty in order to develop students as a full person. Teachers are not only teaching but they are to care for their students as individuals. In some cases their genuine caring extends beyond academic aspects in the confines of the classroom to their students' life and well-being.
Another Vietnamese teacher (2) at Local University emphasised the importance of showing a feeling of care to his students as it made them open up to him and enabled him to understand and respond to their needs. He said “mainly you have to show a lot of care with them if they understood what you are saying to them, they would participate more, they will love to”. His approach in showing a lot of care to his students is consistent with Noddings (2005) who points out that it is not enough to hear the teacher's claim to care, the teachers need to exhibit certain observable caring behaviours to their students so they can recognise that they are cared for.

In order to interact with students, the Vietnamese teacher (2) adapted to his students as he explained, “I will go down to their level of understanding, so I would go from there to interact with them”. Especially in implementation of SCL, he said, “You have to go down to their level because they think that you are forcing them when you are implementing something”. His statement about the ways of interacting with students by 'going down to their level' is not about lowering teaching and learning standards but being mindful and flexible in interacting and communicating with students. This approach is more likely to help the teacher find out what difficulties or misunderstandings students have when adapting to SCL.

The Vietnamese teacher (2) pointed out another method he used to interact with his students which he believed helped them learn better. He said:

...the more you get to know them on the personal basis, the more they open up. And the more they open up, the better for them. They would learn a lot better. They participate much more and their understanding of the course, of the subject, the material. It is valuable because if you get to know them, they will open up quickly.”

What the Vietnamese teacher (2) said above is in line with Noddings (2005, p.4) who identifies that “as we listen to our students, we gain their trust and, in an on-going relation of care and trust, it is more likely that students will accept what we try to teach. They will not see our efforts as 'interference' but, rather, as cooperative work proceeding from the integrity of the relation.” Therefore, the Vietnamese teacher (2)'s caring and his approach is more likely to encourage students to engage in learning including in SCL.

The Vietnamese teacher (2) also encourages his students through compliments. He
expressed the reason:

...just tell them you do one good job, just keep it up, continue with it, that's all they want to hear. They want to hear the little thing because I know in Vietnam, they don't get those kinds of encouragement from a lot of educators.

I find his way of showing a sense of care to his students is similar to the Vietnamese teacher (1). Both of them encouraged their students through compliments; using praise is a powerful tool to boost students confidence and it can demonstrate to students' that these teachers pay attention to their learning progress.

His class that I observed was mainly students' presentations and where the rest was his lecture. During his lecture, I could see that he had developed a very good relationship with his students. The relationship between him and students was informal. He constantly moved around the class, smiled and made eye contact with his students. From time to time, he used his personal experience as an example for the lesson. There were a lot of laughs and smiles between them during and outside class time. For example, during the break, several students gathered around him to talk about non-academic matters and also offered him a snack. These friendly interactions inside and outside class-time indicated the bond between them. This is consistent with Hagenauer and Volet (2014, p.374) who point out that the affective dimension, which describes the bond built between students and teachers, forms the basis for secure and affective positively experienced relationships.

Noddings (2005, p.3) noted that “the receptive teacher can see that his or her caring has been received by monitoring students' responses. Without an affirmative response from the cared-for, we cannot call an encounter or relation caring”. The Vietnamese teacher (2) observed his students' responses and learned from his students' feedback to him that “they love to sit around, listen to what you have to say, from your knowledge, your wisdom, they want to hear more”. His students' response to his approach indicate that they appreciate his caring behaviours.

It is not only Vietnamese teachers who care; a foreign teacher from Foreign University was also found to exhibit caring behaviours to his students. As noted in section 7.2.1, the teacher has been teaching Vietnamese students for almost 6 years. His long
experience teaching Vietnamese students could be one of the reasons that contributes to his caring attitudes and behaviours.

During our interview, he raised many interesting points that demonstrated his caring behaviours. He illustrated his understanding of Vietnamese students' classroom behaviour with regard to the implications of quietness that was related to the culture. He said, “I did notice that they were very quiet or more quiet than it would be in [Foreign University's home country] classroom but I think that the next thing I realised was that the quietness comes out from a sort of respect for the teacher”. Based on his understanding, he chose to adapt to his students. He explained that instead of putting pressure on students to speak up, he focused on having interactive and emotional engagement with them. He said, “So, what happened was I started to teach in a way that I thought will get them more interested and from them being more interested made me more interested”. He motivated and engaged his students using various techniques such as making the class fun, and turning a lesson into a competition. His approach is consistent with Noddings (2005, p.4) who remarked that:

we engage our students in dialogue, we learn about their needs, working habits, interests, and talents. We gain important ideas from them about how to build our lessons and plan for their individual progress. Finally, as we acquire knowledge about our students' needs and realize how much more than the standard curriculum is needed, we are inspired to increase our own competence.

His class that I observed was about theory review. Despite the heavy topic, he delivered the class in his lighthearted manner. From time to time, he made jokes that were related to the theories. His sense of humour helped generate further discussion related to the theories and it was well received by his students as they were engaged with the lesson with smiles and laughter. For example, in reviewing a productivity theory, he asked students in what situation they would learn better; if their teacher left the classroom to have a coffee and left them to learn by themselves, or when the teacher was around watching them. He demonstrated the latter scenario by walking outside the classroom and watching students from the glass door with a funny gesture. This demonstration gained the attention of the students. When the teacher returned to the classroom, they answered questions raised by him. After that the teacher generated a deeper discussion
on the topic. I learnt from the teacher that when it starts off with understanding and caring, the other positive emotions could follow. I saw from his class that he engaged and interacted with students, not just academically but emotionally, such as using humour and fun which creates a good learning atmosphere.

7.6.3 Student empowerment

Student empowerment is one of the crucial parts of SCL (Freire, 2002). Ideally, student empowerment aims to make students the experts and build their confidence. Butler (2017) comments that empowered students are in the driver's seat, they are the engineers who are driving and steering the train. I found some teacher participants empower students by giving them choices and let them take the lead and have some control in the learning process.

The foreign teacher who was found to be empathic and caring, was also found to empower students. First of all, he saw potential in students and helped them to realise it. One of his strategies was to lead students to find answers themselves in order to make them aware of their own potential. He said, “So, I try to take them there because I think they know a lot of it, just realising that they know it, that's the thing”. His way to help students realise that they know more than they think they know is more likely to empower students and help them develop self-respect and self-actualisation.

In his class that I observed, I found he empowered students by giving them choices and letting them choose a classroom rule rather than being told what to do. He provided an example of when he discussed with his students in a lighthearted manner on a mobile phone texting rule where he said that his students liked the idea. He illustrated:

I let them send text message. You know what I mean, many teachers say no phone but I change the rules. I say you can send a text message if you do it on the top of the table, just send the text message, send, that's it. I tell them that if you need to send the message to your mother saying this is the best teacher in the world and I love this class, you can send the message.

