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Research paper

# Learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators in an internationalized doctoral course: A video-cued interpretive study



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#### HIGHLIGHTS

• Culturally responsive teacher educators play pivotal roles in education reform.

- International doctoral programs can prepare culturally responsive teacher educators.
- Teacher educator candidates engage with knowledge from culturally plural perspectives.
- Teacher educator candidates hone strategies for creating culturally inclusive experiences.
- Teacher educator candidates develop asset-based views toward cultural diversity.

#### A R T I C L E I N F O

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#### ABSTRACT

Using a video-cued interpretive research methodology, this study examines how eight doctoral students learn to become culturally responsive teacher educators in a foundation course in one of the first international teacher education Ph.D. programs in mainland China. We identified three patterns undergirding the participants' learning experiences: (a) engaging with teacher education knowledge from culturally plural perspectives; (b) honing strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences; and (c) developing asset-based views toward cultural diversity. These patterns constitute a conceptualization of the process of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators and suggest practical implications for preparing culturally responsive teacher educators.

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#### 1. Introduction

In a "flat world" today (Friedman, 2005), a large and growing number of students, teachers, and teacher educators are crossing national and cultural borders to pursue new opportunities in education (Bense, 2016; Smith, 2018). Cross-cultural educational experiences can expose people to different social realities, cultural norms, and alternative perspectives that can provide them with "the view from afar" (Lévi-Strauss, 1985). In educational research, a growing body of scholarship has shed light on the important role of cross-cultural experience in developing educators' knowledge, strategies, and dispositions for working with learners from diverse backgrounds (Marx & Moss, 2011).

The field of teacher education has been exploring effective ways to make schooling more inclusive and equitable for all learners (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), defined as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2002, p. 106), has emerged to be one of the influential pedagogical approaches to addressing issues of diversity and equity in education. To date, existing literature has mainly focused on the characteristics, practical strategies, and educational possibilities of CRP in the context of United States (e.g., Cholewa et al., 2014; Rychly & Graves, 2012; Savage et al., 2011). Few studies have examined how to prepare



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culturally responsive teacher educators. Considering that educational systems in other contexts have also witnessed increasing diversity among their student population, it is important to explore how CRP can be meaningfully taken up in these contexts to address issues of educational equity.

This study investigated the professional learning experiences of eight teacher educator candidates in an internationalized foundation course at one Chinese university. Our inquiry was guided by one overarching research question: how can teacher education doctoral students learn to become culturally responsive teacher educators? This inquiry adds to the knowledge base of teacher educator development and has practical implications for how to prepare culturally responsive teacher educators.

#### 2. Literature review

#### 2.1. Studies on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP)

CRP was first developed and introduced in the work of the U.S.based scholar Geneva Gay (2002, 2018). The core principle of CRP is that educators respect students' cultural diversity and actively use cultural diversity as a pedagogical asset to improve the learning of all students. She explains that CRP constitutes five key elements: (a) developing a cultural diversity knowledge base; (b) designing culturally relevant curriculum; (c) demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community; (d) promoting effective crosscultural communication; and (e) emphasizing cultural congruity in classroom instruction.

After its initial conceptualization in Gav's (2002) work. CRP has been taken up and further developed to address equity issues across educational settings. Scholars have applied the core tenets of CRP into a variety of subject areas, with different student populations, or at various educational settings, and have developed more context-specific articulations of CRP (e.g., Brockenbrough, 2016; Savage et al., 2011). Furthermore, scholars have also put forward other pedagogical orientations which coalesce with CRP in their attention to cultural caring and affirming instructional practice when working with minoritized students, such as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally congruent pedagogy (Au & Kawakami, 1994), culturally appropriate pedagogy (Hale, 2001) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). Although these pedagogies take different theoretical and practical stances, they all view cultural diversity that students bring as assets rather than viewing it with a deficit or value-free lens (Paris, 2012). As Paris and Alim (2014) put it, these approaches are "asset pedagogies" (p. 85).

Teacher educators have also taken up the notion of CRP in considering how to prepare culturally responsive teachers (e.g., Acquah et al., 2020; Ellerbrock et al., 2016). Some scholars view curriculum as a space critical to the work of preparing culturally responsive teachers (e.g., Vass, 2017; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). For instance, Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that teacher education curricula that explicitly articulate a vision of teaching and learning in a diverse society are essential for preparing culturally responsive teachers. Other scholars have identified a range of teacher education strategies for preparing culturally responsive teachers, such as establishing a positive classroom learning environment, implementing purposeful learning activities, and providing appropriate field experiences and teacher educators' modeling with a focus on diversity (Acquah et al., 's 2020; Jackson & Boutte, 2018; Ellerbrock et al., 2016). Still others (e.g., Belgarde et al., 2002; Brown, 2007) have investigated what programmatic and institutional changes are needed for preparing culturally responsive teachers. For instance, Belgarde et al. (2002) contend that teacher education programs should establish infrastructure for empowering students from diverse backgrounds, foster culturally responsive norms, and draw on the knowledge base of culturally responsive education to inform teacher education practice.

In addition, a small but growing body of literature has explored how to prepare culturally responsive teacher educators. For instance, two studies (Tanguay et al., 2018; Prater & Devereaux, 2009), both conducted in the U.S. context, examined the effectiveness of various faculty development activities in developing culturally responsive teacher educators. Their findings suggest that self-directed projects, discussion groups, and reflection activities, among several others, can help enhance teacher educators' knowledge, strategies, and dispositions for preparing culturally responsive teachers.

Collectively, this body of literature and critical research highlights that the core value of CRP and other asset pedagogies is valuing and leveraging cultural diversity to enhance educational equity. Curricular, pedagogical, programmatic, and institutional reforms aligned with this core value are needed for preparing culturally responsive educators. However, few studies have empirically investigated how teacher educators themselves can learn to become culturally responsive in their situated contexts, especially in the contexts outside of the United States.

