An Exploratory Study of Chinese Undergraduate Student Engagement

Zhe Zhang
School of Education
The University of Manchester
The Context

- Gaps in existing SE literature
  - Problematic definitions (e.g. Krause and Coates 2008; HEFCE 2008; Kuh 2009; RAISE 2010; NSSE 2013)
  - Difficult measurement
  - Gaps in China

- Research aims
  - To explore in depth the engagement of students on an undergraduate course at a Chinese university
Key research questions

- What are students’ response patterns to the survey NSSE-China?
- What are students’ conceptualizations of student engagement, their perceptions of factors that impact upon it and their understanding of how those factors interact?
- What are staff members’ conceptualizations of student engagement, their perceptions of factors that impact upon it and their understanding of how those factors interact?
- What are the differences and similarities in the ways that students and staff conceptualize student engagement in the case?
Methodology

• Research design: Case study
  - An undergraduate English course in School of International Education at a Chinese university

• Methods
  - Survey (with students; N=151): NSSE-China
  - Interviews (N=13, i.e. 8 students & 5 staff members)
  - Focus groups (with students; N=22)

• Data analysis
  - SPSS 19
  - N-Vivo 10
  - A socio-cultural perspective (esp. Etienne Wenger’s framework of three modes of identification)
Findings

- Students’ response patterns to the survey

Means and SD of the five benchmarks
Findings

Means of the benchmarks in terms of gender
Findings

Ranking of year of study by benchmarks

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<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} year</th>
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## Findings

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<tr>
<th>Year of study</th>
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<th>Ranking</th>
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Findings

- The concept of SE: *can yu du & xue xi xing tou ru*
  - Students’ conceptualizations
  - Staff members’ conceptualizations
  - Comparison between students and staff members
Findings

- Influencing factors and their interactions
  - Students’ perceptions
  - Staff members’ perceptions
  - A tentative model of the factors
Emergent issues

• Issue 1: Lack of student-staff interaction
• Issue 2: ‘Shock students’ and their ‘shock capability’
• Issue 3: Adaptation
About the main study

- Comparative case studies
  - Two courses in China
  - Two courses in the UK

- Methods
  - Instrument adapted from: NSSE & NSSE-China, NSS and LSI (Learning Style Inventory)

- Theoretical framework
  - Community of Practice
  - Figured Worlds
Thank you!