What makes me interested in his approach is not really about the tactics he used but, instead his attitude in giving students choices and letting them choose rather than being told what to do. Given that Vietnamese students are used to being told what to do by
their school teachers, they are likely to use the phone only when it is necessary as the teacher recommended. However, there is a difference between “I do what I'm told by the teacher” and “I choose to follow the teacher”. Although the outcome is the same, the reason is different. While the first is about doing something because the students have no choice, the latter empowers them. In this case, the benefit of student empowerment could have an overall impact on the teaching and learning experience since students are more likely to be less resistant to the teacher who empowered them and more accepting of the SCL approach the teacher is using.

A Vietnamese teacher (3) at Local University was also found to empower students by encouraging them to set up their own objectives and provide support where needed. She believes that this approach helps students study successfully in the student-centred approach. She explained:

I suggest them to set up their own objectives, why you need to go to the class, what are your objective, what do you want to become in the future and I think if they set up their own objectives and they choose the way to go there then the teachers help them to that objectives.

The strategy that the Vietnamese teacher (3) employed is consistent with the concept of student empowerment in that students are put in the driver's seat and pushed to think in ways that work for them and allows them to go through the process of problem-solving (Butler, 2017). The role of teachers is not to impose what has worked for the teachers but to empower students by helping them to build up their confidence and provide support where needed (Butler, 2017). As discussed in chapters five and six, some student participants have no clear goal of what they want to achieve or what they want to be in the future. By assisting them to find their purpose and set their goals the teacher would enable them to start thinking and planning to reach their destination.

The Vietnamese teacher (3) also gave students options to select a topic of presentation and assessment. She pointed out that, because some students lacked interest in learning, she needed to motivate them to study. She describes her approach as follows:

I just give them a lot of options, what you want, really want to do just tell me. Okay sometimes I ask them what they want to do. For example I ask them to deliver presentation but they said it’s boring, so I give more options
so that they can choose and sometimes we also encourage them to participate in service learning. It means that the program allows the students to go to the community to work.

The above approach of giving choices to students is student empowerment, especially by giving them the opportunity to do service learning and project-based learning. According to Haynes (2019) encouraging students to do service learning and project-based learning is the fastest way to empower them because it creates an environment where their effort will impact other people. Teachers can help students realise their power and potential, even while they are still students. Students can develop confidence and strong-efficacy to impact the world in positive ways.

A Vietnamese teacher (4) at Local University was another teacher whom I found enhanced student learning through empowerment. The teacher assigned students to be lecturers to prepare for lessons instead of her. She explained the reason behind the approach was that she noticed students seemed to be bored in their learning and faced difficulties in following the lessons. I asked how her students responded to the acting role as a teacher. She said that at first it was difficult for them but later on students made good progress. Her attempt is in line with what Butler (2017) points out that empowerment involves handing over the baton to students, and showing them how to lead.

I interviewed two of the Vietnamese teacher (4)'s students, both of them mentioned that they like the way the teachers at Local University give them freedom in learning what they like. For example, a student said “it [Local University] makes me feel free to do what I love.” Another student supported the first student's statement and said that:

The students feel free to do the project at the style the way they want and they feel free to show the idea and the lecturers just help and adjust the project that we did so when we do the project, we feel no pressure and I don't know what to say but if there is a single word that I can mention about [Local University] is “free”. You are free to do.

The students' statement above indicates that students like to have freedom and be empowered to do things. Less pressure means there would be less resistance to the SCL approach that the teacher is using.
7.7 Summary

This chapter reveals important findings about key features of the implementation of SCL at participating universities. Firstly, it responds to questions about how SCL is implemented at each of the participant universities. Firstly I found there are some similarities and some differences between the two universities. First of all, both universities publicised their use of SCL. Both of them stated challenges in implementation of SCL, such as teaching in large classes. While Foreign University employed educational technology in enhancing the implementation of SCL, Local University did not. For student assessment methods, both universities employed examinations and assessments to evaluate students' academic performance. For Foreign University, students are assessed through examinations and assignments, while the combination of these two types of assessments is commonly employed to evaluate student learning in many universities. I found a key insight from a British teacher where he identified that extra attention should be paid to the type of assessment used for students in this context since it can be used to motivate students to take an active approach. At Local University, which had an assessment policy designed to support SCL. There was an issue where teachers did not follow it due to their lack of interest. Nevertheless, another issue at local university, apart from teachers lack of interest in following the university's policies, could also be due to the unsettled nature of the SCL implementation policy and practices. This could be a demotivating factor in teacher readiness for the implementation of SCL.

For the question about how teachers and students experience the implementation of SCL, the chapter examined what appeared to work well and did not work well in the implementation of SCL. To begin with, teachers of both universities stated that the issue of student resistance to SCL is one of the most difficult things to deal with. They noticed student resistance from observations of class participation and negative student evaluations. Teachers expressed their frustration with those students who still relied heavily on their teachers to provide knowledge and blamed the teachers for not giving the answers to them. A factor that adds more frustration to teachers is when students, who do not understand the underpinning ideas of the SCL approach or their role as active learners, gave unconstructive feedback on the student survey. This issue caused negative effects on the teachers' teaching performance evaluations.
Teachers employed different methods to motivate students to adapt to SCL. Some methods were found to work well in this context. Firstly, contextualisation using real-life local examples helps students construct knowledge better than a textbook filled with examples from Western based context. However, all foreign teacher participants at Foreign University experienced some difficulty in finding local examples and need support from the university to help them with the contextualisation of the learning resources.

Secondly, co-opetition, which is the concept of combining cooperative and competitive efforts, is found to maximise student interaction. The findings about co-opetition are surprising given the concept has been found to help in solving a problem where students would not likely be motivated to participate in a class activity that required individual students to compete against their peers for an individual gain, because it could cause their peers to lose face in front of others. Combining these two approaches helps enhance the benefits while minimising the drawbacks of the approaches, as well as making learning culturally appropriate and catering to students’ interest.

Finally, findings in this chapter contribute to the affective dimension, an important but forgotten aspect of SCL. Insights from this chapter indicate that the quality of the affective engagement between students and teachers developed based on empathic understanding, caring, and student empowerment bring a climate of joy and passion to SCL classrooms. The findings suggest that some challenges in the cross-cultural classroom can be managed through attention to the affective quality of student-teacher relationships developed based on affective dimension.
Chapter Eight: Conclusions, implications and recommendations

8.1 Overview

This thesis began with the observation that the flow of Higher Education across borders and the adoption of international models made a significant impact on cross-cultural teaching and learning, in particular, the spread and adoption of student-centred learning across the globe. The popularity of SCL expanded further when the concept of globalisation of education and the knowledge economy became a centre of interest and SCL was seen as one means of integrating education systems with the global knowledge economy. It led to the idea of investing in education in order to maintain competitiveness on the global economic stage and generate economic growth. Subsequently, the traditional teaching model of teacher-centred learning as opposed to SCL has been considered by educational policy makers as less relevant for the changing world.

