Learning to teach: cross-cultural internship teaching of a mainland Chinese Master's student in a Macao university

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper examines the cross-cultural internship teaching experience of a mainland Chinese student of a Master's program on adult education in a Macao university.

Design/methodology/approach – Using autobiography, the data were collected from the teaching journals, biographical notes, and deep reflections of the student teacher, tracking the whole process of cross-cultural internship teaching. The data were analyzed in a grounded way, by scrutinizing the process to overcome the difficulties and challenges encountered in the two-month internship teaching period.

Findings – Three key themes were identified: (a) constructing relationship with mentor teacher as the key condition; (b) classroom interaction as an important influencing factor; (c) professional identity as the result of the learning-to-teach process. Furthermore, this paper reveals an adaptation process during the internship, where the student teacher went through three phases, novice anxiety, adjustment, and ability acquisition.

Originality/value – This paper's analysis on the internship teaching experience reflecting practical issues in the process has extended the literature of academic adaptation in internship learning of non-local students. Based on this cross-cultural student case under the unique mainland China-Macao cross-border context, some suggestions are provided for university policy makers and educators in Macao.

Keywords Cross-cultural internship teaching, Student teacher, Academic adaptation, Macao SAR

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The past few decades have witnessed enormous growths in the number of international students in higher education in the context of education globalization. Mainland Chinese students consist of the leading share of international students at higher education institutions globally (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). The destinations for studying abroad have also displayed a transition from western countries to East Asian regions (Ghazarian, 2014). In recent years, Hong Kong and Macao, the two Special Administrative Regions of the People's Republic of China (PRC), due to their hybrid social and cultural natures, have attracted an increasing number of mainland Chinese students (Bodycott, 2009; Li and Bray, 2007). They differ a lot from mainland China in language, laws, and educational systems (Li and Bray, 2007). Most existing

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studies have suggested that mainland students studying in the two regions may confront with various academic challenges, because of language barriers, cultural gaps, and different teaching patterns (Trent and DeCoursey, 2011; Benson, 2012; Cheung, 2013; Zhang, 2019). Besides normal coursework, internship turns to be another academic challenge. However, research about this issue is scarce.

This article focuses on an educational internship experience of a mainland Chinese student studying in Macao. The guiding research question is: How the student teacher adapted to the non-local teaching context? The study will explore what adaptation difficulties the student teacher encountered and how she overcame them. This inquiry helps better understand the mechanism and significance of the cross-cultural internship teaching, especially for non-local students.

Background

Mainland Chinese students in Macao

There has been a growing trend of international students choosing Macao for their tertiary education in the last decade. In the academic year 2018/2019, the number of non-local students (foreign students, Hong Kong students, and mainland Chinese students) exceeded that of local students enrolled in Macao higher education institutions. It even displayed an upward trend in the academic year 2019/2020 (Figure 1). Moreover, the number of mainland students always occupies the largest proportion (Education and Youth Development Bureau, 2020), and turns to be the main source of enrollments in Macao universities.

