4-30-2018

Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University

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Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University

by

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Education

at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university. Data collection for the study was comprised of two parts: an online survey for the collection of quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews for the collection of qualitative data. Sixty-two participants (n=62) voluntarily finished the online questionnaire and ten interview participants took part in semi-structured interviews. The exploration into the participants illustrated that Chinese graduate students held positive perceptions of classroom assessment at the Canadian university where the study was conducted, in terms of congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity. However, the lower values for student consultation and diversity imply that students were not consulted and informed adequately about the forms of assessment tasks being employed, and teachers were not adequately concerned about students' diversity with regard to issues such as students' different abilities and the time required to finish their assessments. Also, there were no significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program of study, and year in the program, but significant differences in their perceptions by self-perceived level of English proficiency. Finally, in order to enhance students' learning and motivation to learn, the research suggested that six factors of classroom assessment should be emphasized: timeliness, score, authenticity, forms of assessment, assessment guidance, and assessment feedback.

Keywords: students' perceptions, classroom assessment, congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, diversity, motivation to learn

DEDICATION

To myself

To my parents

To my grandparents

To all the people who have been helping and supporting me

To all Chinese international students

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ISC   The International Student Center

OINP The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program

PATI   Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory

SDT   Self-determination theory

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Classroom assessment serves as an integral constituent of the teaching and learning process (Cheng & Fox, 2017). During a considerable amount of classroom time in schools, students are exposed to all kinds of assessment tasks, and they build their own opinions about the significance, usefulness, value, and shortcomings of these tasks when processing them (Alkharusi et al., 2014; Mertler, 2003). Such assessments are not only considered a means of evaluating and awarding marks in order to decide whether students have accomplished objectives; they have also developed into a tool for learning (Watering, Gijbels, Dochy, & Rijt, 2008).

Teachers and administrators overwhelmingly determine what forms and tasks of classroom assessment are applied in schools; however, students' experiences with the process are central to determining the effectiveness of a pedagogical approach and how to improve it. Thus, educators must recognize students' perceptions of assessment if they seek to construct an involving and high-quality learning environment that can develop excellence and equity (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hayward, 2012). Students should also understand the assessment processes and the meanings for themselves as learners in order to maximize learning (Fisher, Waldrip, & Dorman, 2005; Schaffner, Burry-Stock, Cho, Boney, & Hamilton, 2000). It is therefore important to recognize and examine students' perceptions of classroom assessment; however, few studies have thoroughly investigated students' perceptions (Torkildsen & Erickson, 2016).

The Current Study

With an increasing number of international students studying abroad, ethnic diversity, or internationalization, has seen significant expansion, particularly in Western universities since

2000. This provides a substantial source of revenue to receiving countries and universities (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In Canada, the internationalization of higher education is developing at a high pace (Y. Guo & S. Guo, 2017). One indication of the recent progress of internationalization is the increasing enrolment of international students in Canadian institutions of higher education. According to a report given by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in 2016, there were 353,570 international students in Canada at all levels of study in 2015, and Chinese international students comprised 118,915 (33.5%) of those students. Given the substantial number of Chinese international students entering Canadian educational institutions, investigating how Western pedagogical approaches, particularly assessment, impact these students is becoming increasingly important.

The current study focuses on an examination of Chinese international graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university. This vein of research is critical to the success of Chinese international students as Western and Chinese pedagogies are drastically different in many respects: Western education is known as student-centered and quality-oriented, while Chinese education has long been considered teacher-centered, content-based and exam-oriented (Wang & Kreysa, 2006). Also, assessment is primarily executed in the form of examinations in Chinese schools (Kennedy, 2007). Whether this gap between the two pedagogies could lead Chinese international graduate students to hold different perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university is necessary for the researcher to examine. With respect to students' perceptions of classroom assessment, Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015), Cheng, Wu and Liu (2015), Dorman and Knightley (2006), and Gao (2012) note that gender, subject area, and grade level can influence such perceptions; however, their findings are not consistent. Due to these inconsistency, future research should further examine students' perceptions of classroom

assessment in different curriculum areas, year levels, and even other countries. Investigating Chinese international graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment and exploring any potential differences with respect to gender, subject area, and year in the program will help to address the current gaps in this field of research. In addition, the study will add another variable: self-perceived level of English proficiency. This is important because for those students from countries where English is not the primary language, English proficiency is a significant challenge to their learning (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). Finally, as assessments are not only considered a means of evaluation but also a learning tool (Watering, Gijbels, Dochy, & Rijt, 2008), the current study examines Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment to determine which factors they believe can motivate their learning. In this study, "Chinese international graduate students" is interchanged with "Chinese graduate students" and is considered as students who were born in China, have Chinese citizenship, and have come to Canada in order to pursue their graduate programs.

Research Questions

1. How do Chinese graduate students perceive their classroom assessment?

2. Are there significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency?

3. What factors of classroom assessment do Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning?

Theoretical Framework

   Self-determination Theory. Dornyei (2001) suggests that multiple theories outline a link between assessment and learning motivation. These theories address engagement in tasks,

integration of expectancy and value constructs, or a combination of motivation and cognition (Cheng & Fox, 2017). For the current study, self-determination theory (SDT), introduced by Ryan and Deci (2000), is the most suitable. SDT starts from self-determination forms of intrinsic motivation, moves to controlled forms of extrinsic motivation, and concludes with amotivation based on degrees of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic motivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is motivation that makes learners feel involved because a particular learning activity is inherently engaging. If assessment practices make learning engaging to the students, the assessment will seem more authentic; consequently, learners will experience intrinsic motivation (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

Extrinsic motivation. In contrast, Ryan and Deci (2000) define extrinsic motivation as necessary motivation. A learner may have a goal that requires the completion of supporting exercises. Though these exercises may not be inherently interesting to the learner, the learner is still motivated to complete them because they are required for a goal that the learner is motivated to achieve. There are two categories of extrinsic motivation: self-determined and non-self-determined (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Self-determined extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) define self-determined extrinsic motivation as motivation where an individual completes a task or exercise voluntarily because it is important. The motivation to participate is to achieve another goal, and so it is extrinsic since the activity is not inherently engaging. Moreover, because the individual is motivated by a goal he/she has established on their own this kind of motivation is also self-determined. If an assessment encourages learners to perceive the learning as vital to self-improvement, this may foster self-determined extrinsic motivation (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

Non-self-determined extrinsic motivation. In contrast, Ryan and Deci (2000) define non-self-

determined extrinsic motivation as motivation that occurs when external factors regulate

learners. These factors may take the form of rewards and/or punishment. This is extrinsic

because the individuals' participation is dependent on factors outside of the activity. As a result,

since individuals are obligated to participate due to external rewards and/or constraints, and/or

punishments, it is not self-determined (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Thus, assessments that make

learners feel as though their learning is predicated on external rewards rely on non-self-

determined extrinsic motivation (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

   Amotivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) state that amotivation occurs in instances where there is

an absence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When learners lack the intent to act, it may be

due to the fact that they have autonomy with respect to their actions or that the

exercise/assessment lacks meaning or value (Cheng & Fox, 2017). If an assessment does not

intrinsically or extrinsically motivate learners, then the activity becomes useless.

SDT is suitable for the current study because it helps to explain the complexity of individual

perceptions of assessment, motivation and learning.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to examine how Chinese graduate students perceive classroom assessment, it is important to establish some of the fundamental elements that characterize this issue. Firstly, it is critical to define assessment itself, as well as the different formats of assessment, particularly formative and summative assessment. It is then necessary to outline the importance of students' perceptions of classroom assessment. Finally, an in-depth investigation requires an understanding of the factors of classroom assessment that can motivate students' learning, and assessment and learning in China.

Assessment

Teachers can use assessment tools to gather accurate information about students' learning, understanding, and skills (Cheng & Fox, 2017). By locating students' positions in their learning process, teachers can arrange and adjust their instruction to support and enhance students' learning. Students can use assessments to find their strengths and weaknesses and to support their learning progression.

Definitions of assessment. Black and William (1998) broadly define assessment as processes that either teachers or students employ to evaluate the learning process and that in turn provides insights that can inform the pedagogical approaches employed in class (as cited in Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 1). This is consistent with Hill and McNamara's (2012) definition of "classroom-based assessment", also known as "classroom assessment", which is framed as instances where teachers and/or learners reflect on learners' work for "teaching, learning (feedback), reporting, management, or socialization purposes" (p. 396).

Cheng and Fox (2017) think that assessment may be conducted by both teachers and students and can come in three forms: teacher-student, or teacher-assessment; student-student, or peer-assessment; and student-self, or self-assessment. However, it is important to note that peer-assessment may lead to competition rather than personal improvement (Black & William, 1998).

This definition is narrowed by Allen (2004), Linn and Miller (2005), Dhindsa at al. (2007), and Lambert and Lines (2013), who regard assessment as a systematic process of data collecting about students' progress. Allen (2004) and Lambert and Lines (2013) underscore the systematic elements of this process by noting that empirical data should be recorded and then interpreted to measure knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve student learning by refining pedagogical approaches.

When considering these classifications of assessment, it is reasonable to define assessment as a systematic process of gathering information relating to student achievement and interpreting assessment results and students' responses, and then using the findings to adjust teacher instruction with the aim of enhancing students' learning. Although there are some differences between evaluation and assessment, which evaluation decides whether a standard is met while assessment offers feedback about how performance can be enhanced, in this study, the two terms are just synonyms in literal meaning to exchange and explain with each other (Baehr, 2005).

Different formats of assessment. Cheng and Fox (2017) and Herrera et al. (2007) outline a number of assessment tools and test formats that are often applied in classrooms, including essay assignment, multiple-choice tests, portfolios, peer- and self-assessment, and e-assessment.

Essay assignment. As a common method of assessment, essays encourage students to develop their ability to make clear arguments and display original thinking by responding to a clear question (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Multiple-choice. Multiple choice questions include two components: a 'stem', which can take the form of a question, a phrase, or a sentence; and several answers or 'distractors', one of which is designed to be an ideal response to the stem. Multiple-choice tests allow students to display their knowledge by selecting the correct answer from among the distractors (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

Portfolios. Compared with the traditional synoptic assessment, like final exams or standardized tests, portfolios are a combined collection of students' work that reveals their efforts, growth, and accomplishment in one or more areas (Carr & Harris, 2001; Herrera et al., 2007; Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991). Wiggins and McTighe (2007) compare portfolios to photo albums that contain a chronology of various photos from different contexts that display students' progress. Biggs and Tang (2011) note that portfolios can be problematic as some students may be too enthusiastic and consequently generate an unnecessary workload both for themselves and for the teachers; thus, limits need to be established, such as the number of items and estimated size of each item (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Self-Assessment. Self-assessment is generally defined as judgments made by students concerning their achievements and that are often framed in categories designed by the teacher (Baird & Northfield, 1992). When students assess themselves, they can know where they are trying to go, where they are, and how they can close the gap (Atkin, Black, & Coffey, as cited in Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002, p. 43).

Peer assessment. Peer assessment encourages students to evaluate their peers' academic level and outcomes, which can also include learning and/or social behavior (Topping, 2013). Peer assessment not only provides students with feedback on their work, but also requires them

to make comments regarding their peers' work; thus, the feedback is two-way (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002).

E-assessment. Computer-assisted assessment (CAA) evaluates declarative knowledge efficiently with an objective format. Teachers can design a databank of questions and post them on an education technology website where students can respond to questions or take tests. Students' responses can be easily recorded, and students can receive correct answers, some diagnoses of their performance, and learning suggestions in real time (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Formative assessment and summative assessment. There are other ways to categorize assessment, such as formative assessment and summative assessment, terminology proposed by Scriven (1967) and Bloom (1969) to distinguish the two different roles and types of assessment (William & Thompson, 2008).

Formative assessment. Several studies on formative assessment define it as a constant process of appraising students' learning, supplying feedback to regulate instruction and learning, and enhancing the curriculum and students' achievement (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Black & William, 2009; Cheng & Fox, 2017; Cizek, 2010; William &Thompson, 2008).

Biggs and Tang (2011) emphasize the significance of feedback to teaching and learning, which Bloom (1968) states is the essential difference between formative and summative assessment. Feedback derives from simple flow charts applied to show production processes, which is utilized as an approach of organizing performance and production to keep systems on track (Butt, 2010).

Within the educational fields, feedback can support the formation of future learning, performance, and outcomes by using present and previous assessment information. Traditionally, feedback is a one-way process: teachers to students. However, it should be a collaborative, two-

way, even multi-way process offered by teachers, peers, and students themselves (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Furthermore, Hattie (2009) argues that the essence of feedback is not simply providing brief information to students about their performance, as is the case with short and evaluative comments on assignments; teachers must also find where students are and where students should be, then help them to narrow the gap between them (Biggs & Tang, 2011). By using a singularly impressive meta-analysis, Hattie and Timperley (2007) conclude that although feedback is normally effective, it is not consistently so. This means that for the sake of effectiveness, feedback has to encourage students' engagement to the learning task. It is evident that feedback, regardless of its direct/indirect or limited/extensive nature, or whether it is positive or negative (Cheng & Fox, 2017), must place the focus on students' understanding.

Stiggins (2005) outlines five characteristics of high quality formative assessment that effectively summarize the literature on the subject:

1. Accuracy. Feedback should be accurate in terms of it being a correct assessment of the learner's current state.

2. Relevance. Feedback should be focused on the aspects of learning that need attention from the learner.

3. Timeliness. Feedback should be received in a timely fashion in order for the learner to be able to properly relate it to his or her learning.