### 2.2. Studies on professional learning and development of teacher educators

Teacher educators are a heterogeneous group of educational professionals who work in teacher preparation or professional development. They can be found working at different levels of educational institutions, within different subject areas, on different tasks, and at different sites (Association of Teacher Educators, 2018; Murray, 2017). But they all share one commonality in the nature of their work: preparing and/or supporting teachers. In this study, we adopt Lunenberg et al.' (2014) definition and consider teacher educators as "all those who teach or coach (student) teachers with the aim of supporting their professional development." (p. 5). Accordingly, we define teacher educator candidates as "teacher educators in training."

Teacher educators are a large, diverse, and expanding group whose work is pivotal for teaching and teacher education. However, their professional learning and development, as Smith (2003) pointed out, is a "neglected area in the literature of teacher education" (p. 201). A small number of recent studies (e.g., Kosnik et al., 2011; Ping et al., 2020; Yuan, 2015) have investigated the complex process of how teacher educators learn to develop their professional expertise, which has generated a few foundational understandings as follow.

First, teacher educators need to learn and develop specialized knowledge, strategies, and dispositions relevant to supporting teachers' learning (Ping et al., 2018; Association of Teacher Educators, 2018; Smith, 2005). For instance, Smith (2005) argues that different from teachers, teacher educators need to possess additional knowledge and expertise, such as the knowledge of how to create new knowledge, comprehensive understandings of the educational system, and the expertise of articulating reflectivity and metacognition. In addition, scholars point out that teacher educators also need to develop a professional identity as a researcher and the kind of knowledge and strategies for engaging a variety of research activities, such as using research literature to inform their practices, studying their own practices, and disseminating their research through publication to make knowledge contribution to the field of teacher education (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2005; Lunenberg et al., 2007).

Professional associations have also specified the professional competencies of teacher educators (e.g., Association of Teacher

Educators, 2018). Differing from research literature that usually focuses on certain specific aspects of teacher educators, professional standards often provide a comprehensive list of the competencies that teacher educators need to develop. On top of the competencies related to teacher educators' roles as educators and researchers, standards also emphasize the leadership roles of teacher educators in broader contexts. For instance, the U.S. Standards (Association of Teacher Educators, 2018) emphasize teacher educators' leadership in collaborating with multiple stakeholders and in initiating efforts and events of public advocacy for educational equity for all learners. The U.S. Standards also stress on the cultural competency of teacher educators, defined as the capacity to work with people from culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Such capacity is further differentiated into a set of knowledge (e.g., understanding their own culture and that of their students), strategies (e.g., modeling ways to reduce prejudices for pre-service and in-service teachers), and dispositions (e.g., embracing diversity).

Second, learning to become a teacher educator is a long-term process that involves a variety of engagements in different contexts (Loughran, 2014; Ping et al., 2018; Smith, 2003). In other words, the growth of teacher educators is not a once-and-for-all event but occurs moment-by-moment over a sustained course of learning experiences. For instance, Smith (2003) argues that teacher educators can pursue their learning through attending a range of activities, such as coursework in higher education programs, in-service workshops, feedback on teaching, support from others, and peer tutoring. Ping et al. (2018) synthesized the learning activities of teacher educators into four types, i.e., academic engagement, collaborative activity, attending professional development programs, and reflective activity. Given the increasing emphasis on academic performance in higher education, many inservice and prospective teacher educators choose to take courses or even doctoral programs to seek further development (Kosnik et al., 2011; Yuan, 2015). While doctoral education has been recognized as an important venue for teacher educator preparation, it is still unclear how doctoral programs with different value orientations and curricular configurations shape teacher educators' learning process and outcomes (Lin, 2013).

Third, personal and contextual factors can shape teacher educators' learning and development (Korthagen et al., 2005; Loughran, 2014; Ping et al., 2018). Studies found that teacher educators' teaching experience, language competency, socio-cultural belief, motivation, and identity can significantly influence their learning (Liao, & Maddamsetti, 2019; Shagrir, 2010; Smith, 2005). For instance, compared to experienced teacher educators, novice and prospective teacher educators present greater and more urgent needs of support at the early phase of socializing into the profession. Research also shows that contextual factors such as program and institutional cultures, education reform discourses, and sociocultural contexts can influence the goals, process, and consequences of teacher educators' learning (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Loughran, 2014; Zeichner & Liston, 1990). For instance, a recent study by Ping et al. (2020) compared the professional learning experiences of Dutch and Chinese teacher educators. The study identified several significant differences between the two groups, such as the extent of activeness in conducting research and getting inputs from others. The authors explained that different sociocultural norms and reform contexts between the two countries have contributed to these differences.

In China, the practice and research of teacher educator preparation are still at an early phase. Teacher educator preparation was formally initiated in China's higher education system in 2007 (Ministry of Education of China, 2008; Xiao, 2018). As of 2020, only 19 out of a total of 828 higher education institutes qualified for

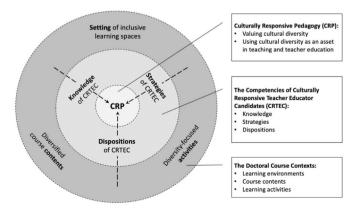
offering graduate degrees have teacher education graduate programs (Ministry of Education of China, 2020). This implies that many current teacher educators in Chinese universities have not received formal and specialized preparation for educating teachers (Yang, 2018). Research on teacher educators in China is also young. Wu (2019) reviewed 78 publications on Chinese teacher educators and made two observations. First, previous studies mainly focused on in-service teacher educators working in universities. Scant attention has been paid to teacher educators working at other sites (e.g., K-12 schools) or teacher educator candidates. Second, most of the existing publications in this area are conceptual articles or literature reviews, and very few empirical studies have explored how teacher educator candidates engage with their professional training. Wu's assessment of the research on teacher educator training supports the findings from several other reviews (e.g., Ma & Hu, 2018; Xiao, 2018) on the current state of teacher educator preparation in China.

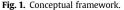
We draw on the existing research on the professional learning and development of teacher educators within and beyond China to inform our research design. Specifically, we seek to understand how a group of doctoral students from diverse cultural backgrounds learn to become culturally responsive teacher educators in an internationalized doctoral course at a Chinese university.

#### 3. Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the literature on CRP and the development of teacher educators, we developed the study's conceptual framework for analyzing teacher educator candidates' learning experiences in doctoral course contexts (Fig. 1). The framework comprises three parts: CRP as the core, the competency layer, and the context layer. The underlying assumption is that teacher educator candidates can develop CRP-related competencies through learning in doctoral course contexts where cultural diversity is centered and valued as an asset.