Macao was ruled by Portugal until its sovereignty returned to China in 1999, with the implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems' policy. The complexity in language is one of distinguishing features in Macao society. Although Chinese is recognized as one of official languages, mainland students may still feel a sense of isolation because of the spoken dialect used in Macao (Zhang, 2019). Most local people speak Cantonese in their daily life, which is totally different from Mandarin. Linguistic challenge also appears in the course instruction, involving English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Portuguese (Zhang, 2019). Besides, Macao's higher education institutions recruit a great number of non-local academic staffs worldwide (Hao, 2016), which also strengthens the linguistic complexity in teaching. In this study, the
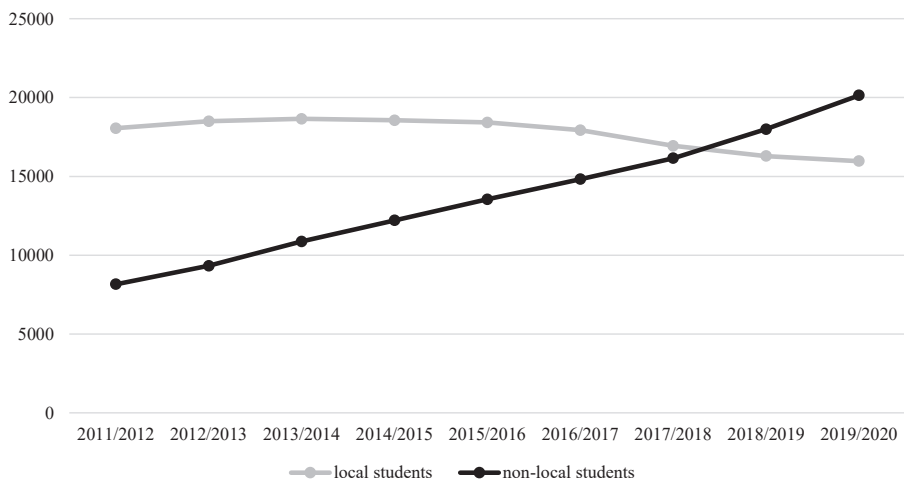

Figure 1.
Number of Local and Non-local Students studying in Macao Higher Education Institutions, 2011/2012-2019/2020
Source: Education and Youth Development Bureau (2020)

student teacher comes from mainland China. She also confronted potential cultural collisions. The internship happened to be cross-cultural teaching.

Practical courses in Macao higher education
Different from Hong Kong, which has been recognized as an international higher education hub (Cheng *et al.*, 2011), the tertiary education system in Macao is often labeled as less advanced (Bray, 2015). The University of East Asia (UEA) was founded in 1981, as the first modern university in Macao. In 1988, the Macao Government purchased UEA and renamed it as the University of Macau (UM). After the sovereignty of Macao returning to PRC, the Macao government expanded higher education dramatically (Bray, 2015). Both public and private sections experienced rapid developments (Lau and Yuen, 2013).

Curriculum setting in Macao's higher education institutions went through a series of reforms, from a vocational education model to a more comprehensive system (Hao, 2016). Based on this transition, many universities set practical courses within different disciplines, to enhance professional training. In general, UM, Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), and City University of Macau (CityU), all set practical courses in the field of education, business, hospitality and tourism management. Students need to do teaching practice, management internship, or service practice. In this paper, the research takes place in an educational internship, which is set within a Master's course in education at CityU.

Literature review
Adaptation of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong
Academic adaptation refers to a dynamic and interactive process between the students and the academic context, including interpersonal relations in education, educational activities, and educational space (Anderson,1994). International students may confront more academic challenges, because of cultural differences and shortages of support from instructors and peers (Ramsay *et al.*, 1999). There have been many studies examining the adaptation experience of mainland students studying in Hong Kong. Cheung (2013) concluded four major adaptation challenges that mainland Chinese students encounter in Hong Kong: language, academic, socio-cultural and financial adjustments. Furthermore, limited language proficiency in Cantonese often makes mainland students feel hard to integrate into the local student community (Yu and Zhang, 2016). The student-centered education model in Hong Kong also influences mainland Chinse students' adaptation to their academic context (Vyas and Yu, 2018). Additionally, social-cultural discrepancies take place in class interactions. For example, mainland students may feel confused by Cantonese local slangs mentioned by their classmates (Cheung, 2013).

Inspired by these studies, this research focuses on adaptation problems of mainland Chinese students in Macao and attempts to extend the literature in this aspect. The specific academic adaptation refers to the process that the student teacher gradually adapted to the Macao teaching context to complete the educational internship. It draws on the problems in the cross-cultural internship teaching.