With the flow of Higher Education across borders and the adoption of SCL worldwide, there have been studies indicating that SCL has been adopted more easily in Western countries than Asian countries. SCL was found to be better suited with similar traditions of liberal democracy and relatively individualistic cultures than it does with Asian countries with CHC. Since there are issues of cultural disparity involved, implementation of SCL to CHC students is a challenging task. Studies have shown that both teachers and students deal with pressure and confusion in adapting to each other. Furthermore, there has been concern over the issue of teachers not truly understanding the offshore cultural context of the students they are teaching which could also escalate to the undesirable issue of colonialism in education.

This study found that in the Vietnamese context, there have been some concerns over the free market economy and the concept of globalisation of education on how they might affect Vietnam's distinctive values and culture. Some concerns, with regard to the cultural insensitivity of policy borrowing, argue that imitating a Western pedagogical style will not serve the country well since inappropriate ways of implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning. These
tensions are particularly acute in 'international programs' in Vietnam which are taught in English using overtly 'international' teaching methods.

Previous studies have investigated the implementation of SCL approaches in Vietnamese higher education after the reform. While many studies have shown obstacles slowing down the adoption of SCL in Vietnamese universities, there is little concern about what hampers or supports the implementation of SCL at international universities that are partnered with, or owned by, a foreign provider. Furthermore, most research done by transnational educational providers primarily focuses their research on quality assurance, regulation issues and cross-border mobility. This gap in literature indicated a need to investigate the implementation of SCL in international universities to find new insights and evidence to confirm and inform effective and appropriate practices in this cultural context.

Given the gap mentioned above, this thesis employed a case study approach to gain in-depth and detailed explorations of the implementation of SCL in the context of international higher education in Vietnam where these two educational cultures, SCL and CHC, interact. This study was conducted at two international universities in Vietnam, one a Western institution and the other a local private university. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how teachers and students of the international universities in Vietnam experience the implementation of SCL.

In this study, I have developed a conceptual framework based on mutual engagement approaches. Mutual engagement approaches go beyond the basics of cultural knowledge to acquire in-depth understanding that is applicable to a real life practice. This is because mutual engagement approaches are more than the acquisition of factual knowledge based on the presentation of cultural facts and dos and don'ts of cross-cultural interactions. It involves the process of observation, analysis and interaction where culture of knowing become reciprocal, developmental and ever-changing (Crichton & Scarino, 2007). The conceptual framework includes seven different approaches to cross-cultural pedagogy, and I used this framework as a lens to investigate the implementation strategies and experiences in international universities in Vietnam. I found which of these approaches is being used, and how these affect the experiences of participants.
Case study methodology was employed since it suits the aim, the research questions and the perceived shortcomings of other research methodologies in the study area. Furthermore, a case study approach was employed to gain in-depth and detailed explorations of the implementation of SCL in the context of international higher education in Vietnam where the two educational cultures, SCL and CHC interact. Case study methodology, in general, seeks “to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.61). Likewise, this study sought to understand the phenomenon of the implementation of SCL in considerable depth in a small number of sites, and understand the experience from various viewpoints. Case study methodology allowed me to examine the way the different aspects of the educational institution shape the experience of the implementation of SCL. This thesis followed the logic of triangulation by gathering data from different sources: (1) interviews conducted with teachers, students, teaching advisors and learning advisors, (2) focus group interviews with students, (3) observations of classes, learning workshops, teacher induction, student orientation, (4) reviewing of pedagogical approach and values of the universities, teaching and learning materials of the class observed, teaching materials and schedules for learning skills workshop, and student and teacher orientations. The data was collected from the faculty of business administration related courses of a bachelor degree at each of the two universities. From both universities, 51 participants were interviewed and 14 sessions observed.

8.2 Returning to the Research Questions

8.2.1 Question 1: How is SCL implemented in the classrooms of the universities involved in this study?

Both universities explicitly adhere to SCL principles although, the way they implement SCL is different. Foreign University is focused on active learning which is shown through the many pursuits they employ. From the first day, students experienced active learning through activities conducted in the student induction program. As discussed in chapter 6, Foreign University places emphasis on interactive activities rather than requesting students to sit and listen to information. This is indicative of an active learning style where students need to learn by interacting with others.
In terms of learning and teaching principles, as discussed in chapter 7, Foreign University places emphasis on the constructivist model which is one of the important aspects of SCL. Nonetheless, students came from teacher-centred learning backgrounds where they were mostly required to take knowledge from their teachers. In helping students adjust to constructivism, teachers needed to find strategies to assist them become more active learners. The contextualising of learning materials to suit students' learning needs is working successfully here as it allows students to construct knowledge from what they already know. The use of contextualisation, in this case, supports constructivism which is one of the important aspects of SCL. Other key features of SCL employed at Foreign University include practice-small classes, flexible management through ability to use technology and no compulsory attendance. I noted that there is a diversity of approaches, depending on the course design and teacher preference. It seems that Foreign University's implementation of SCL matches with Biggs' Level 3 which is based on the universality of the learning approach. Level 3 teaching is directed at helping students develop the necessary skills and cognitive processes to meet the learning objectives of the studies.

With regard to new student induction programs, I have learnt how SCL is implemented at the participating universities through an investigation of how Foreign University prepares new students for SCL approaches. In section 6.2.2, introduction to independent learning, I used Grow's Staged Self-Directed Learning (SSDL) model to analyse how teachers can actively equip students to become more self-directed. Using Grow's lens to analyse the Foreign University's independent learning workshop that I observed, it seems as though the university made it very clear that students are expected to be independent and active but that the detail of what that expectation might involve was lacking.

Observation of teacher inductions at Foreign University allowed me to see how the university's prepares new teachers to teach Vietnamese students with SCL approaches. The guidance provided to new teachers on teaching techniques including making eye contact, how to develop good rapport with students, how teachers should divide the class into groups/pairs and what is the right apportionment between the teacher's talking time and student interaction. In general, new teachers seemed to find these skills useful. However, as found in chapter five, in this context there have been issues about cultural
disparities that affect the way students learn and teachers teach, thus training new teachers on the teaching techniques seems to be the bare minimum.