4. Mediation. Frequently, learners need expert assistance in interpreting feedback and determining how to act upon it.

5. Context. Formative assessment functions best in a setting that is supportive in nature and encourages learning from mistakes. Within school classrooms, this is often referred to as the classroom-assessment climate. (p. 18)

Summative assessment. Summative assessment is utilized to "evaluate student learning, skill acquisition and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period – typically at the end of a project, a unit, course, semester, program, or school year" (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 5). Compared with formative assessment, commonly applied to give feedback to students and teachers, summative assessment is normally a high-stakes and final assessment of how much learning students have acquired (Gardner, 2010). Thus, summative assessment is often graded or scored, normally less recurrent, is included in a student's stable and lasting academic record, and includes final exams, final performances, and term papers (Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

Formative vs. summative assessment. It is important to note the differences between formative and summative. Formative assessment is supplied during learning, while summative assessment is given after learning, which means the former is employed to monitor and improve students' learning while the latter is used to measure and evaluate students' achievements. Consequently, Stiggins (2002) suggests that formative assessment can motivate students more successfully than summative assessment.

Furthermore, Cheng and Fox (2017) argue that a mark should not be related with formative assessment, but that to incentivize the process, teachers may consider awarding marks for participation in or completion of a stage of a process of activity. However, this practice may be problematic when applied, as the aims of formative and summative assessment are not the same (Cheng & Fox, 2017). According to the self-determination theory, though, awarding bonus marks to students can be seen as non-self-determined extrinsic motivation, which is an external factor that controls an individual's behaviors, as is commonly associated with positive and negative reinforcement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, if this practice leads to increased student

motivation and involves assessment activities and their learning, a change in the nature of assessment should not matter.

Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment

Teachers and administrators overwhelmingly determine what forms and tasks of classroom assessment are applied in schools; however, students' experiences with the process are central to determining the effectiveness of a pedagogical approach and how to improve it. Thus, educators must recognize students' perceptions of assessment for constructing an involved and high quality learning environment that can develop excellence and equity (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hayward, 2012). Students should also understand the whole assessment process and the meanings for themselves as learners in order to ensure effective learning (Fisher, Waldrip, & Dorman, 2005; Schaffner, Burry-Stock, Cho, Boney, & Hamilton, 2000). Hence, it is worthwhile to recognize and examine students' perceptions of classroom assessment.

Perceptions of assessment tasks inventory (PATI). Dorman and Knightley (2006) note that in schools, students normally acknowledge how they are assessed. However, they also observe that students often want to understand why a given assessment task is important, if they are fair, if they are reflective of what they have been learning, and if they have real world applications. In spite of these questions, limited studies have tried to analytically discover students' perceptions of assessment tasks. Therefore, Dorman and Knightley (2006) built and validated an instrument to assess students' perceptions of assessment tasks, which is named Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory (PATI).

Fraser (1986) and Hase and Goldberg (1967) found four methods to develop instruments: intuitive rational, intuitive theoretical, factor analytic and empirical group discriminative (as cited in Dorman & Knightley, 2006, p. 50). Dorman and Knightley (2006) chose an intuitive

rational means to design their instrument and test its validity, which needed to perform three

tasks: identify salient dimensions, write sets of test items, and field test the questionnaire. In the

final form, PATI involved 35 items with regard to five dimensions, which are: congruence with

planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity (Figure 1), and

had been tested with a sample of 658 science students from 11 English secondary schools in

Essex, England. As shown in Figure 2, the two researchers reported scale statistics for the final

form of PATI.

Scale	Scale description	Sample item
Congruence with planned learning	The extent to which assessment tasks align with the goals, objectives and activities of the learning programme	My science tests are a fair indicator of what my class is trying to learn
Authenticity	The extent to which assessment tasks feature real-life situations that are relevant to the learner	I am asked to apply my learning to real-life situations
Student consultation	The extent to which students are consulted and informed about the forms of assessment tasks being employed	I am asked about the types of assessment I would like to have in science
Transparency	The extent to which the purposes and forms of assessment tasks are well-defined and clear to the learner	I know what is needed to successfully accomplish a science assessment task
Diversity	The extent to which all students have an equal chance at completing assessment tasks	I complete assessment tasks at my own speed

Figure 1. Descriptive Information for Five PATI Scales (Dorman & Knightley, 2006, p. 52)

Scale	Cronbach α (r)	Mean correlation	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Congruence with planned learning	0.73	0.39	22.15	2.67	−0.30*	1.94*
Authenticity	0.75	0.45	21.16	2.92	−0.41*	1.17*
Student consultation	0.74	0.47	21.25	3.12	−0.28*	1.05*
Transparency	0.85	0.46	22.90	3.39	−0.57*	1.07
Diversity	0.63	0.31	19.63	3.24	−0.05	0.71*

*$p < 0.05$.

Figure 2. Scale Statistics for Final Form of PATI (Dorman & Knightley, 2006, p. 54)

Although Dorman and Knightley (2006) examined students' perceptions of assessment tasks in science classrooms, PATI is suitable for any curriculum area, and they expect that validation work could be done in other curriculum areas, year levels, and even other countries in the future. Consequently, the current study will conduct PATI within a group of Chinese graduate students at a university in southern Ontario.

Gender, subject area, and grade level differences on perceptions of classroom assessment tasks. As demonstrated in Table 1, PATI considers gender differences among student perceptions of classroom assessment tasks. Though Dhindsa et al. (2007) suggest that there are no gender differences, their findings are not consistent with the findings of other researchers. For example, Alkharusi (2011) and Alkharusi et al. (2014) argue that female students had a tendency to have more positive perceptions of the assessment tasks than male students, and Gao (2012) found statistically significant gender differences with respect to authenticity and transparency: female students indicated a stronger preference for both. Although

Author(s)	Date	Differences on Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessments Tasks		
		Gender	Subject Area	Grade Level
Alkharusi	2011	•		
Alkharusi	2013	•		
Alkharusi et al.	2014	•		
Alkharusi & Al-Hosni	2015	•	•	•
Cheng et al.	2015		•	
Dhindsa et al.	2007	•		•
Gao	2012	•		

Anderman and Midgely (1997) and Meece et al. (2003) did not use PATI, the conclusions of their research were consistent with Alkharusi (2011, 2014).

Table 1. Research Studies Using PATI

Alkharusi et al. (2014) suggest that the reason to study gender differences in student perceptions of classroom assessments tasks was that Omani students were separated by gender in basic education grade levels and female teachers only taught female students, which was the same with male students and teachers. This situation was not found in other research contexts mentioned above, but those researchers also chose to investigate gender differences because no consistency was identified. Thus, the current study must test gender differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment tasks.

As for subject area, secondary science students from four districts in Brunei were found to have weak positive perceptions of the classroom assessment tasks and had statistically significant grade-level differences; conversely, upper grades placed a higher priority on planned learning and transparency (Dhindsa et al., 2007). However, in China, Cheng et al. (2015) found that with respect to consultation and transparency, there were significant differences among undergraduate students from three universities between four different majors: the humanities/social sciences, engineering, business, and the sciences. The significant differences were greater in the humanities/social sciences, engineering, and business than in the sciences. With respect to classroom assessments in mathematics, Gao (2012) found that high school students from northeast Arkansas in America held a strong congruence with instruction, adequate transparency, inadequate authenticity, little student consultation, and diversity. It may be unfair to compare different subject areas in different social contexts, but limited research studies can be found, so these trends suggest that there are no subject areas showing consistency with respect to students' perceptions of classroom assessment tasks.

Concerning an interplay of gender, subject area, and grade level, Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015) found that

There were statistically significant 3-way interaction effects for gender, subject area, and grade level on congruence with planned learning and transparency. Also, there were statistically significant 2-way interaction effects for gender and grade level on authenticity and student consultation. Further, there were statistically significant 2-way interaction effects for gender and subject area on student consultation and diversity. These results lead to a conclusion that students differ in their perceptions of the assessment tasks due to the nature of the classroom assessment activities driven by the subject area and grade levels. (p. 215)

In general, by using PATI, previous research studies had not established consistent conclusions with respect to gender, subject area, and grade level differences on students' perceptions of classroom assessment tasks. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to test them further.

Students' perceptions of classroom assessment. Because assessments aim to help students, it is important to consider students' perceptions regarding assessment. Thus, it is essential to review some past studies on student perception of classroom assessment based on five dimensions: congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency and diversity, and another aspect of study in educational assessment, which is students' perceptions of specific assessments.

Five dimensions: Congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency and diversity. Although researchers have used PATI to examine students' perceptions of classroom assessment, their results are not consistent with each other, especially in terms of authenticity, student consultation, and diversity.

Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015) surveyed 2753 Omani students from grade 10 and 11 whose subjects were Arabic language, English language, Islamic education, mathematics, science, and social studies. Of the students they examined, 80% believed their classroom assessments were authentic. However, Gao (2012) found that most students did not believe their classroom assessments in math were related with real-life situations, through researching 248 high school students around northeast Arkansas in the USA. These contrasting results could be due to a significant gap in sample sizes, different subject areas, and distinct social contexts. These results also may be due to a gap between teachers' perceptions of authenticity and that of students', which means that teachers believe assessment tasks are authentic, but students may not because authenticity relies on personal experience to some degree (Gulikers et al., 2008). As a result, when teachers design assessment tasks and decide assessment processes, they should acknowledge the real-life situations on which their students focus.

The second contentious dimension is student consultation. Almost 50% of students believe that they were consulted with respect to assessment tasks (Alkharusi & Al-Hosni, 2015). However, Dhindsa et al. (2007) used mixed methods to study 1028 upper secondary students' perceptions of science classroom assessments, and these students were from all four districts of Brunei. Using quantitative data, they found that students could not frequently consult their teachers about their assessments, which was also confirmed by interviews and observations. Dhindsa et al. (2007) noted that teachers referred to giving information about the schedules and types of assessments as student consultation; however, students did not think that was enough and that they needed more details about assessments. The gap caused students to believe that they were not consulted with respect to assessment tasks. Likewise, Gao (2012) found that students showed that they did not have or only had little opportunity to be involved in assessment

planning procedures. Carless (2006) emphasized the significance of involving a dialogue with students about assessment processes, demonstrating how understandings about valued learning outcomes and mutual trust during the educational process can be established. If not, assessment integrity and the quality of the student learning experience can be damaged (Carless, 2009).

Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015), Dhindsa et al. (2007), and Gao (2012) found similar results regarding diversity, though in Dhindsa et al.'s (2007) study, the quantitative data were not supported by interviews and observations. Students thought that classroom assessments provided by teachers only considered their diversity some of the time; however, based on teachers' interviews and observation data, teachers believed that they took students' diversity into account. Thus, it is important to give teachers some strategies about how to design assessments in order to cater to students' diversity.

There was, however, consistency with respect to congruence with planned learning and transparency. Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015), Dhindsa et al. (2007), and Gao (2012) found that students firmly thought that classroom assessments accorded with their planned learning, and "they almost always or often understood what was expected and needed to successfully accomplish assessment tasks" (Gao, 2012, p. 64). Student academic achievement can be improved by a congruence between instruction and assessment by raising students' attitudes and effectiveness in learning (Koul & Fisher, 2006) because students tend to take more time and energy to engage with their learning activities when they believe class content will appear in their assessment tasks (Brookhart & Bronowicz, 2003; McMillan, 2000).

Students' perceptions of specific assessments. Students' perceptions of specific assessments are another aspect of study in educational assessment. For instance, students recognized that traditional assessments such as multiple choice and essay questions can better assess knowledge

application than knowledge reproduction (Watering et al., 2008). Moreover, it is necessary for teachers to make students acknowledge the aims and cognitive processes of assessment tasks, not just show them assessment examples. In this way, a proper connection between student perceptions of assessments and demands can be established. Similarly, Lindblom-Ylänne and Lonka (2001) found that undergraduate students in advanced medicine hold negative perceptions of traditional assessments, such as written examinations, which negatively influenced their learning approaches. Therefore, teachers should consider students' perceptions of assessments and learning experiences in advance when planning a curriculum. In stark contrast, however, Iannone and Simpson (2013) report that undergraduate students in mathematics hold positive perceptions of traditional assessments and referred to them as the best discriminator of their mathematical ability; consequently, when studying students' perceptions of the assessments, researchers need to consider the essence of different subjects.

With respect to group assessment, students were willing to receive a group grade and had positive perceptions of group work, which opposed earlier research about group assessment (Li & Campbell, 2008; Scotland, 2016). Students also liked group assessment because it can raise their grade, boost innovative ideas, and generate joint responsibility.

Assessment and Learning

The initial and primary goal of assessment in education is to motivate students' learning (Black & William, 2012). Thus, assessments should not only be considered a way to evaluate and award marks in order to decide whether students accomplish objectives, but more importantly, they should be a tool for learning (Watering, Gijbels, Dochy, & Rijt, 2008). As such, it is critical to understand how classroom assessment motivates student learning.

Assessment and learning strategies. Different characteristics of assessment, such as format, feedback and workload, and students' perceptions of classroom assessment can encourage students to employ different learning strategies and instill them with varying degrees of learning motivation.

Assessment format. Marton and Säljö (1976) argue that surface learning is superficial because it primarily relies on remembering and reciting information. In contrast, they suggest that deep learning offers higher rates of retention by focusing on comprehension rather than memorization, which in turn promotes learning. To be more specific, surface learning approaches are rehearsal, whereas deep learning approaches include elaboration, organization, and critical thinking (Biggs, 1979; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & Mckeachie, 1993).