First, we place CRP at the center of the framework. The core idea of CRP is valuing and capitalizing on the cultural diversity that students bring into the school to enhance teaching and learning (Gay, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2014). In the original theory of CRP, the term "culture" is defined as "ethnic groups' cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns" with a particular reference to the U.S. context (Gay, 2002, p. 107). Considering the transnational nature of the research context of our study, we extend the definition of culture to encompass the cultural values and beliefs underlying the practices of teaching and teacher education in different societies (Stigler & Hiebert, 2009).





The middle layer of the conceptual framework attends to the competencies of culturally responsive teacher educator candidates (CRTEC). We break down CRTEC's competencies into three general categories-knowledge, strategies, and dispositions based on the KSA competency model (Kraiger et al., 1993). The KSA model originates from occupational psychology research and it posits that knowledge, skill, and attitude are three core competencies that a iob holder needs to accomplish work tasks and activities. This model also highlights the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions of a job holder's learning and development. Our conceptual framework follows the general structure of the KSA model. However, as informed by a rich body of research literature on teacher education (Gist, 2014; Korthagen et al., 2005; Ping et al., 2018; Smith, 2003), we replaced "skill" and "attitude" used in the original model with "strategy" and "disposition" to emphasize the sophisticated skills and disposition-related values and beliefs that teacher educators need for their professional work. Furthermore, we purposefully keep the constructs broadly defined because our analytic focus is on how these teacher educator candidates engage with the key ideas of CRP rather than identifying what specific knowledge, strategies, and dispositions they have developed.

The outer layer consists of the doctoral course contexts. We break down the doctoral course contexts into curricular setting, contents, and activities (Tanguay et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2011; Prater & Devereaux, 2009; Gurvitch et al., 2008). Curricular setting refers to how the learning environment is physically and conceptually framed, and the contents and activities respectively focus on what to learn and how the learning experience is being structured in a course context. Drawing on the literature and research on CRP (e.g., Gay, 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner & Liston, 1990), we designed the doctoral course by considering how to fashion the three core course components to create the kind of learning experience that would facilitate the teacher educator candidates' development of CRP-related knowledge, strategies and dispositions.

#### 4. Methodology: A video-cued interpretive study

In this inquiry we adopted a video-cued interpretive study design, a research methodology originated from Tobin's (2019) comparative ethnographic studies on education in the 1980s. Video recording is a powerful tool in capturing social activities in great detail. Previously, researchers (e.g., Sherin & Han, 2004; Tripp & Rich, 2012) have used videos either as a form of data or as cues to solicit participants' perspectives in their investigations of learning, teaching, and teacher education. Learning to become a teacher educator is a complex process experienced first and foremost by teacher educator candidates themselves. Thus, we use video-clips of critical learning events from the course to elicit the participants' interpretations of and reflection on how they negotiated learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators.

#### 4.1. Research setting

This study was conducted in a foundation course in the International Teacher Education Ph.D. Program (ITEPP, pseudonym) at the National Normal University (pseudonym) in China. ITEPP is one of the first international Ph.D. programs in teacher education in mainland China. Two recent trends in China have contributed to the emergence of ITEPP and other international teacher education programs in Chinese universities: modernizing teacher education and internationalizing higher education. Over the past two decades, preparing high-quality teacher educators through formal, professional training (e.g., teacher education doctoral programs) has become a crucial part of China's endeavors to modernize its teacher education enterprise (Xiao, 2018). At the same time, internationalizing its higher education system, including teacher educator preparation programs, has become one of China's broad initiatives to improve its "soft" power and make greater contributions to the international communities (Zha et al., 2019).

ITEPP offers a curriculum that is composed of three sets of courses and curricular experiences and all the courses are delivered in English. The "core courses" cover teacher education theories and practices, research methodologies, and academic writing. The "elective courses" focus on issues and topics in teacher education and advanced research methods. The "required tasks" include a practicum, international experiences, a mid-term examination, and a dissertation. Five international students (two from Tanzania, one each from Algeria, Ghana, and Pakistan) formed the first cohort of ITEPP, and they started their study in the program in fall 2018.

As part of a larger research project, the present study examined how teacher educator candidates with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds learn to engage CRP in one of the core courses in the ITEPP program— Teacher Professional Development: Theory and Practice (TPD). TPD introduces to students the foundational theories and practices in the field of teacher education, such as theories about the natures of teaching, teacher knowledge, teacher learning; and practical models of teacher education, such as mentoring, action research, and lesson study.

Informed by the conceptual framework, the course instructor, also the first author, took several measures to make the course culturally responsive and inclusive to the students. The measures include: (a) creating an inclusive discourse by explicitly emphasizing the values of cultural diversity in the syllabus and throughout the course; (b) diversifying the learning materials (e.g., each student could find at least one reading material about teacher education in their own country); (c) democratizing the course processes (e.g., arranging the seats in a circle, which is not typical in many university classrooms in China; each student having a chance to lead the class to discuss a topic they chose); and (d) establishing mechanisms for students to learn from and with each other (e.g., group tasks; peer-reviews for course papers).

#### 4.2. Participants

In fall 2018, nine students took this course, including the five international students from ITEPP and four domestic Chinese doctoral students majoring in teacher education. This mix of teacher educator candidates from China and four other countries presents a unique internationalized learning context for exploring how to prepare culturally responsive teacher educators. Therefore, the first author invited the students to participate in this study to better understand their learning. Eight students agreed to participate on a voluntary basis (one domestic Chinese student declined due to time constraints).

Among the eight participants, five were male and three were female. Three participants were from China, two from Tanzania, and the rest three each from Ghana, Algeria, and Pakistan. They all spoke English as a second language, and their mother tongues included Chinese, Kiswahili, Akan, Twi, Arabic, and Urdu. They all held a master's degree, seven in education and one in linguistics. Seven of them had full-time teaching experience in either K-12 or higher education settings, and the lengths of their teaching experience ranged from one to twelve years.