Internship challenges for non-local students
Practice or internship emphasizes the acquisition of practical skills. Some studies have pointed that internship is particularly challenging for non-local students (Barlow *et al.*, 2010; Barton *et al.*, 2015; Quezada, 2004). Specifically, Barlow *et al.* (2010) reported a serious of academic problems that cross-border students faced, for example, shortage of practical knowledge and local resources in an EU-Canada social work exchanging program. Focusing on international students who conduct teacher education practice in an Australian university, Barton *et al.* (2015) revealed difficulties in professional learning and handling the relationship

with mentor teachers. Similar cases also happen to Chinese international students. For example, Spooner-Lane et al. (2009) stated that most Chinese students suffer from language barriers, culture differences, and tense relationship with their supervising mentors, when they joined internship teaching in Australian schools. Trent and DeCoursey (2011) also found that mainland Chinese students felt highly challenging in adaptation to local education system when they conducted internship teaching in Hong Kong.

Based on the above review, this study aims to examine the cross-cultural teaching experience of a mainland Chinese student studying in Macao. Emphasis will be put on the learn-to-teach process within an internship course, to analyze the process of adaptation in a cross-cultural context.

Research method
Autobiography
Autobiography is a form of narrative inquiry that explores and gives a reflective insight to personal experience within the social and cultural context (Kim, 2015). The method of autobiography examines the dynamic personal experience and makes meaningful connections between one's past and present encounters to track the changing process (Watson, 2007).

In this study, the authors are the student teacher and the mentor teacher respectively. The student teacher is a second-year Master's student majoring in Education from mainland China. In the second year of the Master's program, she decided to choose an elective course to do teaching internship and hope to gain helpful practical knowledge in teaching. Before that, she had little teaching experience, only learnt some theoretical knowledge in teaching. The mentor teacher also comes from mainland China but has studied in Hong Kong and worked in Macao for more than ten years. Her responsibility includes guiding the student teacher to do the teaching practice and evaluating the teaching performance. Based on the practices and personal experiences, autobiography allows the two authors to find out what happened in the teaching internship.

Internship course
This elective course is set for second-year Master's students, which requires students to undertake two-month internship teaching. After a discussion between the mentor and the student teacher, the internship plan is arranged within a general study course, named *Special Topics in Social Science*, for two classes of sophomores (40 students in total) majoring in international tourism and hotel management. They were basically local students. In this internship, Mandarin was adopted as the medium of instruction.

As a traditional way of teaching internship, apprenticeship was practiced throughout this cross-cultural internship to keep providing guidance. Before the formal teaching, the student teacher made instructional observations and rehearsals. In the teaching process, the student teacher did instructions independently. After each teaching sessions, the mentor often gave feedback and suggestions for improvement. This internship was conducted within eight teaching sessions.

Data collection
In order to increase the integrity of data interpretation, diversified data is needed to enhance trustworthiness of data (N.G. Fielding and J.L. Fielding, 1986). This study collected autobiographical data from teaching journals, reflection reports, and further discussion with the mentor, which took place continually in the internship. Specifically, the teaching journals and reflection notes recorded the teaching notes, questions, suggestions and evaluations from the mentor in each teaching session. It also recorded the acquisition and summary of failure

as well as success in the teaching process. In addition, regular discussions between the student teacher and the mentor teacher were conducted, focusing on specific questions emerged in the teaching process. Major themes were explored and identified from these data sources, and all these original data were recorded in Chinese.

Data analysis
The coding procedure of this study consists of open coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. All the codes were shaped with techniques, such as memo writing, constant comparisons and saturation (Charmaz, 2008). First, line-by-line open coding was conducted to analyze the data from the teaching journals and biographical notes. It concentrates on the guiding question of the adaptation process in a cross-cultural internship teaching. Two specific questions guided the coding process, "What are the main academic difficulties of the participants?" and "How do they resolve them?".