A number of researchers have examined multiple-choice for a long time, which is the most generally used objective test (Biggs, 2003) and many report that students generally prefer multiple-choice formats to essay assessments (Scouller, 1998; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005; Zeidner, 1987). For instance, Scouller (1998) chose a sample of 206 sophomores in Education from Sydney to examine the influence of assessment methods like multiple-choice examinations and essay assignments on students' approaches to learning. When students prepared for a multiple-choice examination, they tended to use surface learning strategies; however, deep learning strategies were employed for essay assignments. Consequently, Scouller (1998) recommends that teachers rely more heavily on essay assignments because they can help students elaborate, organize, and think critically, rather than simply rehearse the lesson content. This is validated by Birenbaum and Feldman (1998), who state that "students with a deep study approach tended to prefer essay type questions, while students with a surface study approach tended to prefer multiple choice formats" (as cited in Watering et al., 2008, p. 647). Thus,

multiple-choice tests reward surface learning while essay assignments encourage students to develop comprehension.

Furthermore, Biggs and Tang (2011) note that multiple-choice questions can encourage students and teachers to use game-playing strategies. For example, students thought "in a four-alternative multiple-choice format, [they should] never choose the facetious or obviously jargon-ridden alternatives" (p. 233). Likewise, when students see anomalous options such as 'Both A and B', or 'All of the above', they may strategically choose these formats rather than considering the content of the answers. Alternately, teachers might choose 'C' as the correct answers several times in a row to encourage students to question their approach, which may cause students to doubt their reasoning. In this way, the test becomes more about 'playing a game' or choosing answers strategically based on their formatting and letter designation rather than engaging with the content. Through formal interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended written surveys, Slater (1996) studied first-year university physics students' perceptions of portfolio assessment in America. Most students liked it, not only because portfolios considerably eased their test anxiety, but also because portfolios encouraged their permanent learning and applied physical science concepts understanding, which can be seen as deep learning. However, students also thought that making a portfolio required much more time to review than the textbook or required readings. Davis et al. (2009) reported that students' perceptions of the portfolio process were not initially positive but tended to become positive with time.

Based on extensive research, Dochy et al. (1999) conclude that students hold positive opinions towards peer- and self-assessment. Engaging students in assessment was considered as being effective, reliable and rational and as encouraging development and ability. Similarly, Wen and Tsai (2006) collected data from 280 university students in Taiwan, and found that students

also had positive perceptions toward peer assessment, but only considered peer E-assessment as a technical tool in assessment practice, rather than as a learning assistance. Male students held more positive perceptions of peer assessment than female students, and students with previous peer-assessment experiences had more positive perceptions of peer-assessment.

Assessment feedback. When using 'frame learning', Gibbs (2006) recommends that teachers' assessment feedback should be of high quality and they should value learning over marks, the relevance of the objective of the assignment, and the intelligibility of the students. Lynam and Cachia (2017) added that feedback needs to be direct and clear for students' learning from assessment. Moreover, in order to improve learning, students should be involved in the assessment process and follow their teachers' feedback to improve their own work (Winstone et al., 2016), which has been defined by Carless (2007) as 'feedforward'. This means that feedback needs to be provided to students for their next work at an appropriate time.

Lipnevich and Smith (2009) examined students' reactions to grades, praise, and feedback given by computer versus instructor, as well as students' opinions of the perfect feedback. The study conducted focus groups that included 49 students from an eastern US university. These students valued feedback as a key aspect of the assessment process and considered detailed comments as the most significant and helpful form of feedback. Praise can positively influence emotion and prevent student demotivation when facing low grades, but it cannot truly help to improve students' learning (Lipnevich & Smith, 2009).

Assessment workload. Decreasing student workload was an efficient and successful way both to raise student satisfaction and boost a deeper approach to learning (Drew, 2001; Gibbs, 1992; Naude et al., 2016). Drew (2001) found that a heavy workload tended to influence the depth at which students studied. For example, some students believed that the workload of some

courses should be reduced so that the work does not overwhelm them. Gibbs (1992) also found that a high workload was associated with a surface approach to learning, as were a lack of choice within assessments and student anxiety. Thus, it is important for teachers to consider how students perceive their assessment workload (Kember & Leung,1998).

Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment. Struyven et al. (2005) offer a comprehensive review of students' perceptions about assessment, which significantly contributed to the understanding of the factors that influence assessment in post-secondary education. The study found a reciprocal relationship between students' perceptions about assessment and their approaches to learning. This was supported by Segers, Nijhuis, and Gijselaers (2006), who aimed to find the relationship between students' intentions to use a particular learning strategy, perceptions of assessment demands, and actual use of the learning strategy. The study compared two groups of second-year students who enrolled in an International Business Strategy course: one group consisting of 406 students who used an assignment-based format, and one consisting of 312 students who used a problem-based format. After comparing them, Segers et al. (2006) found that under both assessment conditions, students who adopted surface-learning strategies considered the assessment demands to be superficial and actually adopted surface-learning strategies.

Likewise, Ullah, Richardson, and Hafeez (2011) investigated the relationship between students' perceptions of assessment and learning strategies. They surveyed more than 900 students at two universities and discovered that students who had positive perceptions of the assessment tasks would employ deep learning strategies, whereas students who had negative perceptions of the assessment tasks would employ surface learning strategies.

As for the five dimensions of students' perceptions of classroom assessment, Alkharusi (2013) tested 198 Omani tenth grade students who enrolled in English language classes at Muscat public schools to form canonical correlational models that demonstrate the essence of the relationships between students' perceptions of the assessment tasks and their motivational orientations and learning strategies. High degrees of authenticity, transparency, and diversity in the assessment tasks were related with a strong dependence on deep learning strategies, such as elaboration and organization. Moreover, a high degree of congruence with planned learning and a low degree of authenticity in the assessment tasks were related with more dependence on surface learning strategies, such as rehearsal, and less dependence on deep learning strategies, such as elaboration. McMillan and Workman (1998) argue that authentic tasks emphasized understanding and applied learning to real-world problems rather than the recall of factual knowledge. Thus, they conclude that these tasks need deep disposing strategies.

Gulikers, Bastiaens, Kirschner, and Kester (2006) likewise studied the relationship between perceptions of assessment authenticity and alignment on students' approaches to learning and learning outcomes through using mixed methods to collect data. 118 senior students at a vocational education and training institute in the Netherlands reported that they were more likely to adopt deep learning strategies when they considered the assessment task to be authentic and aligned to classroom instruction. The study found no connections between perceptions of assessment authenticity and alignment on surface learning.

Assessment and motivation to learn. Harlen (2012) argues that motivation is a vital pre-condition to learning, and Stiggins (2001) suggests that motivation can be seen as an input into education and the 'engine' that prompts teaching and learning. However, it can also be seen as an

essential output of education. Hence, it is necessary to examine what aspects of teaching and learning practice act to support or undermine the motivation to learn.

Stiggins (2001) asserts that assessments are the most effective means through which teachers can promote or discourage students' desires to learn more rapidly and more constantly. According to Ames (1992), four specific classroom assessment practices were best able to increase student motivation to learn: developing a sense of efficacy, referring to the task as being significant and meaningful, decreasing test anxiety, and underlining deep meaning and understanding rather than surface meaning and rote memorization (as cited in Alkharusi, 2013, p. 22). She suggests that teachers design assessment tasks that include challenge, diversity, innovation, and active involvement, provide students with opportunities to make options and decisions regarding their learning, and allow for time to change assessment tasks to conform with the nature of the task and student needs.

Furthermore, using a path analysis technique to research a model to clarify the effect of students' perceptions of the assessment environment on their motivational orientations, Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, and Akey (2004) discovered that students who thought the assessment tasks were meaningful and motivating had mastery motivational orientations.

To conclude, assessment can influence student learning strategies and motivation to learn. McMillan and Workman (1998) explain how particular assessment practices increase or decrease student motivational orientations and learning strategies. To improve student learning approaches and motivation, they suggest that teachers engage in five key assessment practices: They should clarify how learning will be evaluated, give specific feedback following an assessment activity, employ moderately difficult assessments, utilize many assessments rather than a few major tests, and use authentic assessment tasks.

Assessment and Learning in China

Western education is known as student-centered and quality-oriented, while Chinese education has long been considered teacher-centered, content-based and exam-oriented (Wang & Kreysa, 2006). This has led to significant differences between the West and China in terms of assessment and learning.

Assessment at Chinese universities. From the Han Dynasty, circa 206-220 BCE, until the late 19th century, China employed imperial examinations, the purpose of which was to select government officials (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Carless, 2011; Kennedy, 2007). No matter who they were, those who scored highest earned wealth and prestige throughout their lifetimes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The current assessment culture in China is still heavily influenced by this imperial examination, so examinations are the primary mode of assessment in the Chinese education systems (Kennedy, 2007).

Competitiveness and diligence, particularly in the form of memorization, are underlined in students' approaches to learning (Stevenson & Lee, 1996). Consequently, students involve themselves in competition and push themselves for selection, and it is common for Chinese parents to desire their children's academic success and social advance through examinations (Zhou, 2016).

Sociocultural values influence student perceptions and behaviors associated with assessment (Zhou, 2016). For example, the harmony-maintaining and face-saving strategies adopted by Chinese students impact their behaviors in peer-assessment (Bond, 1996; Hofstede, 1991). Carson and Nelson (1996) conducted a micro-ethnographic study on Chinese students' interaction styles and reactions in peer response groups at a university in America. They reported that Chinese students were quite unwilling to criticize their peers' drafts or disagree with peers'

comments, which resulted in silence during peer-assessment activities. If Chinese students had to express themselves in peer interactive activities, they often employed strategies like indirection and underspecifying to ease criticism of their peers. With a mixed-method approach, Liu and Carless (2006) also studied the rationale for peer feedback among 1740 university students and 460 academics in Hong Kong. Their results suggest that few students used peer-assessment and generally objected to its use, and they thought only teachers had sufficient knowledge, experience, and expertise to assess students.

Zhou's (2016) personal experience suggests that the university where she worked gave limited autonomy to teachers as it required students' final grades to be decided by classroom performance, midterm exams, and final exam scores. This experience was confirmed by the findings of Chen, Kettle, Klenowski and May (2013). After examining assessment policy enactment at two universities in China, they found that the top-down nature of the policy directly limited the utilization of formative assessment and that formative assessment often took the form of continuous summative assessment.

Teachers themselves also resisted the utilization of formative assessment to some extent. For instance, Chen and Goh (2011) investigated teaching and assessing oral English at 44 universities in 22 cities through China and found that English teachers in Chinese colleges did not know how to form, design and employ effective and valid assessment tasks. Furthermore, Xu and Warschauer's study (2004) examined English teaching innovation in a Chinese university and report that 85% of English class time included activities like 'extensive reading', 'social investigation', 'academic writing' and 'oral presentation', and the evaluation of student performance was through portfolios (80%), personal evaluation (10%) and group evaluation (10%). The study reports that while the innovations brought improvement in student learning

processes and outcomes, few teachers wanted to instruct these courses. It meant an excessive assessment workload. Moreover, because they were accustomed to the teacher-centered approach employed in China, they were unaccustomed to navigating a classroom that relied on student-centered learning styles (Xu & Warschauer, 2004).

Characteristics of Chinese students' learning. Coming from a different cultural environment and educational system, Chinese students are commonly labeled as surface, quiet, and passive learners by Western teachers (Pratt & Wong, 1999; Samuelowicz, 1987).

Traditionally, education in China has primarily relied on examination; consequently, learning depended largely on preparing for exams and memorization. This has led students to become surface learners, meaning students focus on developing the ability to repeat information without understanding the meaning or making connections between the previous and new knowledge (Kennedy, 2002). This is consistent with Ballard and Clanchy (1991), who report Chinese students were often silent, uncomplaining, and diligent. As a result of these common characteristics, Chinese students were often considered passive-obedient-learners who would never ask questions during lectures.

However, these views are stereotypes of Chinese approaches to learning. Though memorization is required and is viewed as a deep approach (Ho et al., 1999), learning through memorization and through understanding can be intertwined with and related to each other (Sit, 2013). Chinese students may employ strategies that appear to be surface oriented but actually have a deep orientation (Biggs, 1987), which helps them succeed academically, particularly in mathematics and science (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005). Furthermore, Chinese educational philosophy and learning traditions had been deeply influenced by Confucianism (Bush & Qiang, 2000), which emphasized modesty, diligence, hierarchical order, and respect to authorities.

Hence, Chinese classroom activities have normally been controlled by teachers, featured limited questions or discussions, and saw students treat teachers as professionals while unquestioningly accepting the knowledge conveyed by teachers (Chan, 1999). In order to keep order and harmony, students were typically allowed to speak up when being called upon; however, most of them asked questions privately after class rather than during class (Sit, 2013).

As a result, when Chinese students study in Canada and engage with the different pedagogical elements of Western education, their learning can be impacted by their perceptions of classroom assessment. Thus, in order to improve their learning outcomes, it is crucial to examine classroom assessment and their perceptions of it.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

Creswell (2007) argues that a mixed method design is ideal for merging the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to interpret and answer research questions. He likewise states that it is also ideal for summarizing the findings and developing comprehensive visions as to the meaning of a phenomenon or the conception of individuals.

A mixed-method design is ideal for the current study for several reasons. For example, it effectively merges the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Likewise, it is ideal for interpreting and answering research questions, and it allows researchers to summarize the findings and develop comprehensive visions as to the meaning of a phenomenon or the conception for individuals (Creswell, 2007). To understand Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment, quantitative data is needed. However, this data also needs to be contextualized and explained, elements that a qualitative approach can provide. Moreover, qualitative data "can augment and explain complex or contradictory survey responses" (Driscoll et al., 2007, p. 24). Therefore, for my study, an online survey was the method of data collection for the quantitative data set while semi-structured interviews were used for the qualitative data set.