#### 4.3. Data generation

Following the tradition of video-cued interpretive study design, data analyzed in this inquiry are collected through video recording, semi-structured interviews, and video-cued interviews.

#### 4.3.1. Video recording of class sessions

We recorded the class sessions for two reasons: (a) to collect classroom data that captured how the participants negotiated learning to become a culturally responsive teacher educator in this internationalized doctoral course; and (b) to generate raw video materials that were later edited and used in the video-cued interviews. In particular, the first author videotaped all eight class sessions of the course. Each session lasted 3.5 h, including 20-min break in the middle. The camera was placed at a corner of the classroom from where all class activities could be captured. The second author, working as the teaching assistant of this course at the time of the study, assisted the first author in data collection.

#### 4.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant within a month after the course ended. Each interview lasted 100–150 min. In this interview we focused on the participants' backgrounds, motivation for becoming a teacher educator, and understandings of culturally responsive pedagogies. Particular efforts were devoted to soliciting the participants' elaborations on the critical events that stimulated their learning, and how those events influenced their development of knowledge, strategies, and dispositions as a future teacher educator.

#### 4.3.3. Video-cued interviews

To further explore how the participants negotiated learning to become a teacher educator, we conducted a video-cued interview with each participant. We first identified the participants' critical learning events by reviewing the semi-structured interview transcripts. Our selection of the critical learning events was primarily based on the participants' narratives of their learning experiences. We also added additional events with reference to the conceptual framework, ensuring that at least one critical learning event was selected for each of the three competency categories (i.e., knowledge, strategy, disposition). As a result, we identified 4 or 5 events for each participant. Second, we cut the episodes of the identified critical learning events from the videotaped classes. This step led to an individualized set of video clips for each participant (See Appendix 1 for details about the video clips). Third, we conducted a second, one-on-one interview with each participant. Each videocued interview lasted 90-120 min. During the interviews, we asked each participant to view their own video clips and to provide a detailed account of their experiences during those critical learning events. In addition, we probed their thinking and perspectives regarding those events.

In typical video-cued ethnographic studies, researchers often create one main video as the stimulus for the interviews with all the participants. However, considering the exploratory nature of this study and the fact that teacher educators' professional learning is highly contextual and idiosyncratic (Zeichner, 2005; Liao, 2020), we created a customized set of video clips for each participant. Although the video cues differed across the interviews with the participants, our conceptual framework, which consists of the cognitive, behavioral, and dispositional dimensions of professional learning, provided an underlying structure for us to compare and contrast the critical learning events across the participants in data analysis.

#### 4.4. Data analysis

Following a typical data analysis procedure in interpretive research (Saldana, 2015), this study used four steps to analyze the data. First, all interviews were transcribed verbatim to document the participants' perceptions. Second, the first author used a combination of deductive and inductive approach to generate initial codes related to the participants' learning experiences. Next, the first author refined the initial codes by readings the transcripts several more times and then generated initial themes by conducting cross-participant analysis (Yin, 2014). An arbitrary criterion was used in this step, that only the themes that covered relevant codes in the data of equal to or more than half of the participants (i.e., four) were selected for further refining. This round of coding resulted in several preliminary themes relevant to the participants' learning. Fourth, the second and third authors helped refine the themes by asking clarifying questions, re-analyzing unsettled episodes of the data, and making collective decisions on structuring and naming the themes. As a result of this step, three themes and six sub-themes have emerged, which constitute the major findings of the study. Table 1 displays the evidentiary path of inference from individual participants' data to the research findings.

#### 4.5. Research ethics and validity

As how we did in this inquiry, university faculty studying their own classrooms and instruction has been increasingly practiced in teacher education and other professional settings where student participation is essential (Ferguson et al., 2004; Kitchen et al., 2020). This type of self-study has unique values for developing disciplinary knowledge and informing pedagogical practice, but it also poses ethical dilemmas. Thus, we adopted several measures commonly used in self-study research to ensure the ethics and validity of the study, including seeking the participants' informed consents, building reciprocal relationships with the participants in research activities, and involving external experts as critical friends during data analysis to ensure the validity of the research findings (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2019). See more details of and reflection on this study's methodology in Liao (2020).

#### 5. Findings

Our analyses identified three patterns undergirding the participants' experiences of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators in the course studied. These include: (a) engaging with teacher education knowledge from culturally plural perspectives; (b) honing strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences for teachers; and (c) developing asset-based views toward cultural diversity.

Table 1

Themes	Sub-themes	James	Ray	v Phill	y Shaw	n Tina	ı Jiar	n Lir	1 Hen	g Count
Engaging with teacher education knowledge from culturally	Broadening culturally-embedded prior knowledge	~	Х	1	1	Х	/	1	1	6
plural perspectives	Constructing alternative understandings of "authoritative" knowledge	х	1	1	Х	Х	1	1	Х	4
Honing strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences for teachers	Designing culturally inclusive learning environments	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
•	Initiating cross-cultural analysis	Х	1	1	Х	1	1	1	1	6
Developing asset-based views toward cultural diversity	Disrupting stereotypical views of cultural "others"	Х	Х	1	1	Х	1	1	1	5
	Building reciprocity in cross-cultural learning	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8

### 5.1. Engaging with teacher education knowledge from culturally plural perspectives

All participants reported that as a result of their learning from the course, they were able to engage with the knowledge about teacher education from more than one cultural perspective. Their newly developed ways of knowing through this course took two specific forms: broadening culturally-embedded prior knowledge and developing alternative understandings of "authoritative" knowledge.

#### 5.1.1. Broadening culturally-embedded prior knowledge

Most of the participants reported that they had broadened their pre-existing knowledge about teacher education that was embedded in their own cultural, social, and educational contexts. For example, almost all the participants have heard about or conducted action research in the past, given that action research is widely used in teacher education around the world. However, by encountering the topic of action research again in this course, some participants developed new understandings of this research methodology. For instance, James mentioned that in his previous teacher education practices at a Tanzanian university, he often led teachers to conduct action research and they tended to focus on improving the teachers' instructional practices only. However, after learning about lesson study in this course, James began to realize that in action research teachers and teacher educators should also focus on students in their inquiries and draw on student feedback to improve teaching. Drawing on his own experiences, Philly commented that action research is used in Ghana mainly in the teaching practicum in pre-service teacher preparation, and less frequently in professional development for in-service teachers. After learning from his Chinese classmates that China's professional development policy requires all in-service schoolteachers to complete 360 h of professional learning every five years, Philly began to view that teachers in Ghana may also need to continue doing action research or other sorts of professional learning activities with the support from teacher educators and the educational system.