Second, the focused coding was conducted by identifying the most significant and frequent codes to do further explanation and categorization (Charmaz, 2006). In this step, three key themes emerged: constructing relationship with mentor teacher as the key condition, classroom interaction as the crucial influencing factor, and professional identity as the result of the experience (Figure 2). Further inquiries went to how the student teacher dealt with challenges in building relationship with the mentor teacher, communicating with local students, and constructing the professional identity. Hence, an in-depth discussion between the student teacher and the mentor teacher were also conducted to locate appropriate codes.

Third, a chronological coding system was constructed to form reasonable categories and concepts to explain the process of adaptation in this internship (Figure 3). The whole internship teaching was divided into three periods: the beginning stage (preparations before teaching and the first as well as the second teaching session), the middle stage (the third to the sixth teaching session), and the ending stage (the seventh to the eighth teaching session). Then, theoretical saturation was used to ensure no new categories, properties or theoretical insights would be yielded (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, a theoretical model was generated. During the coding and analysis process, trustworthiness was guaranteed through member checking (DePoy and Gitlin, 2005), whereby the mentor checked the interpretations of data again.

Findings
This study reported three themes at different periods of the teaching internship, namely, constructing relationship with mentor, making classroom interaction, forming teacher professional identity. Furthermore, an adaptation process, including novice anxiety,

Key themes	Main codes		
a- Constructing relationship with mentor	a1- learn from the mentor a4- continuous adjustment a7- fixed pattern in teaching	a2- just follow instructions a5- gain confidence a8- introduce Macao to me	a3- overdependence a6- more independent
b- Classroom interaction	b1- possible problems b4- Macao students are different b7- local culture-based discussion session	b2- whisper in Cantonese b5- hard to build a closer relationship b8- collective responses are acceptable	b3- a failed invitation b6- identified culture differences
c- Professional identity	c1-look like a student c4- gain recognition to be a teacher c7- applied what had learned	c2- an outsider c5- self-reflection on being a teacher c8- master the professional knowledge	c3- learn like a student, teach like a teacher c6- know more about Macao c9- gain understanding of local culture

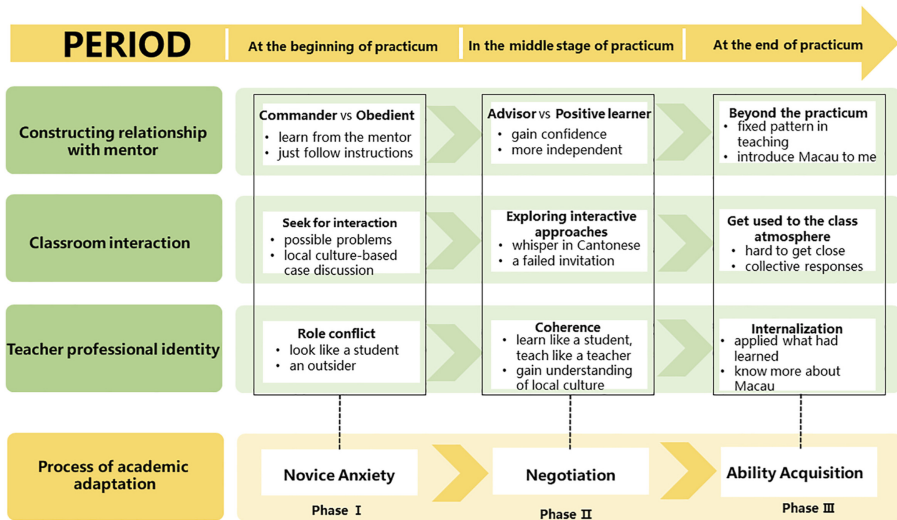Figure 2.
Key themes generated from codes

negotiation, and ability acquisition, was also detected. Figure 3 shows this process and illustrates the categories and concepts within a chronological coding system.

(1) Constructing relationship with mentor

As the mentor-guided learning mechanism worked through the internship teaching, building a mentorship is the first academic challenge for the student teacher to handle. The mentor teacher, as a role model, influenced the student teacher in many aspects, including attitudes, beliefs and teaching styles.