Participants Recruitment

A purposive sample is a group of people specially selected as participants who have a particular characteristic that makes them appropriate for the study (Creswell, 2012; Nardi, 2014). Due to the unique features of analysis, the proposed study recruited Chinese graduate students at a university in southern Ontario.

After the researcher received the approval from the university's Research Ethics Board (REB), participants were recruited with the help of the International Student Center (ISC) via email. The contact information of those who received the email would be never collected, nor would the identities of recipients who responded. The recruitment email involved a letter of information, a link to participate in the survey, information about volunteer participation in semi-structured interviews, and researcher contact information.

According to the information provided by the ISC, the number of Chinese graduate students at the university in the Winter term 2018 was about 500. A research conducted by Kraut et al. in 2004 notes that online surveys may lead to lower response rates than paper surveys, which is around 10-15%. For quantitative data set (online survey), the total number needed was around 75 and the minimum needed for the research to succeed was 50. For qualitative data set (interview), the total number needed was 10 and the minimum needed for the research to succeed was 5, because the number of the faculties that Chinese graduate students were mainly studying in were 5, including Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Odette School of Business, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, and Faculty of Science. When I chose interview participants, I needed to focus on that my interview participants were from different faculties and their gender balances. After the ISC sent the initial recruitment email, there were 59 online survey participants and 9 interview participants, which only exceeded the minimum number need for this research. Thus, a reminder email was sent out two weeks after the initial recruitment email in order to increase the both data set. Finally, three more online participants and 1 more interview participants took part in my research.

Data Collection

Data collection for the study was comprised of two parts: an online survey for the collection of quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews for the collection of qualitative data.

Quantitative data. An online survey was conducted to collect quantitative data about Chinese graduate students' perceptions of their classroom assessment. The researcher formed and hosted the survey by using Qualtrics, an online survey platform provided by the university. The online survey was in English and consisted of four sections. Section 1 was the welcome and information section of this research. Section 2 was based on Dorman and Knightley's (2006) PATI, which had 35 items. PATI had five scales: congruence with planned learning, which spoke to the extent to which assessment tasks aligned with the goals, objectives, and activities of the learning program (items 1–7); authenticity, which referred to the extent to which assessment tasks featured real-life situations (items 8–14); student consultation, or the extent to which students were consulted and informed about the forms of assessment tasks being employed (items 15–21); transparency, or the extent to which the purposes and forms of assessment tasks were defined and made clear to the learner (items 22–28); and diversity, which spoke to the extent to which all students had an equal chance at completing assessment tasks (items 29–35). These items employed a five-point Likert scale response: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. Pilot tests had been conducted with a small group of Chinese graduate students (n=4) whose characteristics were similar to the survey participants. As a consequence, the 35 items were revised to improve clarity and idiomatic expressions to Chinese participants. Section 3 consisted of five demographical questions that collected information on the participants' gender, age, year in the program, program, and perceived level of English proficiency. Providing demographic questions at the end of the survey experience made the task easier for the survey respondents; therefore, demographic data were collected at

the end of the survey (Nardi, 2014). Section 4 provided expressed appreciation to the participants for their completion of research participation.

There were many advantages to using an online survey, including accessibility and convenience. The survey required an internet connection, but all participants could connect to a secure wireless network provided by the university as long as they were on campus. It was also convenient for participants to finish the online survey through mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, when they used internet connections offered by telecommunications companies. Although online surveys might lead to lower response rates than paper surveys (Kraut et al., 2004), some of the target participants belonged to a demographic that was increasingly dependent on digital technologies with respect to communicating and learning (Prensky, 2001). There was a clickable hyperlink in the recruitment email that made the process to complete the survey simpler and more convenient.

Qualitative data. A semi-structured interview was conducted to collect qualitative data in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the findings of the survey. As Schensual, Schensual, and LeCompte (1999) note, "Semi- structured interviews combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data at the factor level" (p. 149). Due to the limited research on how Chinese graduate students perceive their classroom assessment at Canadian universities, the current study was considered and designed to be an open-ended and explanatory investigation. Because of its essence, a qualitative study was necessary to explore Chinese graduate students' in-depth opinions, struggles, and helpful suggestions about their classroom assessment. It was also beneficial for the researcher to collect in-depth data by asking

questions and listening to participants' opinions in their own language and about their own positions, which allowed for more authentic responses (Patton, 2002).

After receiving the recruitment email, ten participants who contacted the researcher and wanted to voluntarily participate in the interview were selected. When selecting the participants, the researcher ensured that interview participants were from different faculties and the study had a balanced representation of gender. The interviews were held individually at a time suited to participants' schedules and needs. Each interview was approximately one hour. Interview locations were chosen based on convenience, comfort, and privacy. Each of the participants was a graduate student and met the admission requirement established by the university. The international graduate students were considered to possess high levels of English proficiency, so interview participants had enough English proficiency to be interviewed in English. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-taped for transcription.

All questions were open-ended and concerned the research topic. According to Berg (2007), open-ended interviews enable researchers to direct the flow of the conversation to some degree but also encourage participants to freely understand the questions and express their general views or perspectives in details. Relying on the responses from each participant, the researcher followed up with probing questions. Participants were allowed to decline to answer any question that they were unwilling to answer or that made them feel uncomfortable or unpleasant.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012) stresses that the researcher should collect and analyze the qualitative and quantitative sets of data separately in order to maximize both approaches. In addition, both sets of data should be seen as equally important (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In this study, the researcher followed this central and fundamental guide as both sets of data were significant.

Quantitative data analysis. The data collected from the PATI were arranged through the export tools provided within the Qualtrics platform. The researcher transferred the data from Qualtrics in a SPSS file, which was used for statistical calculations.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA and t-tests. In order to answer the first research question, descriptive statistics relating to means, standard deviations, and percentages were computed to examine students' perceptions of classroom assessment. In addition, one-way ANOVA and t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in their perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived English proficiency.

Qualitative data analysis. Heieh and Shannon (2005) note that "existing theory or prior research exists about [the] phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description" (p. 1218). Therefore, a conventional content analysis approach was employed in the current study.

The analysis process involved selecting key ideas, summarizing the field notes, recognizing and sorting codes into themes, counting the frequency of the codes, relating categories to analytic frameworks in current literature, generating a point of view, and presenting the data.

The analysis began with repeated reading of the text data. After reading the data, a deeper understanding was developed about the information given by participants, as per the outline prescribed by Creswell (2008). The researcher then created codes by reading the text accompanied by the researcher's notes and recording impressions and thoughts. By using the semi-structure open-ended questions and the transcripts, the data analysis was developed and improved several times in order to make sure all the information was coded appropriately. At the first level of coding, the researcher used open coding to divide the data into the first level

concepts, headings, subheadings, and second-level categories. The codes then were named and categorized into subcategories according to correlation. In the open coding, the researcher focused on the text to explain and differentiate these concepts and categories. Next, when re-reading the text by utilizing concepts and categories developed in the open coding, the researcher employed an axial coding method, which is "the process of relating categories to their subcategories" (Wicks, 2012, p. 154). This had been done to confirm the accuracy of the findings and discover how these were related. Categories then were merged into a smaller number of categories to discern similarities and differences and form a hierarchical structure. Lastly, final concepts and categories were transferred into a data table and the report findings were prepared.

Ethical Considerations

The current study employed a method of recruitment and data collection that was designed to secure participants' identities and ensure all data is kept confidential. The study's inclusion criteria were specific enough to ensure participants were ideal for the purpose of the study and that potential participants were not excluded for any other potential reasons. Participants were allowed to decide on their level of participation based on what they each felt comfortable with and were free to exit the study or refuse to answer questions without penalty. Participants were free to complete the questions either in the survey and/or the interview. The inclusion of surveys and interview responses were individually assessed.

Voluntary participation. Participants voluntarily took part in the research. Before collecting quantitative data, participants also voluntarily chose to participate in the study by following the survey link that the recruitment email provided. The online survey was preceded by a consent letter that asked for participants' consent, which they provided by checking a box. Once they did that, they were required to click another button to begin. Qualitative data

collection followed a similar process. Potential participants were forwarded a consent letter, and participants were asked for a signature to confirm that they consented to having an audio recording of their interview being made.

The researcher was not an authority figure to the participants in any way, nor did the researcher have any personal relationships with the participants, so it is unlikely that they were influenced in any way. The participants in this study were not forced to take part in the study, nor were they provided with incentives. The tools used to collect data were non-invasive, and the study's research methods did not have a formal effect on assessment. No grades had been attached; thus, their participation did not have any impact with respect to the participants' academic standing at the institution where the study was taking place.

Risk, anonymity and confidentiality. By conforming to the TCPS 2 guidelines (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014), the current study ensured that confidentiality was ensured for each participant. All data were protected as any confidential information should be. While completing the online survey, those participating were reminded to avoid providing identifying information in order to ensure anonymity. The data were collected via Qualtrics, and all data were deleted when research was completed.

For the qualitative interviews, participants' names were replaced with codes to protect their identities. Thus, if there was any data to be viewed by a person outside of the research, it would not be possible to link any data to a participant. A thorough safeguard plan was put in place to reduce the possibility of this or any information leaks: all digital data were stored in a secure, password-protected folder on the researcher's personal computer, which itself was password-

protected. Once transcription was completed, the researcher deleted all audio data from any

computers or digital recorders used during data collection.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter focuses on the data collected and the analyses of the data in my research study. The data presented in this chapter were collected and analyzed to understand Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university and was divided into two main sections: quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis. The first section of the chapter discusses the quantitative data of the research, which were collected via Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory (PATI), an online survey program. The second section investigates the qualitative data of the research, which contain teacher-related factors and student-related factors that influence Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected in two sections of the online survey, PATI and the demographic questions, which were to answer two of the main research questions:

1. How do Chinese graduate students perceive their classroom assessment?

2. Are there significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency?

The online survey was conducted to collect data from Chinese graduate students who were registered in the winter semester of 2018 at a Canadian university (N=500). The demographic constitution of the participants is shown in Table 2. The sample was made up of 62 participants (n=62) who voluntarily finished the online questionnaire from the link shown in the initial recruitment email and the reminder email. Five programs were represented in the sample: the Masters of Education program (MED), the Masters of Engineering program (MEG), the Masters of Management program (MOM), the Masters of Science program (MSC), and the Masters of

Sociology program (SOCIO). There was one participant who did not report gender and 23

participants who did not show their program of study. Thus, data collection generated a survey

response rate of 12.40%, with a survey completion rate of 61.29% (*n*=62).

Descriptive statistics and demographics.

Table 2. Participant Demographic Overview

Variable	Category	*n*	*M±SD*	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	21	123.71±13.99	33.87
	Female	40	123.51±14.94	98.38
Year	The 1st Year	33	120.95±14.88	53.23
	The 2nd Year	23	124.70±14.58	90.32
	The 3rd Year	1	132.00±0	91.94
	The 4th Year	0	0	91.94
	The 5th Year	0	0	91.94
	Other	5	123.37±14.48	100.00
Age	20-25	34	123.83±17.63	54.84
	26-30	21	125.00±9.84	88.71
	31-35	0	0	88.71
	36-40	5	114.00±4.58	96.77
	41-45	2	122.00±1.41	100.00
	45+	0	0	100.00
Program	MED	17	123.82±11.42	27.42
	MEG	6	126.83±8.01	37.10
	MOM	10	116.10±18.00	53.23
	MSC	5	127.60±19.50	61.29
	SOCIO	1	122.00±0	62.90
English	Low	6	115.67±12.21	9.68
	Medium	43	120.84±14.26	79.03
	High	13	135.32±9.16	100.00

Demographics. According to Table 2, there were 62 participants (*n=62*) who voluntarily

finished the online questionnaire. There was one participant who did not report gender and 23

participants who did not show their program of study, which could be regarded as missing value

and could not be calculated in this research. Therefore, these data were excluded in the data analysis.

Two genders were reported in the study: male (*n*=21, 34.43%) and female (*n*=40, 65.57%). Year of study saw four categories: first-year students (*n*=33, 53.23%), second-year students (*n*=23, 37.09%), third-year student (*n*=1, 1.62%), and other students (*n*=5, 8.06%). The age of participants was recorded in ranges of five years: 34 participants were between 20-25 years old (54.84%), 21 participants were between 26-30 years old (33.87%), 5 participants were between 36-40 years old (8.06%), and 2 participants were between 41-45 years old (3.23%).

Five programs were illustrated in the sample, the Masters of Education program (*n*=17, 43.59%), the Masters of Engineering program (MEG) (*n*=6, 15.38%), the Masters of Management program (MOM) (*n*=10, 25.65%), the Masters of Science program (MSC) (*n*=5, 12.82%), and the Masters of Sociology program (SOCIO) (*n*=1, 2.56%).

The self-perceived language proficiency of the participants fell into one of three categories: low (*n*=6, 9.68%), medium (*n*=43, 69.36%), and high (*n*=13, 20.97%).

Instrument validity and reliability. The researcher tested the PATI for the validity and reliability before making any additional claims about the data. As shown in Table 3, the PATI had good validity and reliability in each scale: Alpha value was .79 for congruence with planned learning, .84 for authenticity, .79 for student consultation, .81 for transparency, and .78 for diversity. It is important to note that good alpha values suggest that the decision to use the PATI for this research was correct.