Furthermore, the three Chinese students all broadened their knowledge about lesson study through critical examinations of their previous experiences contextualized in the Chinese culture. China has a traditional culture of teacher research. As previous teachers or teacher educators, Jian, Lin, and Heng have intensively engaged with teacher research before. After learning about relevant theories, models, and recent debates about lesson study internationally (e.g., Huang & Bao, 2006; Lewis et al., 2006), they developed new understandings of this "old" knowledge. They said, respectively,

In the past, I did lesson study just as part of my job. But this course pushed me to think about why teachers should do it, and how to focus on student learning evidence. Now, I see greater meanings in it [for a teacher's professional development]. (Jian, semi-structured interview)

It [learning about lesson study] made me understand that teachers also can conduct research on their practices in rigorous ways. Like university teachers, primary and secondary schoolteachers can also be a researcher, but just of different kinds. (Heng, video-cued interview)

I heard about lesson study before. My sense was that it's a kind of teacher research. But by carefully reading research articles about it, and also discussing with my classmates, now I know what a formally structured lesson study looks like and how teachers with different roles collaborate in that process. (Lin, semi-structured interview).

These quotes together indicate that, though in different directions, all three Chinese participants have extended their knowledge about a familiar topic by critically engaging with relevant scholarships and the ideas shared by their classmates.

## 5.1.2. Constructing alternative understandings of "authoritative" knowledge

A few participants were able to bring up alternative understandings of some of the "authoritative" knowledge in teacher education, which was primarily developed in Western, developed countries and is now significantly shaping how teacher education is understood, practiced, researched, and reformed across the globe. Two illustrative examples emerged from our analysis of the data. Ray, Hong, and Lin already knew pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) before taking this course. PCK was developed by American scholar Lee Shulman in the 1980s (Shulman, 1987) and is now considered one piece of the foundational and "authoritative" knowledge that teacher educators must know (Ping et al., 2018). Drawing on his eight years of preparing teachers in Tanzania, Ray proposed a new notion, Pedagogical Community Content Knowledge (PCCK), to highlight the significance of community-related knowledge for teachers. Ray reasoned,

The other "C" stands for community ... For teachers, their job is not only to understand contents and pedagogies, but also to understand the school and the broader community where teaching and learning take place. For example, maybe a teacher is a Christian but he teaches in a Muslim community. It would be especially important for the teacher to understand the rules and regulations of the community, so that he can make sure that the learners and himself do not come into conflict with the community. (Ray, semi-structured interview & 1st video clip)

Similarly, Jian considered that lesson study should not be understood as fixed or limited forms of teacher learning originating from Japan. Rather, lesson study takes plural forms, for different purposes, and have already been practiced in many places around the world. Summarizing from his twelve years' experience of teaching and doing teaching research as a secondary science teacher in China, Jian introduced to the class a list of alternative forms of lesson study that is commonly practiced by Chinese teachers but was not mentioned in the course readings on this topic (i.e., Lewis et al., 2006; Huang & Bao, 2006). The alternative forms of lesson study can include other types of lessons such as "Report Lesson (汇报课)", "Research Lesson (研究课), "Exemplary Lesson (示 范课), "Excellent Lesson (优质课), "Public Lesson (公开课)", and "Lesson for Competition (比赛课)."<sup>1</sup>

The two examples, among several others, showed that some of the participants, especially those with rich teaching experiences prior to their study in the ITEPP program, were able to engage with the course contents in critical ways and to construct alternative understandings of the foundational knowledge presented in this course. Although the alternative knowledge the participants proposed and developed might not be new, it showed that some participants began to develop an understanding of how knowledge production in teacher education is closely tied to the cultural, social, and educational contexts in which it is generated.

In summary, our analysis found that the participants began to recognize the contextual nature of the knowledge in teacher education, either the knowledge they previously acquired or that they newly developed in the course. Several course arrangements, which were designed according to the core principles of CRP, seemed to have contributed to this learning outcome. In particular, the diversified curriculum content made it possible for the participants to experience the plurality of teacher education knowledge. The democratized classroom discourses encouraged the participants to exchange ideas from different cultural perspectives, which had further enriched the participants' understandings of teacher education issues. Lastly, the participants' critical, reflective, and collaborative engagement with the curriculum and discussion contributed to their development of a culturally sensitive way of knowing for their ongoing learning and development as a prospective teacher educator.

### 5.2. Honing strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences for teachers

The participants reported that they had developed a repertoire of instructional strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences, a core practice of CRP, by observing how the course instructor and their classmates organized class activities.

*5.2.1. Designing culturally inclusive learning environments* The participants reported that they had learned two strategies to create inclusive learning environments for teachers: setting up inclusive physical space for learning and using pedagogical tools to promote the participation of traditionally silent teachers. Our analysis of the interview data showed that all participants considered that one simple design of the class, the circle-shaped seat arrangement, made them feel more willing and responsible to take part in class activities. The circle-shaped seat arrangement seems quite common in education systems where class sizes are small and learner-centered education is practiced, but it is much less used in the contexts where the participants come from due to large-sized classes, traditions of knowledge/teacher-centered education, or lack of supporting resources. Thus, it was the first time for most of the participants to learn in a physical environment in which they had to face each other directly. This new experience made them feel connected and obliged to the class community, then enhanced the perceived effectiveness of their learning. For instance, Lin said,

I liked the atmosphere of the class. Everyone was sitting in a circle, discussing a topic with "seven mouths and eight tongues [七嘴八舌, a Chinese idiom meaning lively discussion among a group of people with everyone openly sharing their opinions]." We had the chance to hear about different views. It's a natural process for me to eventually come up with my own opinions about the class topics, so that I became more willing to share them in public. (Lin, video-cued interview)

Philly also favored the seat arrangement. He said, "The arrangement of the seats is quite helpful. You know, it's like we were going to have a roundtable meeting, yeah, roundtable. So, feel free to talk." (Philly, video-cued interview) Similarly, Ray reported, "Sometimes we just chat, asking about experiences, sharing information. It [the seat arrangement] gave us the chance to interact more with each other. And from there we built up connection. It [the relationship] was even growing beyond the class." (Ray, semi-structured interview).