In the beginning: commander vs obedient

Learning from the mentor is the first step for the novice teacher. Before formal teaching, classroom observation was conducted to learn how the mentor taught. The student teacher took notes about useful teaching skills and tried to follow the mentor's teaching behaviors:

> I found that when my mentor wants to have communication with the students, she often walks into the student group. So, I also tried to invite students to answer my questions at my first class, as my mentor did.

Because of limited teaching experience, the mentor teacher set several rehearsal sessions to help the student teacher adapt to the teaching environment. After finishing the teaching rehearsal, the mentor always gave prompt feedback and suggestions. Specific guidance of each teaching session was shared to avoid mistakes. From this perspective, the student teacher took the mentor as an authority.

In the middle stage: advisor vs positive learner

Moving to the real teaching context, some changes happened to this relationship. When each class ended, the mentor continually put forward immediate evaluation to the teaching performance. Sometimes, positive evaluations and recommendations made the student teacher gain more confidence in teaching, as written:

> The teacher's recognition of my teaching allows me to believe that I can do better. Everything is getting better. I feel not so worried as the beginning.

Periodical communications between the mentor and the student teacher relieved the student teacher's anxiety. More confidence inspired her to develop a more positive attitude. After completing several teaching sessions, the student teacher gradually mastered the professional skills and learnt to control the teaching pace. At the same time, the mentor reduced detailed instructions but made more orientations for improvements. The student teacher became more independent:

> I started to know what to do in each step. When preparing lessons, I was no longer as confused as I was in the beginning. And my mentor canceled some basic guidance, instead providing more useful suggestions to improve my teaching performance. Then I can make some adjustments in the next teaching session.

During this period, the mentor changed her role from a commander to an advisor. The student teacher became more autonomous and self-driven in this process.

In the end: beyond teaching
When the practice moved to the later stage, the student teacher gained a more fixed pattern created by herself. As the student teacher wrote:

> In the later stage, I think I have already found the fixed pattern of how to teach, from course design to instruction. Although the topic of each class is different, the teaching procedures and the mindset to handle the practice are similar.

The mentor also evaluated the student teacher as below:

> You have learnt how to design the teaching content in a good framework and developed your own teaching methods.

Hence, in the later period of the internship teaching, the student teacher used verified methods to build a very personal teaching style responding to the cross-cultural context. Meanwhile, the mentor and the student teacher started to share many local things related to Macao. For a cross-border student, this communication provided an alternative access to get close to the local culture. As the student teacher recorded:

> After participating in the internship teaching, my mentor teacher told me a lot about Macao, including the local education system, social norms, characteristics of local students, even famous local restaurants. She is more like a native member leading me to the local community.

The mentor teacher works as a mediator transiting between the two cultures to help the student teacher deal with the cultural gaps. In the later period of the internship teaching, the mentor shared less feedback in teaching, but more care in daily life. The communications between the mentor and the student teacher become more diverse.

(2) Classroom interaction
In this study, the internship teaching took place in a real cross-cultural teaching context, so classroom interaction was particularly important. The findings pointed out that the student teacher suffered largely from cultural problems, such as language barriers and sociocultural differences. How the student teacher coped with these problems became very crucial.

In the beginning: seeking for interaction
In the beginning, it was very hard to explore communications with local students. The student teacher tried to integrate into the student group, but felt stressed with the

unfamiliar environment. Besides, the student teacher realized that she and those local students have different cultural backgrounds. It largely increased difficulties in integrating into the new environment. The teaching journal has been written:

> Before the first class, I was worried about how to communicate with local students. I am from mainland China and cannot speak Cantonese. When the local students talk with each other, I cannot understand.

Additionally, the mentor also expressed similar concerns:

> My concern is that the students would not care about you. They may think you are just a student, with little prestige from their perspective.

Before starting the first class, both the student teacher and the mentor seriously considered the issue of class interaction. The mentor suggested appropriate group study for more intensive engagements. However, another emerging problem is the content for discussions. In the first rehearsal session, the mentor pointed out that it involved too less Macao culture but too much about northern parts of mainland China:

> The phenomenon mentioned in the discussion session is well-known in mainland, but may not have been heard in Macao.