SCL is new for Local University, which is still trying to improve its implementation. The university is an advocate of SCL and incorporates some aspects of SCL in its teaching and learning policies. Nonetheless, in practice, the university experiences difficulties in implementing SCL. As showed in chapter 6, there is more room for the university to improve on the current implementation of SCL and new teacher induction. The university planned to follow “best practice carried out in other universities.” As discussed in chapter 2, Biggs' Level 3 represents the universality of the learning approach. Level 3 teaching is directed at helping students develop the necessary skills and cognitive processes to meet the learning objectives of the studies. For Biggs, Level 3 represents a good teaching practice that can be employed in any country and cultural context. The fact that Local University sees the need to follow best practice as carried out in other universities suggests that they have recognised that there is a problem with the current approach they are undertaking. For example, some teachers misunderstood the concept of SCL and were unwillingness to adapt to SCL since it required them to spend more time developing teaching materials for SCL approaches in comparison to the requirements of the lecture style. While the issue was being identified, Local University was still uncertain about how to deal with the issue. Another example was where a lecturing style was being used in large classes of 100 students and Local University could not facilitate SCL. Again, Local University acknowledged the problem but not the solution.

What I found distinctive about Local University is that it employs SCL to improve students' academic skills but encourages them to nurture Confucian values, including collectivism. This method of combining both approaches in this manner provides a good balance between two different cultures. This attempt at combining the two different cultures could lead to a hybrid approach being developed.

8.2.2 Question 2: How do academics of the universities involved in this study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms?

Teachers of Foreign University face many challenges implementing SCL approaches. First of all, guiding students in their step up from the dependent to the independent
stage during their university life was the primary challenge in the implementation of SCL. This study found that students entered the universities whilst in the dependent stage, therefore needed support from their teachers to help them move towards greater autonomy. However, the real challenge is in how the university and teachers use an appropriate and effective strategy to help students move to the next level.

Surprisingly, some teachers reflected the dilemma in the implementation of SCL to students from a teacher-centred background and the difficulty in managing students' expectations. Teachers faced the challenge of teaching the way students wanted to be taught, or the way SCL theory tells them to. Teachers admitted that, with the pressure from students, they adapted their teaching style to match with students' expectations and preferences, despite knowing it is not student-centred. From the situation, we can see teachers were struggling pushing “a square peg into a round hole” and facing a choice of either adapting to an existing culture or imposing one's own on the students. Both approaches are ineffective because they are not beneficial for students' learning developments.

Foreign teachers at Foreign University who participated in this study faced challenges in finding a suitable local examples to contextualise their course materials. For example, the British teacher described how one of his biggest challenges was about having a lot of examples from the Vietnamese context that related to students' own experience in order for them to learn the subject in depth. The challenge indicated that teachers need support from the university in developing a repository for local case studies and examples which are necessary to facilitate teachers in contextualising the course content. Another important implication to be emphasised is that individual effort in contextualising the course content might not be sufficient and effective.

Teachers of Local University face some similar challenges as Foreign University teachers. Teachers reflected the dilemma in the implementation of SCL to students from a teacher-centred background and the difficulty in managing students' expectations. In addition, teachers also expressed their frustration with those students who still relied heavily on their teachers to provide knowledge and who blamed the teachers for not giving the answers to them. There is no issue about contextualisation found at Local University. This is not a surprising finding given Vietnamese teachers would be able to contextualise materials using local examples more easily than Foreign teachers.
For both universities, a factor that adds more frustration to teachers is when students, who do not understand the underpinning ideas of the SCL approach or their role as active learners, gave unconstructive feedback on the student survey. This issue caused negative effects on the teachers' teaching evaluations. With the dilemma in dealing with student resistance in such circumstances, some teachers responded to the issue by giving the students what they want.

8.2.3 Question 3: How do students of the universities involved in this study experience the implementation of SCL in their classrooms?

Using Grow's SSDL model to identify the self-directed stage of new students, I found they were in the dependent stage because, as reported in chapter five, they come from a teacher-centred learning environment, often have an extrinsic motivation to learn and do not often have clear goals for what they want to achieve. When they enter a university that employs SCL, they need to learn and adjust to many new things. In this case, in their first semester, they would still be at a dependent stage in the sense that they need the teacher to give direction and support them in learning new skills. Hence, this is not to label students from a teacher-centred environment as enduringly dependent since, in this case, their dependency is situational as they are adjusting to the new approach.

Students of both university shared similar insights that their positive emotions they had with their teachers led to improvements in their thought processes and learning behaviours. This finding agrees well with the broaden-and-build theory, Fredrickson (1998, 2001, cited in Naude et al., 2013, p.223) which suggested that “the experience of positive emotions is likely to broaden the thought processes and actions”. For example, the students wanted to show their appreciation and pay their respects to those caring and enthusiastic teachers by taking a more active role in learning. This evidence indicates that the students' thought processes and behaviours have been influenced by positive emotions that the students had with their teachers. Similarly, some students mentioned that they had become more motivated to attend classes and participate in learning activities because of the teachers' caring attitude.

In addition, insights from student interviews indicate that students are more intellectually engaged with learning content that is related to their local context. The students found local examples to be more relevant to them than examples derived from
Western sourced textbooks. The students learn actively when they discuss something based on current, real-life local situations that they can relate to and really care about, as well as if they can see how the knowledge can be applied to real-life situations.

8.3 Implications

This thesis found that the participating universities were committed to the SCL approaches. However, there was more room for them to develop intercultural construction that would enable them to strengthen their implementation of SCL and effectively deal with some issues stemming from cultural disparities. In another question, how academics and students experienced the implementation of SCL, this study found that there are some challenges stemming from cultural disparities that affect the way those academics and students experience SCL approaches.

So far in this thesis, we have seen that a key challenge in cross-cultural teaching and learning is the operational reality that large institutions achieve efficiencies by standardising teaching and other processes, and adopting practices that seemed to have been effective elsewhere. This is risky in culturally diverse setting, and it should not be taken for granted that the best practice in implementing SCL employed in one culture will work the same way in a different culture.

This study found evidence to support the mutual engagement approaches. I structured the findings based on what emerged out of my analysis. This study proposes four key features as an exemplary strategy to enhance the implementation of SCL in cross-cultural learning environments. They are; (1) Enhancing mutual engagement approaches, (2) Finding hidden opportunities in cultural disparities, (3) Reviving the affective dimension of SCL, (4) Engaging students in constructive learning through contextualisation of contents.

These findings not only complement those of earlier research but also contribute additional and insightful evidence that increase our understanding about the issues in cross-cultural learning environments and how to effectively handle them. It also sheds light on important but hidden areas such as intercultural construction, affective dimensions of SCL and contextualisation. In this study, a new hybrid approach that learning culturally appropriate content, as well as catering to students' interest, was also found. Each section will also provide some recommendations for practice and/or policy
which is helpful not only for participating universities but other transnational universities which seek intercultural understanding rather than imposing what has been done elsewhere on students of a different culture.