Table 3. Cronbach α for each Scale of the PATI

Scale	Cronbach α
Congruence with planned learning	0.79
Authenticity	0.84
Student consultation	0.79
Transparency	0.81
Diversity	0.78

Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment. There were five scales in

the PATI designed to collect Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment at

a Canadian university: congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation,

transparency, and diversity (Table 4).

Table 4. Average Scale-item Mean and Standard Deviation, Range, Minimum, Maximum

and Percentiles in PATI Scale Scores

Scale	M±SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum	25%	50%	75%
Congruence with planned learning	3.82±0.51	2.14	2.71	4.86	3.43	3.86	4.14
Authenticity	3.63±0.59	3.57	1.29	4.86	3.39	3.64	4.00
Student consultation	3.26±0.66	2.86	1.71	4.57	2.71	3.29	3.71
Transparency	3.77±0.57	2.86	1.86	4.71	3.43	3.86	4.14
Diversity	3.15±0.75	3.29	1.00	4.29	2.82	3.29	3.71

According to Table 4, the average scale-item mean values were greatest for congruence with

planned learning, authenticity, and transparency; the mean values were lowest for student

consultation and diversity. The average scale-item mean value was higher for congruence with

planned learning, authenticity, and transparency scales. This suggests that, generally, Chinese

graduate students perceived that class assessment at this Canadian university was congruent with

their learning goals and objectives, could reflect real-life situations, and was transparent. In

contrast, the lower values for student consultation and diversity imply that students were not

consulted and informed adequately about the forms of assessment tasks being employed, and teachers were not adequately concerned about students' diversity with regard to issues such as students' different abilities and the time required to finish their assessments. Thus, the overall analysis of students' perception data advises a scope for improvement in student consultation and diversity.

One-way ANOVA and T-tests. In order to examine whether there were significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency, two one-way ANOVA tests were applied in program and English proficiency and two t-tests were conducted in gender and year in the program. Thirty-three first-year students and 23 second-year students completed the quantitative survey; however, only six students from other stages of study completed the survey. This left too small a sample size and too large a gap to develop reliable and comparative data between each year of study. Therefore, the data were divided into two categories: first-year students and non-first-year students. Also, because only one student reported he studied in the Masters of Sociology program, data from that participant would be excluded when the research examined program difference.

According to Table 5 and 6, the t-test results showed that, when considering gender and year in the program among Chinese graduate students, there were no significant differences regarding perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university with respect to congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity (ps>0.05). Also, based on Table 7, the one-way ANOVA results revealed no program of study differences in students' perceptions of assessment, with regard to the five scales (ps>0.05).

Table 5. Gender Difference in Classroom Assessment T-test

Scale	Male (*n*=21)	Female (*n*=40)	*t* (59)	*p*
Congruence with planned learning	3.90±0.58	3.77±0.47	0.97	0.34
Authenticity	3.66±0.71	3.61±0.54	0.30	0.76
Student consultation	3.24±0.64	3.29±0.68	-0.23	0.82
Transparency	3.83±0.57	3.77±0.56	0.41	0.68
Diversity	3.03±0.84	3.21±0.71	-0.85	0.40

Table 6. Year in the Program Difference in Classroom Assessment T-test

Scale	First Year(*n*=33)	Non-First Year(*n*=29)	*t* (60)	*p*
Congruence with planned learning	3.81±0.45	3.82±0.58	-0.03	0.98
Authenticity	3.60±0.69	3.67±0.47	-0.42	0.68
Student consultation	3.13±0.63	3.40±0.68	-1.62	0.11
Transparency	3.66±0.61	3.90±0.50	-1.71	0.09
Diversity	3.07±0.78	3.23±0.72	-0.84	0.40

Table 7. Program of Study Difference in Classroom Assessment One-way ANOVA

Scale	MED (*n*=17)	MEG (*n*=6)	MOM (*n*=10)	MSC (*n*=5)	*F* (3, 34)	*p*
Congruence with planned learning	3.81±0.49	4.14±0.51	3.60±0.64	4.29±0.67	2.25	0.10
Authenticity	3.70±0.39	3.60±0.81	3.31±0.60	4.03±0.70	1.95	0.14
Student consultation	3.34±0.60	3.36±0.22	2.84±0.78	2.97±0.88	1.55	0.22
Transparency	3.77±0.61	4.14±0.49	3.53±0.50	3.77±0.46	1.57	0.22
Diversity	3.07±0.56	2.88±0.87	3.30±0.72	3.17±0.84	0.51	0.68

As shown in Table 8, the one-way ANOVA results illustrate there are significant differences in congruence with planned learning (F(2,59)=9.34, p<0.001), authenticity (F(2,59)=3.25, p=0.046), student consultation (F(2,59)=4.30, p=0.018) and transparency (F(2,59)=7.61, p=0.001), and no significant differences in diversity (F(2,59)=2.82, p=0.068). Then, the post hoc tests were conducted. As for congruence with planned learning, there were significant

differences between low and medium (M_D=-0.68, p=0.001), and low and high (M_D=-0.96, p<0.001), but there were no significant differences between medium and high (M_D=0.27, p=0.058).

Table 8. English Proficiency in Classroom Assessment One-way ANOVA

	low (n=6)	medium (n=43)	high (n=13)	F (2, 59)	p
Congruence with planned learning	3.14±0.39	3.82±0.46	4.10±0.42	9.34	0.000***
Authenticity	3.10±0.63	3.65±0.59	3.80±0.46	3.25	0.046*
Student consultation	3.21±0.64	3.13±0.58	3.71±0.78	4.30	0.018*
Transparency	3.55±0.32	3.65±0.59	4.26±0.25	7.61	0.001**
Diversity	3.52±0.48	3.00±0.81	3.45±0.47	2.82	0.068

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

As for congruence with planned learning, there were significant differences between low and medium (M_D=-0.68, p=0.001), and low and high (M_D=-0.96, p<0.001), but no significant differences between medium and high (M_D=0.27, p=0.058). Likewise, in terms of authenticity, significant differences were found between low and medium (M_D=-0.56, p=0.029), and low and high (M_D=-0.71, p=0.015), while there were no significant differences between medium and high (M_D=-0.15, p=0.418).

In contrast to congruence with planned learning and authenticity, student consultation did not have significant differences between low and medium (M_D=0.08, p=0.759), and low and high (M_D=-0.50, p=0.114); however, significant differences existed between medium and high (M_D=-0.58, p=0.005).

With regard to transparency, there were no significant differences between low and medium (M_D=-0.11, p=0.636), while significant differences were identified between low and high (M_D=-0.72, p=0.007), and between medium and high (M_D=-0.61, p<0.001).

In terms of diversity, no significant differences were found in the five scales.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The current study employs open-ended questions in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of some of the lived experiences of the research participants. According to a report provided by the ISC, Chinese graduate students primarily study in five faculties: the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Odette School of Business, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, and Faculty of Science. Thus, in addition to balancing gender, when selecting interview participants, it was critical that the current study focus on students from different faculties. To achieve this, there should be at least five qualitative participants and ideally around ten. The current study was able to recruit the ideal number of ten Chinese graduate students, who respectively came from five different programs: Master of Education program, Master of Management program, Master of Engineering program, Master of Science program, and Master of Sociology program. In addition, there was a sufficient gender balance: six men and four women. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. For the sake of confidentiality, the study allotted each participant a random alphanumeric code, ranging from "Participant A" to "Participant J".

The findings of the one-on-one interviews conducted with Chinese graduate students were categorized into two themes based on the data: teacher-related factors and student-related factors.

Teacher-Related Factors

When interviewing the ten participants about their perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university, their responses offered insights into four subthemes: score, assessment guidance, assessment feedback, and form of assessment.

Score. When evaluating participants' responses to how assessments are scored, two subthemes emerged: the distribution of scores and the fairness of scoring. These were points that participants focused on most, suggesting they saw them as the most critical components.

Distribution of score. All participants thought that teachers should design and arrange the distribution of scores reasonably and scientifically, rather than randomly and groundlessly, as demonstrated by Participant C and D. In one of the Participant C's three mandatory courses, the score of the final paper occupied 70% of the overall grade, which made him extremely nervous and anxious during the preparation process. Given how the paper was weighted, if Participant C failed his final paper, it meant he would likely fail the course. Also, he did not understand the reason why the teacher arranged the distribution of score in this way. Likewise, Participant D was critical of the fact that, in one class, 20% of final grade was awarded for class attendance: he thought this distribution was unreasonably high. In addition, he found that the teacher and the teaching assistant did not keep track of everyone's attendance in every class, so he doubted the purpose, the necessity, and the fairness of this assessment.

Other participants did not think their teachers' arrangement for the distribution of scores were unreasonable or biased, but at the time, they provided suggestions about the viable distribution of score. They advocated for two, equally weighted, forms of classroom assessment: oral and written. In terms of the specific assessment, participants supposed that the distribution of score should be spread across individual or group presentation and final papers, but that none should be worth more than 30%. Moreover, they suggested that peer-assessment, self-assessment, group discussion, class attendance, and class engagement should not collectively account for more than 10% of the final grade.

Fairness of grading. Participants also expressed particular concern with regard to the fairness of scoring. First, many participants noted that some teachers did not always mark carefully because in a class of 80 students, they would sometimes receive the grading result within three hours of submitting a paper, suggesting that there simply was not enough time to thoroughly and thoughtfully mark each paper. Second, some teachers had several teaching assistants or graduate assistants, but they did not unify the scoring standard for their assistants, nor did they supervise their assistants' scoring. This led to two students in the same group receiving different scores despite finishing and submitting the same assignment. Another example given by Participant F was that he had two friends who copied each other's assignment, but the same answer led to two different scores, and the one who had better hand writing had 15% higher scores. Third, some participants noticed that some students cheated during the midterm or final exams, but teaching assistants or graduate assistants did not find this problem and did not take their responsibility to invigilate the exam. Their observation of such unchecked cheating led some participants to view the marking and evaluation process as unfair and inconsistent. Last, some participants thought that their teachers over scored them, as demonstrated by Participant C. He observed that he often outperformed his Canadian classmates. This caused him to wonder if he truly performed at a higher level, or if his professor was trying to encourage him or lowering the standards due to Participant's C status as an international student. He hoped that he would receive authentic score responses as this is the only way he believes he will be able to recognize how much he has learnt.

Assessment guidance. All students appreciated direction and instruction that was provided by teachers before and during assessment preparation. Participant D offered an anecdote that underscores the importance of the feedforward guide process for international students. In his

first class, he was required to participate in class discussion via an online forum. At least one post had to be an original thread, and another had to be a response to another student's post. However, because Participant D had never used that particular forum before, he did not know how to navigate the website, an issue that many international students had, and so he raised the question to the instructor. In response, the instructor explained the process and guided the international students through the process in the class. Participant D suggested that "Teachers should present every assignment in details in the syllabus, including objectives, guidelines and explanations, rather than only description, due date and score value" and that "every international student needs the guidance, because [they] are from different country and experience different education" that may be drastically different from Western modes of education.

Meanwhile, some participants were concerned with the limited guidance that they received from their instructors. This was disappointing as they assumed that instructors would provide them with enough support to facilitate and encourage their independent learning. Furthermore, students hoped that guidance could be given early or in advance because it would help them accept and effectively apply the advice so as to improve their current and future work.

Other than assessment guidance, students hoped that they could consult instructors about their assessments. All participants acknowledged that teachers had absolute authority and final decision about how, why, what, when, and where an assessment could be done, but they also would like to be involved in the assessment process. For example, they hoped to be asked what their preferred form of assessment was, how each assignment should be weighted into the final grade, and what content would be included in exams. That did not mean that students would control assessments, merely that instructors would consider student input or consult them about

assessment. This seemed reasonable to the participants given that students and teachers have the same goal: facilitating students' learning. However, Participant F observed that even when one instructor did solicited student' opinions, that instructor did not incorporate them. Participant F assumed it was simply a 'symbolic' strategy meant to appease students and discourage them from complaining that the instructor did not consider their perspectives.

Assessment feedback. All participants valued and were concerned about teacher's prompt and objective feedback. Students did not care what form the feedback took, whether oral or written; they were only concerned that teachers did provide them with constructive feedback. Many of them stated that most teachers did not give them constructive feedback, but rather polite praise. Also, students hoped to receive prompt feedback, which for them meant within a week of submitting an assignment. This was underscored by Participant F, who noted that after letting an instructor know that he wanted some constructive feedback on how to improve his performance after receiving a low grade, the instructor failed to provide this feedback within a week, despite promising to do so. Over the preceding month, Participant F emailed the professor six times and did not receive any responses, leading him to feel as though his instructor ignored him and simply did not care about or value Participant F in general, or his learning outcome specifically.

Moreover, students would like to receive critical feedback, rather than just praise. The students often received comments that were simply a collection of subjective and vague value judgements, such as 'good job', 'well done', or 'excellent', which they thought were useless and meaningless. Participant B noted how frustrating this could be, especially when the grade one received was not consistent with the comments. One teacher, for instance, would praise international students with words like 'awesome' and 'perfect', but would then give low marks. This was confusing. Instead, Participant B hoped to receive "accurate, fair and objective

feedback" that would provide the input required to identify one's strengths and improve areas that did not meet the instructor's academic expectations.

Form of assessment. According to all participants' answers about different forms of assessment, students took issue with peer- and self-assessment.