This case helped the student teacher understand that inadequate understanding of local culture may cause confusions in the class discussion. The student teacher gradually grasped how to explore interactions with suitable topics and cases.

In the middle stage: exploring interactive approaches
The efforts to facilitate class discussion helped the student teacher gain more responses in class, as recorded:

> When I shared a case happening in Macao, the students no longer lowered their heads but looked at the PowerPoint. Sometimes, they even really discussed with their classmates.

A followed by problem emerged when the student teacher asked someone to share. Most of the students tended to discuss or whisper with their classmates, but few were willing to share individually:

> Most of them enjoyed discussing with classmates in group. But when I tried to invite someone to talk about their ideas, they seemed to refuse.

Moreover, local students discussed with their classmates in Cantonese. Although they may respond to teachers in Mandarin, few of them were willing to speak in Mandarin. This created an embarrassed situation in the class:

> Even I walked to the student group and invited one student to share, he still refused me. This is very different from my personal learning experience. In mainland, when the teacher invites a student to answer, it seems that you must say something even though you do not have the right answer. No one refuses teachers' invitation.

A failed invitation made the student teacher realized different student characteristics and learning styles in Macao.

In the end: making alternative interactions
Based on this phenomenon, the student teacher adjusted herself to adapt to the particular class atmosphere. In order to better understand what local students said, the mentor helped to translate instantly for the student teacher. The student teacher also changed her way to interact. More often, she asked questions and waited for collective responses:

Since then, I did not invite students to express individually, instead, waited for their collective responses. Someone who wanted to say something just speak out casually. The informal feedback made the class atmosphere turn to be more active.

In this way, the student teacher gradually adapted more causal and relaxing class atmosphere. It became an alternative way to push possible interactions.

(3) Teacher professional identity
In this study, teacher professional identity represents the student teacher's self-image in the internship teaching. Specifically, the key question "how the student teacher viewed her role as a teacher in the internship?" guided the analysis of the formation of professional identity in different periods.

In the beginning: role conflicts
In the beginning, the student teacher struggled with the role transition. Limited professional experience often made her feel embarrassed. In the first teaching rehearsal, the student teacher behaved much more like a student. The mentor evaluated this:

> You looked more like giving a presentation to do report. As a teacher, you need to communicate with your students confidently.

Meanwhile, the mentor also reminded the student teacher about the professional dressing code, which may help build the professional figure as a teacher. Additionally, the student teacher worried about possible psychological distance with the local students. Specific outsider experience explained how cross-cultural context hindered the construction of the professional identity:

> Even I am a teacher, I can feel that I am still not one of them, especially feeling alienated when they talk in Cantonese.

In this phase, potential divergence with the Macao local culture led to a sense of isolation. It thereby resulted in the student teacher's self-doubt on her teacher identity.

In the middle stage: coherence
In the mid-internship, the student teacher gradually initiated a self-regulated mode of teaching. The positive interaction with local students boosted her confidence. When the student teacher can maintain active interactions with students, she gradually recognized the identity of being a teacher:

> When these students responded to me, I can feel that I am like a real teacher.

After each teaching session, the student teacher continually learned subject knowledge. The process of preparing the discussion session about Macao issues provided her a chance to know more about the local society. The mentor commented:

> The student teacher has great progress in collecting information about local society. She knows more about the city. It can stimulate more communications with students.

In this process, the cultural gaps were gradually narrowed, which helped relieve the negative influence on her teacher professional identity. Diverse identities tended to go to be coherent.

In the end: internalization
At the end of internship teaching, the student teacher gradually turned to be more mature in teaching and largely constructed teacher identity for her. In addition, the student teacher applied what she had learnt from the internship to her academic work:

This internship teaching really benefits me a lot, not only in obtaining teaching knowledge, but also in my academic study. When I prepared for teaching, I learnt how to search literature and sort data, which did help a lot in my thesis writing.