8.3.1 Enhancing intercultural construction

The participating universities need to clearly demonstrate their commitment to the intercultural construction approach to their teachers and students. This would be helpful in achieving certain ends because a clear stance will direct those groups of people toward the same understanding and goals. Specially, how intercultural construction is to be positioned and amalgamated into the SCL approach currently used by both universities. The universities need to clarify that intercultural construction is an excellent approach that can be employed to enhance the international practice in the cross-cultural teaching and learning context. Without clarification, teachers and students might not see any purpose in using it since they think they already committed to SCL approaches. According to McInerney (2005, p.4) there is a slight problem in following only the best practice conducted elsewhere since the “best” is context specific and often time limited. For example, while the fundamental principles of teaching and learning practice, such as SCL, have stood the test of time and are still applicable, “some specific instruction practices become outdated and less relevant or less applicable in certain contexts” (McInerney, 2005, p.4). This study is consistent with the above idea that, while following SCL principles, its implementation can be adapted according to intercultural understanding and practice.

The participating universities need to provide training to teachers that goes beyond the basics of cultural knowledge in order for them to acquire in-depth understanding that is applicable to their real life practice. This is because intercultural learning is more than the acquisition of factual knowledge based on the presentation of cultural facts and the dos and don'ts of cross-cultural interactions. It involves the process of observation, description, analysis, interpretation and explanation which leads to a deeper understanding of human communication, interaction and behaviour (Crichton & Scarino, 2007; Leask & Carroll, 2013). In the case of participating teachers, they have been informed about cultural facts such as the dos and don'ts of cross cultural interactions. That, however, is not enough to help them develop intercultural construction skills and an appropriate mindset. Hicks, Kohler & King (2005, p.24) put
forward that in order to help teachers adopt such an approach, “intercultural construction should be integrated into orientation and academics' work; that is, connected to their discipline and tailored to their needs rather than offered in a generic form”. This study agrees with the process above since, without the integration, teachers cannot truly improve their intercultural mindset and skills.

The findings above responded to research questions about (1) how SCL is implemented in the universities and (2) how academics experienced the implementation of SCL. The findings led to many significant implications. Firstly, a gap in enhancing intercultural construction at participating universities has been revealed. This finding is significant since it provided a better understanding of what hinders the development of intercultural construction in this context. Importantly, the study provided insight into what else universities can do to nurture the approach at their institutions. These findings affirm existing literature about the necessity for intercultural construction. The significant implication is that the universities need to ensure that their policy of the best practice covers intercultural construction. Otherwise, the universities would easily lose sight of their responsibility to provide teaching and learning that caters to students' specific needs. These findings are not only applicable to the participating universities but for other transnational universities that aim to provide the best practice in cross-cultural teaching and learning.

8.3.2 Finding hidden opportunities in cultural disparities

This study found there is more room for the participating universities to initiate a hybrid approach in their teaching and learning practice. To bridge the gap in cultural disparities, educators are encouraged to develop a 'third space' which is described as where hybrid and transformed practices from different cultures can be formed (Flessner, 2014; Pham, 2016). The benefit of hybrid practice includes opportunities for the transformation of conflicts and tensions in cultural disparities into rich zones of learning (Flessner, 2014). In the Vietnamese context, the possibility of developing a hybrid approach of West and East has also received attention as it has been recommended by some local educators as a way to put Vietnamese learning culture on an equal footing with Western-based SCL. This idea was formed over concerns that inappropriate ways in implementing SCL could overshadow the Vietnamese traditional way of teaching and learning (Pham, 2016). As discussed in chapter two, although there have been many
discussions about the benefits and the possibilities of developing a hybrid approach, there are not many studies which provide an actual model to be used in the Vietnamese classroom. Unexpectedly, this study found a hybrid approach, 'co-opetition', that has not been previously documented in cross-cultural teaching literature. Especially, in Vietnam, no research on co-opetition in education has been found. The way co-opetition is used in the classroom is described as “collaboration within the group and competition between groups” (Yu, 2008, p.8). In this study, this approach has been found to be culturally appropriate learning as well as catering to students' interest.

The concept of co-opetition was employed in a class of a Vietnamese teacher at Local University through an activity which required students to collaborate within their group and compete with the other groups for extra marks. This hybrid approach helps in solving a problem where students would not likely be motivated to participate in a class activity that required individual students to compete against their peers for an individual gain because it could cause their peers to lose face in front of others. Competition between groups, on the other hand, worked very well in this context as it was found to strengthen the cooperation of group members toward a collective goal rather than individual gain.

What was found to enable the teacher to come up with the hybrid approach was a combination of three factors. Firstly, the teacher was well aware of cultural sensitivities that affect the way Vietnamese students learn. Secondly, she has a strong will to improve her implementation of SCL. For example, she mentioned some difficulties in getting students to engage in active learning. With her attempts to improve her facilitation of the approach to her students, she went out of her way to improve her teaching by being critically reflective of her own teaching practice. She also observed colleagues' classes to learn what works well. In addition, she also self-studied to find new and interesting teaching tactics to use in her class and conducted research on in-class learning interaction. Thirdly, she not only followed the international best practice employed at Local University but also looked for new ways to implement SCL to better suit Vietnamese students in this context. In another words, she endeavoured to push the boundaries. Up to this point, it can be seen that the cultural disparities are not necessarily putting those people involved at a disadvantage since it could become a rich zone of learning. The results of this investigation show that effective implementation of
SCL is not about strictly applying theoretical-based teaching practice. Instead, the educators need to understand the context and work around how the theory can be applied in a way that helps students to be more active in learning without devaluing their culture or existing knowledge.

There was no specific model of hybrid approach found at Foreign University. However, an insight into the advantage of the hybrid learning approach for students was found. For example, an academic staff member raised a critical point by noting that instead of persuading students to adopt SCL by emphasising the advantages of SCL over their traditional learning culture, why not encourage students to see advantages in combining both ways of learning and how that could become their strength and bring out the best of both worlds for them.

Overall, there are few hybrid approaches found at the participating universities. The low number of hybrid approaches initiated at both universities could stem from the fact that the hybrid approach is only conceived and initiated at an individual level, not by the universities' initiative and involvement. The participating universities can be pioneers in this area by supporting a hybrid strategy and practice in their institutions. In order to increase the number of new hybrid approaches, the universities need to integrate the hybrid approach as part of their practice. If the universities do not make clear to their teachers that the hybrid approach is good practice then teachers might be hesitant to initiate new approaches themselves. Next, the universities need to establish a professional development program to equip teachers with the appropriate skills and mindset.

All in all, the findings above answered all research questions about how SCL is implemented in the universities and how academics and students experienced the implementation of SCL. Furthermore, this is the first study that has found a hybrid approach of co-opetition used in a cross-cultural context in Vietnam. This finding not only contributes to the body of knowledge by affirming the benefits of the hybrid approach but also provides a concrete model to follow.