Another strategy the participants learned is using pedagogical tools to engage the seemingly inactive learners to participate. For instance, James designed a lottery game to randomly pick the class members to answer questions during his leading discussion. Several other participants were inspired by this little trick. Lin and Jun even borrowed this idea to their own leading discussions because they both felt that this trick worked well in giving each class member an equal chance to share ideas. Jian learned about another trick, the fast write activity, from the course instructor. The activity asks students to think fast around a question or issue and then write down their thoughts within a short time window. Jian said,

I want to use this [fast-write] in my future training of teachers. I think it can motivate all teachers to think in their personal and safe space. Many teachers I worked with before, I would say, didn't seem to like sharing their ideas in public perhaps because they didn't want to lose face, or to be seen as showing off. So, a fast-write activity might help encourage the teachers who usually remain silent to speak up through writing. I can also quickly collect teachers' feedback through their fast-writes so that I can adjust my instruction right in time. (Jian, video-cued interview)

#### 5.2.2. Initiating cross-cultural analysis

Except for James and Shawn, the rest six participants reported that they had further developed their strategies for initiating cross-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Report lesson (汇报课): lessons that teachers (oftentimes new teachers) present to principals as a mechanism of teaching quality assurance; research lesson (研究 课): lessons that a group of teachers conduct together to improve teaching and learning; exemplary lesson (示范课): lessons that teachers (oftentimes experienced teachers) present to novice teachers for mentoring purposes; excellent lesson (优质 课): high-quality lessons prepared by schools or teachers to exemplify certain teaching models or strategies; public lesson (公开课): lessons open to other teachers for professional development purposes; lesson for competition (比赛课): lessons that teachers prepare for a teaching contest.

cultural analysis by simply posing questions. For instance, at the last section of Lin's leading discussion on Huang and Bao's (2006) article on lesson study, she asked the class, "In your own country, is there some lesson-based research similar to lesson study? If yes, please first teach your neighbor how to say 'lesson study' in your native language, and then share something you think worth knowing to them." Then, the pronunciations of "lesson study" in Kiswahili, Akan, Twi, Urdu, Arabic, and Chinese took off to the air along with the participants' chuckles, chats, and silent and focused listening (Lin, 2nd video clip). In a similar manner, Philly asked his classmates to share the status quo of technology uses in their respective countries after he presented a critical analysis of Hennessy et al.'s (2015) article on this topic in Zambia. Ray jumped in to share first, "In my country [Tanzania], I would say, 60-70 percent of schools do not even have electricity, not to mention using technologies to develop teachers." Lin added,

The situation is similar to some rural areas in China. Once I went to train teachers in a rural area in my region [Xinjiang]. The school did have electricity, but no technology equipment was available there. How could I teach them how to use technologies? On papers? (Lin, video-cued interview; Philly, 2nd video clip)

These and other similar cross-cultural analyses triggered by the students' questioning strategy might seem superficial as they might be read as students simply sharing individual perceptions on complex issues in teacher education. However, such analyses had exposed the participants to diverse local practices and realities related to globally circulated knowledge of teacher education. In addition, these comments indicated that the participants had developed their cross-cultural awareness in considering knowledge, pedagogy and students in teaching. Some participants (e.g., Shawn, Heng) expressed that deliberately asking questions about how things looked like in other countries had helped challenge their parochial mindsets, broadened their perspectives, and triggered their interests in getting to learn more about teacher education in other cultural contexts, which they viewed helpful for their future work with teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds.

#### 5.3. Developing asset-based views toward cultural diversity

The participants reported that their experiences of learning from and with classmates from other national and cultural backgrounds had changed their views of "others." Through this experience, the participants were able to critically examine their own stereotypical views about "others" and benefited from reciprocal cross-cultural learning, which resulted in their development of more asset-based views toward people from different cultures.

#### 5.3.1. Disrupting stereotypical views of cultural "others"

The first stimulating experience was that many participants changed their stereotypical views of "others" whom they previously perceived as culturally different from them. This finding was especially evident in the three Chinese students' experiences. Prior to taking this course, they seemed to hold stereotypical views of the international students from developing countries, but they eventually changed their perceptions after intensive interaction with the international students throughout the course. For instance, Jian said,

They [the international students] really surprised me. They are from developing countries, and their education is underdeveloped indeed. So, in the beginning I thought they just came here for a degree. Their [academic] level might not be good and they might not be active in learning. But after spending time with them in this course, I found their thinking quite critical and creative. Unlike we Chinese students, they were very active in the class, liked asking questions, and were brave to express their disagreements. That's really inspiring to me. (Jian, video-cued interview)

Heng and Lin expressed similar sentiment. Heng considered that the international classmates' critical thinking displayed in the class was impressive. Lin said, as far as she knew, nearly no influential teacher education theories or models came from Africa. Therefore, she did not expect to learn things from the African students in the beginning. But after this course, she saw her international classmates working very hard and sharing many great ideas in the class. As a result, Lin developed more positive perceptions of African people whom she did not know much about before.

In a similar way, the course experience also changed most of the international students' perceptions of their Chinese peers. It seemed that the international students shared some common stereotypes about Chinese people, such as being shy, working too hard, and having lower English proficiency. However, through sustained interaction with their Chinese colleagues throughout this course, most international students began to change their views. For instance, Shawn said that he previously thought the Chinese were shy and not very confident. However, in this course all Chinese students appeared way more confident perhaps because of their rich experiences in education and maturity in life. Similarly, Philly shared his reflection on a stereotype about Chinese people. He said,

Our Chinese classmates seemed shy maybe because of language barriers. They don't speak my language, but they can do better in his or her language than me. And when it comes to my situation, I can do it too because of my language ability. So, I don't actually see them [the Chinese students] different. The only way I will see someone to be different is when he is lazy. (Philly, semistructured interview)

Tina was the only international student who said the course experiences confirmed her previously formed impression that Chinese people were very busy and focused too much on their own business. Tina was the youngest student in the class, and she was the only one who neither had any formal teaching experiences nor the experiences of studying outside his/her home country. According to some participants' observations (e.g., Ray, Shawn, Lin), Tina "seemed very struggling in this course." (Lin, video-cued interview) Thus, Tina might have greater needs of, or expectation for, helps from others. When the domestic Chinese students, the seemingly advantaged group in the class, did not provide the level of support up to Tina's expectation, it was plausible that the course confirmed her perception that the Chinese students in the course focused too much on their own business.