The student teacher also admitted that this internship experience allowed her to have further understanding of Macao. In sum, what she learnt from the internship teaching benefits her learning more in academic and in practice.

(4) Adaptation process in the internship
The above analysis about the cross-cultural internship teaching experience also generated a three-phase adaptation process.

Phase I: novice anxiety
Novice anxiety represents a series of anxiousness that the student teacher wondered whether she could deal with the teaching task when she started the teaching practice. The above analysis suggested that the reasons for her anxiety were due to limited teaching experience, challenging cross-cultural teaching context, unfamiliar class atmosphere and potential identity conflicts. Learning professional skills and grasping the teaching procedures were the main tasks for the student teacher at this phase. Commander-obedient relationship between the mentor and the student teacher displayed the practice of apprenticeship mode. The mentor played a key role in guiding the student teacher to learn how to teach. It was not a smooth role transition from a student to a teacher. Additionally, cross-cultural teaching context aggravated the student teacher's anxiety about classroom interaction and the difficulty in constructing professional identity.

Phase II: negotiation
Negotiation is the second phase which demonstrates the process that the student teacher negotiated her prior learning experience with the current teaching context. She tried to change her teaching styles to master how to teach for local students. In this period, the student teacher became more confident and independent. She had been familiar with the teaching environment and obtained basic teaching skills. More importantly, she got recognition as well as encouragement from the mentor, and also succeeded in making effective adjustment. This contributes a lot to the formation of her teacher professional identity. Moreover, she started to recognize and accept the cultural difference and explore more cross-cultural capabilities.

Phase III: ability acquisition
Ability acquisition describes the third phase where the student teacher had developed the learn-to-teach ability. In this stage, the student teacher was competent in teaching and developing strategies to cope with internship teaching. The student teacher's teaching capacity had enhanced. Even if cultural differences hindered a little their interaction, she found her way to keep the teaching go on.

It has been noted that, during the whole internship process, besides teaching practical knowledge, the difficulties in cultural gaps were originated from both language usage and different cultural cognitions. It is hard for the student teacher to integrate herself into the local culture. Under the guidance of the mentor, further understanding of Macao society and more interactions with local students help the student teacher adapt to the cross-cultural teaching context, especially negotiating different cultural cognitions and creating appropriate teaching methods.

Discussion

This study identified challenging problems, coping strategies, and learning benefits of a two-month teaching internship for a mainland Chinese student in Macao. First, it indicates the necessity to deal with tasks, in both professional teaching skills and cultural differences. It is similar to what Wong *et al.* (2020) pointed out that mainland students pursuing a teacher education program in Macao need to handle dual challenges in language and teaching practice. Leach *et al.* (1997) also explained that entry-level trainees in an internship would struggle with high-level performance anxiety due to inadequate professional skills as well as low self-efficacy in their ability. In this study, cultural factors increased anxiety of the student teacher. Moreover, previous studies have proved that adaptation to an alienated culture, understanding the expectations of their role, and self-adjustment heightened levels of anxiety for international students when they go through a practical internship (Reynolds and Constantine, 2007). In this study, the cultural differences largely influence the relationship with local students. Although both Cantonese and Mandarin could be accepted as instructional language, Cantonese is still the mainstream language for Macao local students. At the same time, the student teacher was hard to recognize her teacher identity. In addition, Spooner-Lane *et al.* (2009) stated that Asian international pre-service teachers usually face tense relationship with their supervising teachers. But in this study, the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor teacher appears to be a positive factor. This situation is largely due to their similar cultural background of both coming from mainland China. The mentor can better understand the difficulties encountered by the student teacher, and figure out feasible solutions, which is helpful to the relationship building.