The more universities that follow the hybrid approach, the more opportunities there are to initiate a hybrid practice to bridge the gap in cultural disparities. This study also urges other universities operating transnationally to incorporate the hybrid approach
into existing teaching and learning practice. As can be seen from this study, the hybrid approach not only offers a culturally appropriate way of dealing with issues in cross cultural teaching and learning but also allows students and teachers to develop an intercultural mindset and appropriate skills where cultural conflicts could turn into a rich zone of learning.

8.3.3 Reviving affective dimension of SCL

This study found the possibility of reviving the affective dimension of SCL through students and teachers relationships. One of the main aspects of SCL is humanisation or affective dimension which focuses on methods that motivate students to pursue their own interests in learning by creating learning environments based on empathy, trust and respect (Avid et al., 2010). Inevitably, teachers play an important role in nurturing an affective learning environment. Surprisingly, these days such an important role has become less important. This is because most instruction in higher education is focused on developing students' cognitive skills rather than bridging the gap between the inward and the outward dimensions of teaching and learning (Greene, Kim & Korthagan, 2013, Reeves, 2006; Sperber, 2005). There are studies raising concerns that affective education has gradually disappeared from the teaching and learning domain (Greene et al., 2013). This reduced focus on the affective aspect of education affects education as a whole. From the top down, it influences the way policy makers set up their curricula to focus merely on content, pedagogy and test scores rather than developing the inner strengths of teachers and students (Greene et al., 2013). It also influences the way universities develop professional programs for their teachers. For example, most universities focus on running professional development programs to help teachers improve teaching skills, techniques and theoretical knowledge rather than providing training in the affective aspects of education (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Intrator and Kunzman (2006) pointed out that many teachers become out of touch with their students' emotional learning needs and lack the compassion to teach students with empathic understanding. Obviously, the lack of attention to affective aspect of education is a drawback.

This thesis found new insights to affirm that the affective aspects of education cannot be overlooked. It is time to revive the affective dimension of education, especially through the quality of the affective relationship between students and teachers since it was found
to bring a climate of joy, passion, respect and caring back to the classroom. The findings serve as new evidence to support the fact that some challenges in the cross-cultural classroom can be simply managed through the quality of student-teacher relationships developed based on affective dimension.

In analysing the findings, I realised that the development of quality affective relationships between students and teachers is good practice across cultures since it is a universal approach that helps bring people together. The idea of enhancing the quality of the affective relationship between students and teachers fits well in this cross-cultural context where SCL meets Confucian heritage culture. It is because the concept fits nicely with both principles. Pedagogically, it is in line with SCL related approaches, such as humanist perspectives. All of these approaches aim to encourage educators to support students' emotional learning needs (Motschnig-Pitrik & Santos 2006; Reeves, 2006). Culturally, it is consistent with Confucian principles where teachers are encouraged to care for their students as well as being role models and moral guides (Kwang, 2004).

Ideally, any university would prefer to have teachers who are not just delivering the course content but are also able to develop quality affective relationships with students. However, as can be seen from the teacher participants, their practice was driven by their inner calling and genuine caring attitude. A question is raised on how a university can encourage their teachers to take such an approach since it requires teachers to develop inner qualities. According to Greene et al., (2013), the 'core reflection' is key in helping teachers to re-connect with their personal inner qualities such as compassion. One way of achieving this is by having a professional development program to re-connect teachers with their core qualities, their sense of purpose and their authenticity as an individual (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006; Korthagan, 2004; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). The core reflection requires teachers to reflect on their core qualities by exploring such questions as, “Why did you become a teacher? What do you see as your calling to the world?” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006, P.40). Essentially, the aim of this approach is “connecting human hearts and spirits with how we see ourselves and others in our daily practice as educators” (Greene et al., 2013, p.4). As can be seen, this kind of professional development program does not aim at enhancing teaching skills but to reenergise and revitalise teachers' inner selves so they could become more passionate
and compassionate in teaching students who may need extra care.

In reality, a professional development program is not prioritised on developing the personal growth of teachers. This is because most professional development programs focus on teaching skills, teaching theories and classroom management rather than developing the internal qualities of teachers (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Similarly, the participating universities are also focused on equipping their teachers with teaching skills and knowledge rather than development of their internal qualities. However, there are many studies pointing out that professional development workshops should also focus on the soul of the teaching, the passion, deliberation on what matters most in good teaching, and purposes that animate teachers' ongoing commitment to students and learning (Fakas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003; Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Significantly, according to Intrator and Kunzman (2006, p.42) “without laying the groundwork that creates purposeful, resilient teachers, any benefits of training centred around new procedures such as teaching techniques, and strategies will eventually fade”. Up to this point, it is clear that, it is not adequate to provide professional development programs that merely focus on teaching skills, teaching theories and classroom management.

Another important method that can help teachers develop inner qualities is by training them to develop their reflective skills. In general, reflective practice refers to

Learning through and from experience toward gaining new insights of self and/or practice. This often involves examination the assumptions of everyday practice. It also tends to involve the individual practitioner in being self-aware and in critical evaluation of their own responses to practice situations (Finlay, 2008, p.1).

According to Johns (2009) teachers in higher education should be capable of reflecting critically on and improve their teaching practice because, by doing that, they are more likely to attain a higher level of self-efficacy belief, thus becoming more capable of transforming the learners they teach. Up to this point, it can be seen that in order to reinforce the approach, it requires the universities to rethink their professional development programs to be in tune with the affective dimension of education.

So far, the findings above answered all research questions about (1) how SCL is
implemented at the universities and (2) how academics and (3) students experienced the implementation. Findings of this study add new insights into the affective dimension of SCL, an important area but one that is often overlooked. The main implication of this study is that the implementation of SCL can be enhanced through the quality of the affective relationships teachers have with their students. As can be seen, the approach helps connect teachers and students together, resulting in students' motivation to learn. This study, therefore, urges participating universities and other universities teaching in cross-cultural contexts to nurture the affective approach in their institutions in order to help teachers and students connect and develop meaningful relationships.

8.3.4 Engaging students in constructivist learning through contextualisation of content

This study found contextualisation of content is key to engaging students to learn well in constructivist learning. It also found what the participating universities need to do more to facilitate their teachers when taking such approach. This finding is significant since it helps students, who were once recipients of knowledge, to take the role of knowledge co-creator.

Students were found to be more engaged with learning content that is related to local examples. This is because local examples are more meaningful and authentic than derived from Western sourced textbooks filled with examples that are less relevant to them. Consistent with Taylor and Parsons (2011, p.12) “one common prerequisite for engaging learners is relevancy”. Today's learners ask that their learning apply to real-life scenarios whenever possible as opposed to being theoretical and text-based”.