5.3.2. Building reciprocity in cross-cultural learning

Overall, all participants reported that they had learned one or

Mutual learnings among the participants.

	James	Philly	Ray	Shawn	Tina Jian	Lin	Heng
James	n/a			Literature review strategies	TE practices in China		
Philly	How to stay calm in presentation	n/a					
Ray		How to think fast in class	n/a				How to be confident in speaking English
Shawn				n/a	TE practices in China; hard- working spirit	TE practices in China; hard- working spirit	TE practices in China; hard- working spirit
Tina		How to cope with coursework	How to be confident	How to participate in class activities	n/a TE practices in China	TE practices in China	TE practices in China
Jian	How to think critically; TE practices in Tanzania	How to think critically; TE practices in Ghana	How to think critically; TE practices in Tanzania	How to think critically.; TE practices in Pakistan	n/a		How to be confident in speaking English
Lin	How to think critically	How to think critically	How to talk like a mature educator	How to think critically		n/a	
Heng	How to think critically; presentation strategies		How to provide peer- review comments	How to think critically			n/a

Note. 1. The content in a cell, if any, means the things that the participant listed in the first column learned from the corresponding participant in the first row; n/a = does not apply. 2. TE = teacher education.

more things from others. Most participants were mentioned at least once by their peers for their contributions to their learning. The contents of the reported learnings revolve around teacher education practices in different cultures, strategies for engaging learners from culturally diverse backgrounds, critical reading and thinking, and several others. See Table 2 for more details.

Our analysis indicated that the mutual learnings occurred more between the Chinese student group and the international student group, rather than within their respective groups. For instance, all Chinese students reported that they had learned different kinds of things from their international classmates, but only Jian said he had learned how to be confident in speaking English from another Chinese student Heng. A similar pattern existed for the international student group. By learning teacher education in this internationalized course, the participants experienced personal and inter-personal interactions with cultural "others," which created an intellectually stimulating space for the class participants. In addition, cross-cultural exchanges that occurred in this course allowed the participants to experience the power of culturally responsive pedagogy that values and centers on cultural diversity. As a result, our analyses showed that the participants began to develop asset-based views toward cultural diversity.

In summary, the participants reported that the course had developed their knowledge, strategies, and disposition for culturally responsive teacher preparation. Our analysis indicated that they acquired CRP-related knowledge from engaging with foundational scholarships on CRP. They also enhanced their understanding of how people learn in culturally responsive classrooms through experiencing such pedagogies in the course. The participants also seemed to have developed a repertoire of pedagogical strategies for creating culturally inclusive learning experiences for all learners through the instructor's modeling of and their experimenting with such strategies. In addition, our analysis showed that their learning in the course contributed to the development of their increased sensitivity to issues of diversity, equity, and bias in education. Many of them also began to embrace cultural diversity, as a result of their collaborative and mutually beneficial learning experiences in this culturally diverse course community.

#### 6. Discussion and implications

In this article, we reported on the findings from a video-cued interpretive study on how a group of students negotiated their learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators in one doctoral course at a Chinese university. This inquiry contributes to the knowledge base of the research on teacher educator development and has implications for preparing culturally responsive teacher educators. First, echoing with recent studies on CRP (e.g., Morrison et al., 2019; Takahashi, 2020), our study extends the current literature of CRP by examining a CRP related educational issue in a non-U.S. context. Takahashi (2020) used CRP as an analytical lens to examine how Japanese cultures are constructed and presented in Japan's immigrant education. Morrison et al. (2019) called for an Australian perspective of CRP to better support the learning of the traditionally disadvantaged Aboriginal and immigrant students in Australia. The present study also adds to the rich body of CRP scholarship by broadening the notion of culture, which is defined with a particular reference to racial/ethnic groups within the United States (Gay, 2002; Jackson & Boutte, 2018), to encompass cultural values and practices at the national scale (Stigler & Hiebert, 2009). This extension was reflected in part in how the participants often drew on culturally situated knowledge in teacher education to negotiate meaning and to develop new knowledge in the contexts of cross-cultural learning. This broadened notion of culture enabled the participants to initiate various kinds of cross-national and cross-cultural analysis that further facilitated their reflections on and imaginations of new possibilities of teacher education in their home countries.

Second, the study adds to the existing literature a conceptualization of the process of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators. The conceptualization highlights three core competencies that culturally responsive teacher educators may need to develop. These include: (a) critical understandings of both indigenous and globalized knowledge about teacher education; (b) the ability to create inclusive learning experiences for all teachers; and (c) embracing cultural diversity in the work with teachers and teacher candidates. These findings resonate with Gist's (2014) conceptualization of the competencies of culturally responsive teacher educators, which comprises "dispositions, skills, and knowledge that the teacher educator can take in her or his classroom to cultivate meaningful learning experiences for teachers of color" (p. 280). On top of the existing studies that list the professional competencies that teacher educators should possess (e.g., Ping et al., 2018; Association of Teacher Educators, 2018; Gist, 2014; Smith, 2005), this study empirically explored how teacher educator candidates could learn and develop some CRP-related core competencies mentioned above. The research findings suggest that in becoming culturally responsive, teacher educator candidates should actively seek cognitive, performative, and dispositional development toward CRP by taking a range of learning activities, such as posing questions on prescribed foundational knowledge (e.g., PCK) for teacher educators, exploring strategies that are both appropriate and engaging for working with teachers and teacher candidates in a specific cultural context, and sustaining an assetoriented mindset to learn from and with educators from diverse cultures (Tanguay et al., 2018). Our study was not designed to identify all the professional competencies that culturally responsive teacher educators would need. Rather, we hope that the three core competencies and learning patterns identified in this analysis can serve as a starting point for future studies to continue exploring the complexity in the process of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators.