Corresponding to the problems stated above, some key points were figured out within an adaptation process to cope with the cross-cultural internship teaching. First, the guidance of mentor teacher and the self-learning mode work together to help the student teacher improve her teaching skills. Second, overcoming cultural differences and exploring alternative interaction approaches contribute to feasible teaching. Previous studies have also illustrated that it is hard for non-Cantonese speakers to integrate into the local Cantonese-speaking community (Yu and Wright, 2016; Vyas and Yu, 2018). In this study, mentor teacher played a key role in helping the student teacher understand how to respond to cultural differences actively, so as to better integrate into the local culture. As Spooner-Lane *et al.* (2009) indicated, mentor teacher could provide international pre-service teachers with culturally-specific information, ideas and support. In addition, in the process of continuous adjustment and negotiation between the student teacher and the new teaching environment, her teacher professional identity was gradually constructed. It is a dynamic process that urges multiple negotiation with others (Wenger, 1998), including mentor teachers and students (Martel and Wang, 2014). It is consistent with the argument of Stachowski and Mahan's study (1998), which indicated that understanding local culture and interacting with local students are conducive to the formation of professional identity in cross-cultural field placements.

Furthermore, the student teacher benefited from this internship beyond teaching. As Cushner and Mahon (2002) reported that international students' teaching experiences would impact on their cultural awareness, self-efficacy, and professional development in terms of global mindedness. In this study, to a certain extent, the student teacher had achieved a short-term success within this two-month internship coursework. She also gained a lot for her academic work.

Comparing with previous studies on mainland Chinese students studying in Hong Kong, this research indicates the unique cross-cultural learning context for mainland students studying in Macao. Yu and Zhang (2016) revealed that mainland students in Hong Kong's universities may suffer from linguistic adaptation, social network, political identification and perceived discrimination. It could be detected that students in both Hong Kong and Macao both encounter difficulties in language barriers and building friendship networks. However, in this study, the mainland student may not experience political identification and

discrimination in Macao. Different learning styles caused certain obstacles in this internship teaching, which echoes Gu's (2011) finding that a familiarity with the values, norms and popular terms deeply embedded in Hong Kong local culture is the real obstacle lying between mainland students and Hong Kong local students.

Conclusion

This study reveals the process of how a Chinese mainland student attempted to accomplish the task of a short-term internship teaching in Macao. Currently, many studies have pointed out adaptations in language, educational system, finance, and specific cultural context, for mainland Chinese students studying in Hong Kong (Cheung, 2013; Yu and Zhang, 2016; Vyas and Yu, 2018), but few discussed the group of students in Macao. From this perspective, this study recorded an adaptation process of a mainland student's educational internship in a cross-cultural context.

This study mainly inspires implications for how better facilitating internship teaching. As the research shown, role transition is not so smooth, especially in a cross-cultural teaching context. Several influencing factors were identified, such as the relationship with the mentor, cultural gaps, and individual reflections in his or her teacher identity. The university policy makers need to consider how to provide a more supportive context for non-local students who take part in internship courses in different majors. Some practical strategies could be taken into accounts, such as providing adequate orientation sessions and prerequisite training. The orientation sessions should offer specific information about the internship, local culture, local peers and the educational system. Prerequisite training including basic teaching skills has to be provided to students. Moreover, cultural gaps were identified as a big challenge. Hence, more cultural activities could be organized to encourage non-local students to get familiar with local communities (Stachowski and Mahan, 1998). Besides, positive mentor-student teacher relationship played a significant role in this inspiring process, particularly in decreasing anxiety and supporting the non-local students both practically and emotionally. More interaction sessions with the mentors should be set in advance.

Focusing on the adaptation efforts within a teaching internship, this study enriched the literature with the experience and practice of mainland Chinese students studying in Macao. Nevertheless, this study has some limitations. First, it applied autobiography to collect data and only focused on one mainland Chinese student about the internship experience. The results cannot be generalized to explain other cases. Second, the study was conducted based on a short-term internship teaching, which restricted the possibilities to do deeper investigation and make further interpretations.

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