From my observation, I found the classes that used local examples were able to engage students more than the class that used less of those since relevant local examples allowed students to discuss the learning topic in depth with their teacher and peers. This study, however, found that the practice of using local examples that match with lessons on a regular basis was not a simple task for Foreign teachers at Foreign University. The teachers mentioned some challenges involved in the process of finding local examples and the contextualisation of education materials. First of all, it is because they also need to make sure that the revised education materials meet with the equivalence and comparability framework of transnational education. For example, contextualised materials are to be suited to local factors, student profile and, at the same time, comply
with the onshore campus's predetermined standards, learning outcomes and internationalisation strategies. While in principle the university encouraged their teachers to contextualise content from imported materials received from its onshore campus, in practice it is run on a voluntary basis dependent upon teachers willingness to put their own time and effort into doing so. These findings indicate that Foreign universities can do more to strengthen the approach by incorporating contextualisation as a main practice. The university also needs to provide support for their teachers to develop a repository of local case studies and examples. Another important implication to be emphasised is that individual effort in contextualising the course content might not be sufficient. First of all, the collective effort would help reduce the time and effort that each individual has to put in to do it alone. Furthermore, there might be an issue about consistency as the materials contextualised by one teacher might not be applicable for other teachers to use when teaching the same course. As such, this study strongly believes that there should be a team of teachers in each faculty, working together to discuss how the local case studies and examples can be incorporated into existing learning materials in a way that meets the equivalence and comparability framework.

Thus far, teachers teaching offshore play a very important role in contextualising materials to enhance student learning. This is in line with Ziguras (2000, p.33) who addressed the important role of teachers teaching in an offshore campus that “Face-to-face teachers are able to introduce a significant degree of local interpretation for imported education materials. Being in close contact with students, they are in a position to know how much local contextualisation these materials may require, and can achieve a balance in the use of various types of material according to students' level, interest, language skills, and so on”. As such, what Foreign universities can do to further strengthen the approach is to incorporate contextualisation as a main practice, developing clear guidelines about the process and making sure that those teachers get the support they need. This is important as, in the end, the benefit goes to students as helping them with constructivist learning is one of the main principles of SCL.

In summary, the findings above answered all research questions about how SCL is implemented in the universities and students experienced the implementation of SCL. Significant findings indicate that contextualisation of content is the key to engaging students to learn well in constructivist learning. However, there is more room for
Foreign University to improve support given to their teachers in the contextualisation of content. The suggestions given for the support are not only helpful for Foreign University but also other transnational universities facing a similar challenge in bridging the gap between the theory and practice of contextualisation.

8.3 Strengths and limitations of the study

The main strength of this study is that I was able to collect data over a period of many months and was also able to revisit each university because I was residing in Vietnam at the time. This great opportunity enabled me to collect data as planned and allowed flexibility in scheduling interviews and observations to suit the potential participants. Furthermore, I had been living and working in Vietnam since 2009 which contributed to my understanding of Vietnamese culture and way of life. My experience teaching undergraduate Vietnamese students in an international university in Vietnam also assisted me to develop a deep understanding of their learning culture. This understanding helped me during the data interpretation process.

Another strength of this study was that it was well supported by the participating universities. The two universities were also very supportive of the aims of the research and the process of data collection. Their permission for my research to be conducted at their institutions demonstrates their willingness to contribute to the body of knowledge in cross cultural teaching and learning in Vietnam higher education, specifically with regard to SCL. Without their support it would not have been possible for me to collect data as planned.

This study did not set out to investigate a particular aspect of the implementation of SCL but to explore the challenges, what works well and does not work well in the implementation through the experience of teachers and students. This exploratory stance brought strengths to this study. First of all, since it investigates the phenomenon with an open mind to whatever the findings might be, this study found what hinders the development as well as the opportunities in enhancing those aspects at the participating universities. Without the exploratory nature, the holistic situation in the implementation of SCL is not likely to be found.

In terms of limitations, since this is a single person study with limited resources, it lacks
the opportunity to investigate the implementation of SCL in a broader context. For example, I was not be able to study a wider range of institutions or in different locations. Another obvious limitation is that I don't speak Vietnamese and some of what I might have observed at local university was not possible because of language barriers. Also students who were nearly all Vietnamese may have been more candid speaking with a compatriot rather than a foreigner.

### 8.4 Researcher's reflections

To conclude on a personal note, I started this PhD with both academic and personal interests in finding out what works successfully and what does not in the implementation of SCL to Vietnamese students. In terms of my academic interest, it dates back to the time when I started teaching in a Western university in Vietnam where I observed and experienced some challenges in my implementation of SCL to Vietnamese students. This first hand experience, combined with my personal interest in learning about cultural awareness and understanding, has driven me to pursue a PhD study in the area of cross-cultural teaching and learning.

Throughout my journey in undertaking this thesis there have been difficult and rewarding experiences combined. Since I am not Vietnamese, there have been some aspects about Vietnamese culture that I needed to research and analyse carefully in order to gain a better understanding. Furthermore, I am of an Asian background and thus I am more familiar with CHC than an individualistic culture. Consequently, I needed to research individualistic cultures in depth to understand them well.

Another difficulty is due to the exploratory stance of this thesis which focuses on investigating the experience of participants in the implementation of SCL. This stance led to several emerging themes of findings which is positive. It required me, however, to continuously revisit literature to find additional and relevant studies to support new emerging themes and to synthesise the findings as a whole. Consequently, during the writing-up process, I went through many rounds of restructuring the content of sections of the findings. Each time I restructured a single section, it meant that I also needed to readjust other chapters or sections to ensure the consistency of a conceptual thread throughout. With this circular process, sometimes I felt like I was going nowhere. Some advice from my supervisors echoed in my head during my episodes of frustration
including the line “it gets messy before it gets better”. So true and I found this simple message educational and encouraging at the same time because it reminded me that the complications of doing a PhD are common and it is a part of the process that I need to go through to achieve the set goal.

My rewarding experiences were largely due the exploratory stance I have operated under and it has been successful, since it has led to interesting emerging themes. For example, findings about the affective dimension were found to enhance the implementation of SCL in this context. These findings contribute to the affective dimension, an important but forgotten aspect of SCL. Insights from this chapter indicate that the quality of the affective engagement between students and teachers developed based on empathic understanding, caring, and student empowerment bring a climate of joy and passion to SCL classrooms. The findings serve as new evidence to support the fact that some challenges in the cross-cultural classroom can be simply managed through the quality of student-teacher relationships developed, based on the affective dimension. To me, the affective dimension is a valuable, meaningful and irreplaceable aspect of education since it makes learning more than just a business.

Another gratifying experience is due to the contribution of this thesis to my personal growth. It helped me to learn that I needed to recognise my own cultural identity first before I could truly engage effectively with those of other cultures. Surprisingly, the understanding about myself I gained through the interaction with others from different cultures helped me to reach a new understanding about myself. All in all, intercultural approaches aided me to better understand myself and others from different cultures.