Peer-assessment. All participants suggested that peer-assessment was an invalid tool with respect to evaluating their learning because students tended to offer high scores. They believed this was done to maintain harmony among classmates. They also expressed concern that some students might deliberately give their peers lower score, which was a way to excel above others. For example, Participant G noted that in a mandatory course, the instructor asked the students not to give every group member full marks, which meant that the most a person could score would be 80%. Despite this instruction, Participant G's group agreed that they would each give each other full mark. However, when everybody received their grades, they found that some received 95% on peer-assessment, while others received only 60%. This meant that some group members broke their agreement. Whether students had followed through with the agreement, or strategically gave some peers lower marks, this process did not offer a score that reflected students' learning outcomes; thus, Participant G failed to see the value in such an approach.

In addition, participants did not know what the standard was to evaluate their peers, and they considered that everyone had their own particular standards and opinions about the same thing. As a result, it was difficult for them to do peer-assessment. They also did not have enough confidence to do this assignment and firmly believed that only teachers had the authority to assess students. Moreover, some students were not familiar with their peers' research topic, which resulted in their unwillingness to do peer-assessment and also highlighted their inability to truly evaluate their peers' learning outcomes.

Self-assessment. Participants thought that self-assessment was equally as problematic as peer-assessment and that it was highly possible that students intended to over-score themselves rather than give themselves a fair score that was reflective of their learning.

Preferences for peer- and self-assessment. All participants felt uncomfortable providing grades in peer- and self-assessment. However, they suggested that were capable of providing anecdotal comments on their own and their peer's papers and presentations with regard to strengths and weaknesses. They felt this was a more effective and helpful approach to supporting and enhancing their own and their peers' learning. If teachers insisted on students providing grades in such instances, the participants suggested that it would be best if instructors provided explanation and guidance in order to make the process less subjective and the evaluation more consistent.

Student-Related Factors

Interview participants conveyed their own perceptions of student-related factors themselves, which could be categorized into three subthemes: background information, knowledge of assessment, and preference of assessment.

Background information. For the qualitative dataset, there were 10 Chinese graduate students who had voluntarily taken part in the interview: participants A and B, who were from the Masters of Education program; Participant C, who was from the Master of Sociology program; participants D and E, who were from the Masters of Management program; participants F and G, who were from the Masters of Engineering program; and participants H, I, and J, who were from the Masters of Science program.

Purposes for studying in Canada. The participants' responses mainly concentrated on three advantages that studying in Canada had the potential to offer them, particularly with respect to

the advance programs and knowledge offered in Western education, the opportunity to become proficient in English, and a potential path to citizenship.

Western education. Chief among these reasons are new knowledge and Western education. When studying the advanced academic subjects that the participants wished to pursue in Canada, they were afforded the ability to attend courses of much better quality than the ones provided by colleges in China. This collective view was exemplified by Participant A, who stated that an internet search suggested that Canada was advanced in education, particularly education administration and theory, which was her field of interest. She stated that theory is abstract and challenging to apply, and she was happy to see that instructors encouraged students to "analyze some cases which were related to… theories first, then taught… theories in details." This allows the students to be able to identify and, more importantly, understand Western education models and theories that they were not familiar with. This experience left Participant A optimistic: "In the future, I will be an educator in China. I will bring pedagogy, cases and knowledge about western education to China, and I hope I can combine Chinese and Western education very well in my class."

English proficiency. In order to improve their English proficiency, all the participants were willing to study in Canada. After studying in a foreign country for a relatively long period, the participants were likely to be fluent in English. This would give them a distinct advantage over their peers who took graduate programs at Chinese universities or could help them integrate into Western societies should they chose to work outside of China. This was reinforced by the co-op opportunities given by some programs, which allowed them to develop their English language skills in a professional setting.

Path to citizenship. In addition, the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (ONIP) provided by Ontario Immigration enticed some participants to study in Canada. ONIP is an immigration program that allows graduate students to apply for provincial nomination after their graduation if they have a post-secondary degree in Ontario. This could be a strong motivator for students who wish to settle outside of China permanently.

Knowledge of assessment. When asked about their knowledge of assessment, participant responses could be coded into two categories: the definition of assessment and meaning of score.

Definition of assessment. When being asked what the definition of assessment was, all participants expressed their opinions by discussing the main purposes and the forms of assessment.

Generally, the participants believed that classroom assessment should be applied to the activities that teachers employed in a class for the sake of determining whether students understood the course contents, such as quizzes, midterm exams, final exams, presentations, essays, and group discussions. Moreover, Participant H thought that any effective and successful activity that can support and raise students' learning ability is a form of assessment. Furthermore, Participant C noted that assessments could help teachers or students themselves determine whether students were utilizing effective learning styles, strategies, attitudes, and habits: Assessment is mainly a test of our learning results. Teachers can give us ranking and grades, and in this way, we can directly and obviously acknowledge whether they gain knowledge or not. But, I also think assessment is not limited to this purpose. It is very important that assessment can highlight our shortages, which are not easy to be found by ourselves within the learning process.

Participant C went on to note that such assessments could help students identify the disadvantages of learning approaches that students might be applying. For example, if he received a low grade on an exam, he would consider the reasons for this, identify the problems with regard to his learning approaches, and then improve upon them: "It is a virtuous cycle [that] can improve and enhance my learning, and I believe everyone can be an independent and effective lifelong learner."

 According to the participants' answers, classroom assessment could be divided into two key forms: oral and written.

Oral assessments. Individual presentation, group presentation and group discussion were the three main oral forms of assessment. Participant D underscored some of the key elements of this, noting that in "Almost every course, teachers will require students to do at least one individual presentation," and that "the topic of presentation… depended on [students'] final paper or [was] given by teachers." He noted that these presentations are usually approximately 15 minutes long and that the grades are decided by the instructors. He also noted that group presentation was also common, though not as frequent, and that most instructors allowed students to choose their group members, who would then negotiate as to the topic of the presentation. Participant D noted that these presentations were about 30 minutes long and that instructors graded these as well, but students often had to assess the efforts of the peers within their own group. Group discussion was also common, and students were usually divided into several groups according to the number of students in attendance. Teachers graded students according to the observed extent to which students understand a given topic.

Written assessments. In terms of written forms of assessment, all participants mentioned quizzes, essays, journals, case studies, midterms, and final exams. Some participants also

mentioned mind maps, which they needed to draw in some classes. While drawing a mind map, students could review the previous content in class and make connections between different knowledge points. This indicated that, to a great extent, students were conscious of various formats and instances of classroom assessment.

Meaning of scores. With regard to the meaning of scores, the participants held different opinions about whether a classroom activity can be considered as assessment according to whether teachers offer grades or not.

Perceived limitations of ungraded classroom activities. Some students deemed that assessments must have grades or scores, otherwise it was just an activity or practice. If teachers did not grade them, this would influence their motivation and willingness to take part in the classroom assessment. For instance, Participant I said,

I don't know why some teachers require us to finish some assignments or participate some classroom activities without any grades or scores… When I am doing these assessments, I cannot help but think teachers are wasting my time and show my unwillingness to take part in these assessment, because there is no grade. You know, we are from China, and in my mind, almost every assessment has grade in Chinese universities, so I cannot understand [an] assessment without grade can be considered as assessment.

Perceived benefits of ungraded classroom activities. However, others believed that classroom activities could be referred to as classroom assessment irrespective of whether teachers provided grades so long as the activities enhanced their learning. For example, Participant B said,

Although I expect high grades, I still don't think teachers should give every assessment scores. As our learning goal should not be to gain a high grade, instead, to gain knowledge truly, these unevaluated assessments can form, support, and raise our learning.

She went not to note that knowledge and learning ability, not grades, accompany students throughout their lives. Though high grades may provide more opportunities with respect to securing entry into ideal universities and jobs, Participant B notes that they are only the first step and that if a student does not likewise possess the skills and capabilities required to excel, they will be ill-equipped to succeed in further academic pursuits or professional positions.

Participants were also asked about why they aimed to secure high grades and provided answer that fell into three categories: justification of financial investments, professional advancement, and academic opportunities. These highlighted their motivations; however, some students did not feel the need to secure high grades.

Justification of financial investments. As the participants' parents paid a lot of money to support their academic studies in Canada, they felt that an impressive transcript with a high grade-point average (GPA) was the most effective way to prove that they had worked diligently, developed an effective way of learning, and learned a great deal of specialist knowledge. High grades would not only prove to themselves that they had what it took to succeed and knew the most effective way to strive for success, but it would also prove to their parents that they did not fail, thereby validating parents' financial investment.

Professional advancement. Participants also believed that they would be asked about their academic qualifications when they applied for a professional position. Thus, they wanted a high GPA to validate their qualifications and set themselves apart from other candidates. Indeed, no resume was acceptable without the inclusion of detailed education backgrounds, and employers

do judge a person by his or her academic qualifications. Therefore, it was virtually an unannounced rule in the job market and society that a person's possession of academic qualifications and a high GPA was critical to securing professional opportunities.

Academic opportunities. Many Chinese graduate students want to continue their higher education and pursue doctoral programs in Canada; therefore, they must secure a high GPA to ensure they meet the criteria outlined by doctoral programs at various universities.

Alternative perspectives. A few participants believe that they did not need high grades. For instance, Participant J asserted that a high GPA was unnecessary for him because he intended to be a permanent resident in Canada rather than to go on in his studies. Thus, as long as he passed all his courses and met the graduation requirement, then he would have fulfilled his goal of being eligible for ONIP.

Preference of assessment. According to participants' responses, there were four significant factors that caused them to prefer some specific assessment models: timeliness, score, authenticity, and forms of assessment.

Timeliness. All participants preferred assessments that offered them reasonable and sufficient time to prepare and finish, rather than urgent assessments. Other than the timeliness, the frequency of assessment was an important factor for the participants. For example, Participant G complained that a teacher in his program always required students to take a quiz in every class, which made him nervous and anxious, and consequently made him reluctant to attend class. In addition, Participant E preferred the classroom assessments used in her Chinese university, in which the overall grade was constituted of a midterm exam, a final exam, and attendance. Compared with classroom assessment that consisted of various assignments, she

thought she could more effectively utilize her preparation time by concentrating on two exams or assignments. This kind of approach put her at ease.

Score. Participants were more willing and likely to take part in the assessment with grades or scores. This point could be best illustrated by an example of Participant A. One of her classes featured a bonus-mark assignment. It was a relatively simple assignment that asked students to submit a short introduction about themselves with a photo of them doing something they enjoyed. If the students submitted this assignment to the course's online forum, they would earn two bonus points, which would be added to their grade at the end of the course. Participant A expressed her favor to this assessment and explained the reasons in details. First, she thought that it was an effective way for her to get to know her classmates and a successful way for her to begin to familiarize with the course's online forum, which she had never used before, but was able to understand from her teacher's comprehensive and detailed guidance. Second, the bonus marks assignment was a way to promote engagement and motivate student learning. Last, through the bonus marks assignment, she could acknowledge that the teacher had studied some pedagogy and students' psychology, which underscored the teacher's professional qualifications. This, in turn, encouraged the students to trust this teacher's instruction and assured them that the instructor cared about their learning outcomes.

Authenticity. The high authenticity of assessment was another main reason why all interview participants favored particular assessments. For example, Participant D reported that a teacher in one of his selective courses required students to do case studies that "took place in the 1990s or 1980s." He was shocked as the cases were older than he was, which caused him to view the case studies as out-of-date cases and irrelevant to contemporary issues. Participant D felt that if these case studies were reflective of the current situation, then the instructor should explain

this to the students beforehand so that they can apply them in practice. Thus, because Participant D did not feel these case studies were current enough to be applicable in a contemporary setting, he did not view the assessment as authentic and hence did not value it.

This was echoed by Participant F. In one of his engineering courses, the instructor taught a number of formulas and the reasoning processes behind them, and then assessed the students based on how well they remembered and applied the formulas. However, having worked in the field for five years, Participant F noted that he had never "seen a company required their employees to remember these formulas, because [they] all had a particular software in the computer [that] had already installed these formulas." Therefore, one was simply required to "input some figures and wait for the result." He noted that his instructor did not tell the students about this, which led him to believe these assessments did not have real-world applications. Thus, because he did not see these assessments as authentic, he failed to see the value in them.

Forms of assessment. In terms of the different forms of assessment, participants illustrated their preference for multiple choice and presentations.

Multiple choice. Participant E liked multiple choice because she could guess an answer and chose an option at random if she really did not know the correct answer. Even though she thought she would not be effectively evaluated in this way, she had the opportunity to earn higher grades. Also, she did not think multiple choice meant very easy and simple assessment, and its degree of difficulty could be decided by the instructor. This was supported by Participant I, who was only concerned with earning his master's degree so as to be eligible for ONIP and so was less concerned about learning. As multiple-choice answers gave him a better opportunity to secure a passing grade, he could spend less time preparing for these tests.

Presentations. Another welcome form of assessment was presentation. Participant D explained that presentations were preferable to written assignments such as essays for a couple of reasons. First, when you submit a paper, one cannot be sure that the instructor will read it carefully; however, for a presentation, the instructor has their full attention on the student's ideas. In addition, when students submit papers directly to their instructors, their fellow students will get no sense of the content of the paper. By doing a presentation, though, the entire class gets an opportunity to see where each of their peers are at academically. This allows for the proliferation of ideas, helps establish a level of expectation, and gives students a chance to provide feedback so that students can improve their work. Participant D also noted that presentations afford an opportunity to enhance speaking skills, which is the most significant skill that international students studying in Canada seek to develop.

Participant J echoed these sentiments but noted that he had not done a presentation during his first three terms. He expressed his confusion about the situation and thought that because his major was statistics, perhaps instructors did not see a need to make students present formulas to the class.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This current study was designed to investigate the nature of Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment at a Canadian university. Overall, the data suggests that students understand the assessment processes and the meanings for themselves as learners, which allows them to maximize learning. However, the nuances of this analysis have the ability to provide useful input for educators who wish to determine the effectiveness of various pedagogical approaches and how to improve learning outcomes among international students by constructing and utilizing a high-quality learning environment that can develop excellence and equity. A larger cross-section of Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment identification will also benefit educational developers tasked with faculty development, course design, and instructional design in the field of international education.

Triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data reported in the current research via a thorough discussion can provide important insights with respect to the study's three research questions:

1. How do Chinese graduate students perceive their classroom assessment?

2. Are there significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency?

3. What factors of classroom assessment do Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning?

Although qualitative results supported most results from the quantitative analysis, there were also some inconsistencies. Thus, after exploring the three research questions, it is likewise critical to consider the implications and limitations of this research.

Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment

Congruence with planned learning. The average scale-item mean value of 3.82±0.51 suggests that Chinese graduate students' perception of classroom assessment at a Canadian university was congruent with their learning goals and objectives, which was supported by participants' interview responses. During the interviews, all students reported a strong association between their assessment and study.

Also, this finding was consistent with previous studies, such as Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015), Cheng, Wu and Liu (2015), Dhindsa et al. (2007), and Gao (2012). These past studies found that students firmly believed that classroom assessments accorded with their planned learning, and that "they almost always or often understood what was expected and needed to successfully accomplish assessment tasks" (Gao, 2012, p. 64). Student academic achievement could be improved by affirming a more cognizant congruence between instruction and assessment by raising students' attitudes and effectiveness in learning (Koul & Fisher, 2006). This would be effective because students tended to take more time and energy to engage with their learning activities when they believed class content would appear in their assessment tasks (Brookhart & Bronowicz, 2003; McMillan, 2000).

Furthermore, when this research identified that classroom assessment at a Canadian university was congruent with Chinese graduate students' learning goals and objectives, it became necessary to examine what their learning goals and their purposes for studying in Canada were. According to the results of qualitative data, Chinese graduate students principally focused on three advantages: the advantages gained from studying in advance programs and offered in Western education, the opportunity to become proficient in English, and a potential path to citizenship. Although students generally believed that classroom assessment was congruent with

their purposes for studying in Canada, they also hoped that some teachers and faculties could value and focus on their voice more when designing classroom assessment and study program. Specially, in order to improve students' comprehensive English proficiency, teachers could balance oral and written forms of assessment rather than only offering one form, and for the sake of helping students to integrate into Canada and the Canadian work environment, faculties and university could supply more co-op opportunities.

Authenticity. For this dimension, the average scale-item mean value was 3.63±0.59, which suggests that students perceived classroom assessment was linked to real-life situations. This quantitative result was confirmed by the qualitative data as interview participants thought that classroom assessment at their Canadian university generally reflected the real-world situations.

With respect to authentic classroom assessment, the current study offered generally positive responses, which correlated with some previous studies, but was in stark contrast to others. Alkharusi and Al-Hosni (2015) surveyed 2753 Omani students from grade 10 and 11 whose subjects were Arabic language, English language, Islamic education, mathematics, science, and social studies, and they found that 80% of the students they examined believed their classroom assessments were authentic. However, in a survey of 248 high school students around northeast Arkansas, Gao (2012) found that most students did not believe their classroom assessments in math were related with real-life situations. These contrasting results could be due to a significant gap in sample sizes, different subject areas, and distinct social contexts. These results also may be due to a gap between teachers' perceptions of authenticity and that of students', which means that teachers believe assessment tasks are authentic, but students may not because authenticity relies on personal experience to some degree (Gulikers et al., 2008). As a result, when teachers

design assessment tasks and decide assessment processes, they should acknowledge the real-life situations on which their students focus.

The qualitative data in this research also showed that in some cases, there was a gap between teachers' perceptions of authenticity and that of students'. Two of the participants reported that their teachers required students explore case studies that "took place in the 1990s or 1980s." which were older than the participants were. Teachers then assessed the students based on how well they remembered and applied the engineering formulas, which though applicable in contemporary engineering context, were usually performed by computer programs. It was possible that these teachers wanted their students be able to perform critical analysis about past cases in order to apply them into the contemporary society, or wanted their students to understand the formulas rather than just punch numbers into a computer, but teachers did not clarify and indicate their final or potential teaching goals and objectives to students effectively. Consequently, students may have misunderstood their designed instruction and assessment. To address this, teachers need to clearly explain and illustrate the value of lessons to students at the beginning of every class and assessment. This is an example of how strengthened communication with students can improve learning outcomes and students' perceptions of assessment.

Student Consultations. The participants' responses to this dimension had an average scale-item mean of 3.26$\pm$0.66. These data propose that students were not adequately consulted and informed about the forms of assessment tasks being employed, which are also supported by the qualitative data reported in the previous chapter.

During the interviews, all participants acknowledged that although teachers had absolute authority and final decision about how, why, what, when, and where an assessment could be

done, they also would have preferred being involved in the assessment process. For example, they hoped to be asked how each assignment should be weighted into the final grade, what their preferred form of assessment was, and what content would be included in exams. They specified that teachers should design and arrange the distribution of scores reasonably and scientifically, rather than randomly and groundlessly. For instance, some teachers awarded 70% of the overall grade to final paper and 20% to class attendance. Also, teachers should consult with Chinese graduate students about the forms of assessment in advance because they hoped teachers could balance oral and written forms of assessment in order to enhance and improve their comprehensive English proficiency. With regard to peer- and self-assessment, students were less willing to take part in these because peers tended to offer high scores to maintain harmony among classmates or deliberately gave their peers lower score as a way to excel above others. These issues were exacerbated by the fact that students generally did not know what the grading standard was, and so had no consistent way to evaluate either their peers or themselves. Participants' responses to peer- and self- assessment were consistent with previous studies, which found Chinese students were quite unwilling to criticize their peers' drafts or disagree with peers' comments, which resulted in silence during peer-assessment activities (Carson & Nelson, 1996). Moreover, they thought only teachers had sufficient knowledge, experience, and expertise to assess students (Liu & Carless, 2006). Therefore, students hoped teachers could pay attention to these problems when they consulted with students about classroom assessment.

Transparency. The quantitative data on students' perception (3.77 ± 0.57) imply that Chinese graduate students perceived that there was transparency in assessment. When data from interviews were triangulated, these results were confirmed and were consistent with past studies, which found that students almost always or often understood what was expected and needed to

successfully complete assessment tasks (Alkharusi & Al-Hosni, 2015; Cheng et al., 2015; Dhindsa et al., 2007; Gao, 2012). During the interviews, participants reported that they were not only informed in advance about how, why, and when they would be assessed and what they would be assessed on, but also received teachers' support and explanation in details about assessment. However, with regard to peer- and self- assessment, the participants suggested that it would be best if instructors provided explanation and guidance in order to make the process less subjective and the evaluation more consistent.

Diversity. The average scale-item mean of 3.15 ± 0.75 implies that teachers did not adequately express concern about or consider students' diversity, which include students' different abilities and the time they required to finish assessments. However, this result was not supported by qualitative data, in which participants reported that teachers paid attention to their international student status and therefore created different assessments that considered the fact that students' abilities were at different levels. One participant even reported that teachers graded international students too easily as a means to encourage them.

This inconsistent result between quantitative and qualitative data supported a finding offered by Dhindsa et al. (2007), who state that "students perceived that assessment only sometimes catered for student diversity, while the teachers' interviews and observation data (analysis of tests, homework, and classwork) did not support this value" (p. 1276). Other studies also found that it was difficult for teachers to paint a clear picture as to whether the needs associated with student diversity had been met, and teachers usually believed that they took students' diversity into account even in instances where students did not. Therefore, it is important for faculties and universities to provide teachers with some strategies regarding the design of assessments so as to address the needs associated with students' diversity.

Significant Differences in Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment

When breaking down the participants responses into gender, year in the program, or program of study, the data did not outline any significant differences with respect to Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment regarding congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, or diversity ($ps > 0.05$). However, when considering participants' self-perceived level of English proficiency, there were significant differences in congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, and transparency, though no significant differences were found regarding diversity.

The results regarding gender were consistent with Dhindsa et al. (2007) but was inconsistent with the findings of other researchers. For example, Alkharusi (2011) and Alkharusi et al. (2014) argue that female students had a tendency to have more positive perceptions of the assessment tasks than male students, while Gao (2012) found statistically significant gender differences with respect to authenticity and transparency: female students indicated a stronger preference for both.

As for year in the program, the current study's results conflicted with Dhindsa et al. (2007), who found secondary science students had statistically significant grade-level differences in their perceptions of the classroom assessment tasks.

Likewise, the last of significant differences based on program of study were inconsistent with previous studies. For example, Cheng et al. (2015) found that with respect to consultation and transparency, there were significant differences among undergraduate students from three universities between four different majors: the humanities/social sciences, engineering, business, and the sciences. The significant differences were greater in the humanities/social sciences, engineering, and business than in the sciences.

Although there were significant differences among Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment in terms of the five scales when looking at participants self-perceived level of English proficiency, these results were also consistent with past research. For instance, Cheng et al. (2015) found that "students with medium language proficiency perceived transparency in the classroom assessment tasks significantly higher than students with low language proficiency did" (p. 13).

These contrasting results could be due to a significant gap in sample sizes, different subject areas, and distinct social contexts, but there were limited research studies about students' perceptions of classroom assessment, thus these researches were compared together. Also, it may inspire other researches to focus on this topic in the future.

Assessment and Chinese Graduate Students' Learning.

In order to enhance students' learning and motivation to learn, the interview participants suggested that six factors of classroom assessment should be examined: timeliness, score, authenticity, forms of assessment, and assessment guidance and feedback.

Timeliness. All participants preferred assessments that offered them reasonable and sufficient time to prepare and finish, rather than urgent or last-minute assessments. Likewise, the frequency of assessment was an important factor for the participants. If classroom assessment was too urgent and too frequent, students would become anxious about having to cope with assessments every day rather than learning truly. This point is supported by the previous studies, which found that reducing student workload was an efficient and successful way both to raise student satisfaction and boost a deeper approach to learning (Drew, 2001; Gibbs, 1992; Naude et al., 2016).

Score. Participants were more willing and likely to take part in the assessment with grades or scores, and some participants did not recognize assessment that did not include scores as legitimate assessment. Chen et al. (2013) suggest that students may have this attitude because formative assessments in China often took the form of continuous summative assessment. Thus, in order to incentivize the learning process, Western teachers might consider awarding marks for participation in or completion of a stage of a process of assessment activity. However, Cheng and Fox (2017) argue that this practice might be problematic as the aims of formative and summative assessment are not the same. According to the self-determination theory, though, awarding bonus marks to students could be seen as non-self-determined extrinsic motivation, which was an external factor that was found to control individuals' behaviors, as well as being commonly associated with positive and negative reinforcement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). If this practice could lead to increased student motivation and involve assessment activities and their learning, a change in the nature of assessment should not matter.

Authenticity. The high authenticity of assessment was another main reason why Chinese graduate students favored particular assessments. Based on the qualitative data, the study identified that not only Western education and English proficiency could attract Chinese students to study in Canada, but a potential path to citizenship could entice them to choose Canada as well. Therefore, an assessment with high authenticity meant a smooth transition for Chinese students integrating into Canadian society and work environment. As for international students, teachers should pay much more attention to assessment authenticity in order to meet students' needs and trigger their self-determined extrinsic motivation to learn. This kind of motivation can encourage students to participate in order to achieve another goal: learning to adapt and integrate into Canadian life (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Forms of assessment. The result of this study was consistent with previous research, which suggests that students expressed different opinions of different forms of assessment. Although it was difficult to unify and conclude what forms of assessment Chinese graduate students preferred, the current study's data still suggest that they were less willing to take part in peer- and self-assessment since they thought both were invalid tools with respect to evaluating their learning. Moreover, students did not know what the evaluation standard was when grading their peers and themselves. This finding supports previous studies about Chinese students' perceptions of peer- and self-assessment, which suggest that Chinese students assess peers more favorably than they should to maintain harmony with students and avoid shaming themselves or others, and that Chinese students feel that only teachers had sufficient knowledge, experience, and expertise to properly assess students (Bond, 1996; Hofstede, 1991; Liu & Carless, 2006). However, participants suggested that they were capable of providing comments on their own and their peer's papers and presentations with regard to strengths and weaknesses, rather than grades. Thus, when designing and forming classroom assessment, teachers should consider Chinese graduate students' particular perspectives regarding peer- and self-assessment. It is possible that teachers could give students a clear rubric to mark their peers and make assessment more objective. For example, if students are assessing a presentation, they should be provided with a rubric that breaks down the marking scheme. In this scenario, the instructor might require students to award a specific number of marks for certain tasks, such as using an effective opening strategy, maintaining eye contact, or making effective use of PowerPoint slides. This not only gives students elements to actually evaluate, rather than asking a general overall impression, but gives them specific points to validate.

Assessment guidance and feedback. All students appreciated the direction and instruction that was provided by teachers before, during, and after assessment.

Participants thought that the high level of guidance that they could gain from their teachers could encourage their learning. Students also hoped that guidance could be given early or in advance because it would help them accept and effectively apply the advice so as to improve their current and future work. Furthermore, it was necessary for teachers to make students acknowledge the aims and cognitive processes of assessment tasks, not just show them assessment examples. In this way, a proper connection between student perceptions of assessments and demands could be established, as per Watering et al. (2008).

Participants valued and were concerned about teacher's instant, objective, and critical feedback, rather than long wait periods and unquantified praise. This was reflective of past studies, which argue that the essence of feedback was not simply providing brief information to students about their performance, as was the case with short and evaluative comments on assignments (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hattie, 2009). Instead, teachers must find where students were and where students should be, then help them to narrow the gap between them (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hattie, 2009).