Third, our study has important implications for the practice of preparing culturally responsive teacher educators in doctoral programs and beyond. Doctoral programs and professional development programs aiming to prepare teacher educators for addressing diversity and equity in and through teacher preparation should incorporate CRP as a core value. Only when a program values cultural diversity and aligns its mission, structure, curriculum, teaching force, and practices with this core value can more culturally responsive teacher educators be nurtured over time (Vass, 2017; Liao, & Maddamsetti, 2019; Belgarde et al., 2002). Furthermore, instructors of teacher educator preparation programs should create inclusive space and learning experience to support students to develop their cultural responsiveness. As evidenced in our study, several curricular and pedagogical configurations have enhanced the teacher educator candidates' cultural responsiveness. These include diversified curriculum contents, collaborative tasks, and guided reflections (Acquah et al., 2020; Tanguay et al., 2018; Ellerbrock et al., 2016). These strategies can be particularly useful in contexts where teacher educator candidates have limited opportunity to interact, reflect, and learn with one another in culturally inclusive communities.

Finally, this study highlights that modeling—the core expertise of teacher educators (Loughran & Berry, 2005)—can be a powerful strategy for preparing and developing culturally responsive teacher educators (Acquah et al., 2020). The first author, also the instructor in this study, deliberately used CRP to inform his course design and teaching. This pedagogical move has influenced the culture and dynamics of the class. The instructor also explicitly explained to the participants the purposes and rationales of doing so. The instructor's modeling of using CRP in this course allowed the participants to directly experience what learning in a CRP classroom was like, why it mattered to educators and students, and how it took form in classroom settings. The participants' direct and positive engagement with CRP deepened their understandings of CRP and enhanced their inclination to use it in their future practices. As Zeichner and Liston (1990) argue, "teachers for progressive schools must be educated in the same kind of supportive and stimulating environment that they were expected to provide for children" (p. 10). Similarly, only when teacher educator candidates are taught in culturally responsive ways will they be more likely to work with teachers and teacher candidates in culturally responsive ways in the future.

#### 6.1. Limitations and directions for future research

This study is limited in several ways. First, the study primarily relied on the participants as the primary source of data. Future studies can draw on additional sources of data to validate this study's findings, such as collecting significant others' perspectives (e.g., program director, educators of teacher educator candidates) and teacher educator candidates' learning artifacts (e.g., course papers, reflection journals) to further unpack the process of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators. Second, the study only captured the teacher educator candidates' learning in one course. However, their learning continuingly takes place in multiple curricular settings and at multiple sites. Future studies can expand their scope, either horizontally to focus on teacher educator candidates' learning occurring across different course and life experiences, or vertically to track down their learning trajectories throughout or even after the Ph.D. programs. Third, the study's conceptual framework captures three general competencies of teacher educators and their development. However, some other competencies, such as emotion, identity, are also crucial to teacher educators' learning and development. Future studies can add new competencies of teacher educators to the study's conceptual framework, construct alternative frameworks, or zoom in on a specific dimension of their competency and develop more nuanced conceptualizations. These theoretical explorations, coupled with empirical examinations, will help deepen our understanding of the complex phenomenon of learning to become culturally responsive teacher educators.

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#### **Declaration of competing interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

#### **Appendix 1**

Descriptions of the Video Clips.

Name	Knowledge-related	Strategy-related	Disposition-related
James	<ol> <li>James learning the definitions of high- quality teacher/teaching from the instructor's lecture.</li> <li>James learning about lesson study in China from Jian's leading discussion.</li> </ol>	3. James, Tina, and Jian presenting a poster that conceptualizes the process of teacher professional development.	4. James feeling stressed in his leading discussion on teacher professional development.
Ray	1. Ray explaining pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) after the instructor called on him.	high-quality teaching. 3. Ray leading a discussion on globally	<ul><li>4. Ray feeling stressed after the ice breaking activity that unpacked the students' identities.</li><li>5. Ray, Shawn, and Heng presenting a poster on teacher learning.</li></ul>
Philly	1. Philly critiquing Hennessy et al.'s (2015) article for their stereotyping of African schools.	competent teachers. 2. Philly leading a discussion on technology uses in African teachers' professional development. 3. Philly presenting a poster about teacher learning on behalf of his group.	<ul><li>4. Philly feeling impressed by the ice breaking activity that unpacked the students' identities.</li><li>5. Philly expressing how he became interested in teacher identity.</li></ul>
Shawn	<ol> <li>Shawn learning about lesson study in China from Jian's leading discussion.</li> <li>Shawn learning about PCK from Ray's explanation.</li> </ol>	0 0 1	5. Shawn echoing with Heng's experience of gender discrimination by sharing a similar experience of his wife.
Tina	1. Tina learning the definitions of high- quality teacher/teaching from the instructor's lecture.	<ol> <li>2. Tina and James presenting a poster on teacher learning theories.</li> <li>3. Tina leading a discussion on cross cultural competency and multicultural teacher education.</li> </ol>	4. Tina sharing an example of "low-quality" teachers from her own experience.
Jian	1. Jian learning about PCK from Ray's explanation.		4. Jian feeling lost during Tina's leading discussion.
Lin	1. Lin learning about PCK from Ray's explanations.	2. Lin leading a discussion on lesson study in China.	<ul> <li>4. Lin feeling surprised by Philly's critical and emotional reactions when the class was discussing Hennessy et al.'s (2015) article on technology uses in African teachers' professional development.</li> <li>5. Lin and James sharing different perspectives on action research according to their experiences in China and Tanzania.</li> </ul>
Heng	1. Heng deepening her understanding of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) from Jian's explanation.	2. Heng leading a discussion on transnational teaching experience.	<ul> <li>4. Heng saying that she saw hidden self and new self through the ice breaking activity which unpacked the students' identities.</li> <li>5. Heng explaining her criteria of cultural inclusiveness by relating to her recent experiences.</li> </ul>

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