Finally, the most important and rewarding aspect of this thesis would be its potential contribution to the policy and practice of transnational universities who are experiencing similar issues. The significant implications include universities needing to ensure that their policy of the best practice covers intercultural construction. The universities can be pioneers in developing a hybrid strategy and practice in their institutions. That said, in order to increase the number of new hybrid approaches, the universities need to integrate the hybrid approach as part of their practice. This study also urges the universities to reinforce the affective dimension and rearrange their professional development programs to be in tune with the affective dimension of education. Finally, universities need to give full support for their teachers to
contextualise teaching and learning materials. All in all, I hope these findings are not only applicable to the participating universities but also for other international universities that aim to provide best practice in cross-cultural teaching and learning.
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Routledge.


Appendices:

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview questions for teaching staff

☐ Can you tell me about your background and how you came to be teaching here?

☐ How long have you been teaching here?

☐ Can you tell me about your approach to teaching?

☐ What is this university's approach to teaching and learning? Did you have to change the way that you teach when you arrived here?

☐ From your experience, are there any teaching approaches that are successfully or commonly practiced elsewhere but are not working very well with your students here? What do you think has caused this?

☐ Is there a need to design teaching materials or learning activities to suit the specific learning needs of Vietnamese students studying here?

☐ Are there any teaching techniques that you specifically designed to maximise student response? How did they enhance students' learning?

☐ Which aspect of your classes effectively motivated students to participate in student centred learning activities? Eg, class discussion, problem solving, group discussion, peer review, debate, critique, critical thinking, self-directed learning, role play. Tell me about it. How did students respond to it? What made it successful?

☐ From your experience, what is the most challenging aspect of implementing student centred learning to students here?

☐ How has your teaching adjusted to deal with the challenges?

☐ Are there any forms of support you need to facilitate student centred learning to your students?

☐ What suggestions would you make to a friend who will be teaching Vietnamese students at this university for the first time?

Interview questions for Teaching and Learning department

☐ Can you tell me about your background and how you came to be working here?

☐ How long have you been working in this position?
What are your roles in supporting teaching staff here?

What is this university's approach to teaching and learning?

How is the student centred learning approach promoted in this university?

How do lecturers and students learn about the student centred learning approach?

How is student centred learning integrated into teaching and learning here?

How do you experience the implementation of student centred learning in the university?

What are the issues in implementation of student centred learning frequently raised by lecturers? What has caused them? What was your advice on the issues?

Are there any teaching techniques of student centred learning that are successfully or commonly practiced elsewhere but are not working very well with students here? What do you think has caused it?

Is there a need to design teaching materials or learning activities to suit the specific learning needs of Vietnamese students studied here?

From your class observation experience, are there any successful teaching techniques that lecturers specifically designed to maximise student response? How did it enhance students' learning?

From your class observation experience, are there any example of lecturers or teachers' classes that effectively motivated students to participate in student centred learning activities? Eg, class discussion, problem solving, group discussion, peer review, debate, critique, critical thinking, self-directed learning, role play. Tell me about it. How did students respond to it? What made it successful?

Are there any forms of support you think necessary to facilitate student centred learning to students and lecturers at this university?

What would you suggest to a new lecturer about the implementation of student centred learning to Vietnamese students at this university?

Interview questions for Learning Skills Unit staff

Can you tell me about your background and how you came to be working here?

How long have you been working in this position?
What are your roles in supporting students here?

What is this university's approach to teaching and learning?

How do you prepare and support students for the student centred learning approach?

Is there any particular workshop about student centred learning conducted for students?

What are the learning skills where students normally ask for your advice?

Are there any difficulties in adapting to the student centred learning approach mentioned by students? For example, class discussion, problem solving, group discussion, peer review, debate, critique, critical thinking, self-directed learning. What was your advice on the issues?

What aspect have you found to be the most challenging in giving learning support to students?

Are there any forms of support you think necessary to facilitate student centred learning to students at this university?

What would you suggest to new students about how they can study successfully in the student centred learning approach?

Interview questions for individual students

Can you tell me a little about where you were studying previously?

How would you describe the teaching style of the school?

Can you describe your learning style, approach or attitude to learning before coming to study at this university?

Can you tell me about the way you are taught at this university, and how you are expected to study?

How does this compare with your previous institution?

Did you have to change the way you learn when you began studying here?

What do you like most about the way you are taught here?

What have you found most challenging about the way you are taught here?

The next questions are about how you experience learning activities implemented in the classroom:
Tell me about the best learning activity that motivated you to participate in a discussion.
Tell me about the best learning activity that motivated you to participate with other students.
Tell me about the best learning activity that helped you to arrive at new ideas.
Tell me about the best learning activity that motivated you to be an active learner.

Are there any particular teaching approaches or activities implemented in the classroom that you found not really useful for you as a learner? Why? What could have been done differently to help you learn better?

Are there any forms of support you need to facilitate your learning at this university?

**Interview questions for focus group interview with 2-3 students**

✓ Can you tell me a little about where you were studying previously?

✓ How would you describe the teaching style of the school?

✓ Can you describe your learning style, approach or attitude to learning before coming to study at this university?

✓ Can you tell me about the way you are taught at this university and how you are expected to study?

✓ What do you like most about the way you were taught here?

✓ What have you found most challenging about the way you were taught?

✓ In today's class, what activities helped you to learn better? Why?

✓ In today's class, are there any lessons learnt in class that cannot be substituted by a text book or from course materials?

✓ In today's class, is there any activity that made you an active learner?

✓ In today's class, is there any activity that helped you to arrive at new ideas?

✓ In today's class, is there anything that could have been done differently to help you learn better? Why?
Appendix B: Ethics clearance

Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN)
Subcommittee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

Notice of Approval

Date: 26 July 2013
Project number: CHEAN-A-2008/087-05/13
Project title: Experience of student-centred learning in transnational universities in Vietnam
Risk classification: Low Risk
Investigator: A/Prof Christopher Ziguras

Approved: From 26 July 2013 To 31 August 2015

I am pleased to advise that your application has been granted ethics approval by the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network as a sub-committee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Terms of approval:
1. Responsibilities of investigator
   It is the responsibility of the above investigator/s to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by the CHEAN. Approval is only valid whilst the investigator/s holds a position at RMIT University.
2. Amendments
   Approval must be sought from the CHEAN to extend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment please use the Request for Amendment Form that is available on the RMIT website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from CHEAN.
3. Adverse events
   You should notify HREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
4. Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)
   The PICF and any other material used to recruit and inform participants of the project must include the RMIT University logo. The PICF must contain a complaints clause including the project number.
5. Annual reports
   Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report. This form can be located online on the human research ethics web page on the RMIT website.
6. Final report
   A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. CHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
7. Monitoring
   Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.
8. Retention and storage of data
   The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.
9. Special conditions (if applicable)

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title.

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.

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