Implications

The current study found that Chinese graduate students generally hold positive perceptions of classroom assessment at their Canadian university in terms of congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity. There were only significant differences in their perceptions by self-perceived level of English proficiency. Furthermore, five factors of classroom assessment should be considered by educators: timeliness,

score, authenticity, forms of assessment, and assessment guidance and feedback for the sake of enhancing students' learning and motivation to learn.

Chinese international students should acknowledge that classroom assessment is not only considered a means of evaluating and awarding marks in order to decide whether students have accomplished objectives, but that they are used as a tool to promote learning. Thus, they should not only pay attention and express high engagement to summative assessment, but also to formative assessment, which can help and support their learning. Moreover, although they must meet the university's admission requirement for English proficiency before enrolment, they should continue to practice and learn English diligently because English proficiency can influence their perceptions of classroom assessment, which in turn impacts their learning and motivation to learn. Finally, Chinese international students should establish an open and regular communication with their teachers and classmates to deal with any problems related with assessment and try their best to participate in assessment activities, rather than just keeping silent in the class.

Teachers and educators should acknowledge that an assessment with high authenticity means a smooth transition for Chinese students integrating into Canadian society and work environments. According to students' responses during the interviews, an assessment with high authenticity means the assessment including the present and updated contents and information from the real world. They should also balance the written and oral forms of assessment to support and enhance Chinese students' comprehensive English proficiency. Thus, teachers should pay attention to the main reasons they have chosen to study in Canada in order to help these students to accomplish their academic, work, and social goals. Furthermore, teachers and educators should consider Chinese students' negative perceptions to peer- and self- assessment.

If teachers insist on students providing grades in peer- and self- assessment, it would be best for instructors to provide explanation and guidance in order to make the process less subjective and the evaluation more consistent.

Universities and faculties should train and help teachers to be supportive and sensitive to intercultural students in Canada's multicultural context. Some specific departments, like ISC and the Center of Teaching and Learning, should offer more services, training, and opportunities to help teachers who do not have experiences teaching international students and help international students who are newcomers to adapt to their new studying and living environment. Universities should also help teachers design and implement assessments that support and enhance students' learning, which not only benefits international students, but also domestic students. Furthermore, other Western universities could replicate this study easily, especially those who have not examined Chinese international students' perceptions of classroom assessment and are missing important information from a key group of students at their universities. In addition, the Chinese education system should also reflect profoundly students' perceptions of classroom assessment, support and develop diverse forms of assessment, and lessen the importance of exam scores. This might not only help Chinese students integrate into international environments more effectively, but also has the potential to improve China's education system.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation is the generalizability of this study. This study was conducted at a Canadian university. Although this study offers specific insights into the setting of the school's graduate student program, it only focuses on a limited sample from a small community; therefore, the results may not precisely illustrate Chinese international students' perceptions of classroom assessment in undergraduate student programs at this university, let alone other cities,

provinces, or countries. However, it is likely that many of these experiences are transferable and that the findings offer important insights for students in analogous situations. This is validated by the fact that many of the study's findings are consistent with past research on the subject.

The second limitation is the accuracy of information given by the participants during the online survey and interview. Participants may offer inaccurate information during the online survey and interview process, since they may be afraid of others finding out about their negative perceptions of classroom assessment. The assessment experiences that the participants remember and provide may also be inaccurate. However, given that many of the findings were consistent with past studies, it seems that the data is relatively reliable.

The third limitation includes that a mixed method had been used to conduct this research because qualitative data could provide an in-depth understanding of quantitative data. However, the online survey was anonymous and there are 23 participants who did not report their programs, thus the interview participants' responses could not be ensured to represent the online survey participants' perceptions of classroom assessment at the university.

The last limitation deals with the challenge of potential researcher bias emphasized by Maxwell (2005). The researcher is a Chinese international student at the Canadian university where the study was conducted; thus, it is possible that she might know or have relationships with some participants prior to this research. This problem could influence how participants responded to the researcher and even who took part in the study. However, the researcher dealt with this challenge by keeping confidentiality: the online survey was designed to be anonymous, and any information that could relate to the participants' identifications was deleted when the researcher transcribed the qualitative data.

Conclusion

Question 1. How do Chinese graduate students perceive their classroom assessment?

Chinese graduate students held positive perceptions regarding classroom assessment at the Canadian university where the study was conducted in terms of congruence with planned learning, authenticity, student consultation, transparency, and diversity. However, the lower values for student consultation and diversity imply that students were not consulted and informed adequately about the forms of assessment tasks being employed, and teachers were not adequately concerned about students' diversity with regard to issues such as students' different abilities and the time required to finish their assessments.

Question 2. Are there significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency?

There were no significant differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment by gender, program of study, and year in the program, but there were significant differences in their perceptions with respect to self-perceived level of English proficiency.

Question 3. What factors of classroom assessment do Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning?

In order to enhance students' learning and motivation to learn, the research suggests that five factors of classroom assessment should be considered: timeliness, score, authenticity, forms of assessment, and assessment guidance and feedback.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A：Online Survey

Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian

University

<u>**Section 1**</u>

This questionnaire aims to explore your perceptions as a Chinese international graduate student

who studies at the University of Windsor. Please read the following statements carefully and

circle the number in front of the item that applies to your perspective. These items are 5=

strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree, and 1= strongly disagree. This survey should

take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

[Information and consent form will be inserted here online, which includes the reminder

that participants may skip any questions or withdraw at any time.]

<u>**Section 2**</u>

Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory (PATI)

Please read the following statements carefully and circle the number in front of the item that

applies to your perspective. These items are 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree,

and 1= strongly disagree.

Congruence with planned learning

1. The assessment in my program is a fair indicator of my work.

2. My program tests are a fair indicator of what my class is trying to learn.

3. My assignments are related to what I am learning in my program.

4. My assessment is a fair indication of what I do in my program.

5. I am assessed in similar ways to the tasks I do in class.

6. I am assessed on what the teacher has taught me.

7. I have answered questions on topics that have been covered in class.

Authenticity

8. I am asked to apply my learning to real-life situations.

9. The assessment tasks in my program are meaningful.

10. The assessment tasks in my program are useful.

11. I find the assessment tasks in my program relevant to the real world.

12. The assessment tasks in my program check my understanding of topics.

13. Assessment in my program tests my ability to apply learning.

14. Assessment in my program examines my ability to answer important questions.

Student consultation

15. I am aware of the types of assessment in my program.

16. I am clear about the forms of assessment being used.

17. I am asked about the types of assessment I would like to have in in my program.

18. I select how I will be assessed in my program.

19. I have helped the class develop rules for assessment in my program.

20. My teacher has explained to me how each form of assessment is used.

21. I ask my teacher about assessment in my program.

Transparency

22. I understand what is needed in all assessment tasks of my program.

23. I know what is needed to successfully accomplish an assessment task in my program.

24. I know in advance how I will be assessed.

25. I am told in advance why I am being assessed.

26. I am told in advance when I am being assessed.

27. I am told in advance on what I am being assessed.

28. I understand the purpose of assessment in my program.

Diversity

29. I complete assessment tasks at my own speed.

30. When I am faster than others, I move on to new assessment tasks.

31. I am given a choice of assessment tasks.

32. I am set assessment tasks that are different from other students' tasks.

33. I am given assessment tasks that suit my ability.

34. I use different assessment methods from other students.

35. I do work that is different from other students' work.

Section 3

Demographics

Please provide some information about yourself. Do not provide information that reveals your

identity. This information will be kept confidential and will only be used for statistical

interpretation.

Gender: _____

Prefer not to answer

Age:

- o   20 – 25

- o   26 – 30

- o   31 – 35

- o   36-40

- o   41-45

- o   Other: _____

Prefer not to answer

Program of study: _____

(Please report the name of faculty and major that you are studying)

Prefer not to answer

Year in the program:

- o   1st Year

- o   2nd Year

- o   3rd Year

- o   4th Year

- o   5th Year

- o   Other: _____

Self-perceived level of English:

- o   Low

- o Medium

- o High

Section 4

Completion of research participation

Thank you for completing this survey. My hope is that by completing this survey, you might be aware of how your perceptions around classroom assessment and the significance of classroom assessment to your learning. Below is the letter of consent you agreed at the beginning of this survey. Please print or securely save this information so you can contact the researcher regarding this study. The results of this survey are expected to be released on 06/30/2018 via the UWindsor Electronic Thesis Database (http://scholar.uwindsor.ca.).

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian

University

General

1. What do you think are the main purposes of assessment?

2. What kind of classroom activities do you count as assessment?

3. How do teachers assess students in your program?

4. Did you have any impression that you did not feel satisfied with assessment result or assessment form?

5. What was a good impression you had about classroom assessment? Why?

6. Do you see any differences in the way your work was assessed at Chinese university and now at Canadian university?

7. How did your teachers know about your class at the beginning of the semester/year?

8. How do you know that you learned something?

9. Do you think that your score tells you whether you have learned?

Use of assessment

1. In general, what is the assessment information used for? What ways?

2. What does grade mean to you? Do you always expect to be graded? Why?

3. Does classroom assessment encourage or discourage the way you are doing your class work or the way you study? You either take that serious, or take it easy? Or you will study for the test?

Kinds of assessment

1.   What are some ways your teachers assess your work? Do they give your written or oral feedback? How often do you receive feedback from teachers? Do their feedbacks help you perform better in your future work? What kind of feedback do you expect most?

2.   Do you like multiple choice, yes/no, true false, essay questions etc? Why?

3.   What do you think (about formative assessment methods) presentation, portfolio, poster presentation etc?

4.   How do you feel if you are asked that you assess your work by yourself? Or assess your classmate? Do you think the results of such assessment are trustworthy?

Knowledge about assessment

1.   Do you think that knowing about what will you be assessed on will help you score higher?

2.   Do your teachers consult with the class about what you will be assessed on? In what ways?

3.   As a student, what is a preferred way do you think to assess students in a classroom?

4.   When taking a test or exam, can you say if that is good or bad? What is your reason?

Appendix C: Consent to Participate in Research: Online Survey

![University of Windsor logo]

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: ONLINE SURVEY

Title of Study: **Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Yue Gu (Principal Investigator or PI) under the supervision of Dr. Zuochen Zhang**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor**.** This research will contribute to the researcher's thesis project.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Yue Gu at guu@uwindsor.ca or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Zuochen Zhang, at (519) 253-3000, ext. 3960 or zuochen@uwindsor.ca**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study's goal is to determine how Chinese graduate students perceive Western classroom assessment, the differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment with respect to gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency, and what factors of classroom assessment that Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate an online survey. The online survey will be in English and will consist of four sections, which will take you around 15 minutes. You may save or print this form for your records.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known potential risks or discomfort in the research. But, there may be potential psychological risks associated with the research. You may feel uncomfortable to share your past experiences, which may recall your unpleasant experience or make you feel a little nervous. Please feel free to skip any questions and end the survey at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants could understand the assessment processes and the meanings for themselves as learners in order to maximize learning. They may enjoy sharing their classroom assessment experience with the researcher and take online survey and interview as an opportunity to reflect their perceptions. The research is helpful and supportive for them to involve better in the future classroom assessment, because they will know the obvious differences in classroom assessment between Chinese and Western Universities, and what factors of classroom assessment would hint them from its participation.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive compensation for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The current study will ensure that confidentiality is ensured for each participant. All data will be protected as any confidential information should be. While completing the online survey, you will be reminded to avoid providing identifying information in order to ensure anonymity. The data will be collected via Qualtrics and all data will be deleted when research is completed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You are free not to answer any question and also have the right to withdraw from the online survey at any time if they feel uncomfortable during the online survey. There will be no consequences to the participant for withdrawing from the survey. Participants who actively withdraw (for example, do not simply 'close' out of the browser, but select a button that cancels participation) and who simply close the browser window will be removed from the dataset. Online survey participants may withdraw their data at any time before the final submission of the survey. The survey contains no identifying marks or codes in order to protect the participants. This means that the researcher has no way to remove a specific participant's data after submission. After completion and submission of the survey, a participant will not be able to withdraw their data.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Only a summary of the interview component of the research will be sent to all the interview participants who take part in the research. The primary output of this research study will be Yue's MED thesis in mid-2018. This will include an oral defense of the thesis, which is open to the general public. The written document will be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies,

University of Windsor and posted in the UWindsor Electronic Thesis Database. Web address: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca. Date when results are available: 06/30/2018.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. By selecting **"I AGREE"** during the survey, I am consenting to have my survey response included in this research.

o   I AGREE to participate in this research.

o   I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this research.

Appendix D: Consent to Participate in Research: Interview

University of Windsor

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: INTERVIEW

Title of Study: **Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Yue Gu (Principal Investigator or PI) under the supervision of Dr. Zuochen Zhang**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor**.** This research will contribute to the researcher's thesis project.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Yue Gu at guu@uwindsor.ca or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Zuochen Zhang, at (519) 253-3000, ext. 3960 or zuochen@uwindsor.ca**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study's goal is to determine how Chinese graduate students perceive Western classroom assessment, the differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment with respect to gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency, and what factors of classroom assessment that Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate an interview. The interview will be in English and audio recorded, which will take you around one hour.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known potential risks or discomfort in the research. But, there may be potential psychological risks associated with the research. You may feel uncomfortable to share your past experiences, which may recall your unpleasant experience or make you feel a little nervous. Please feel free to skip any questions and end the survey at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants could understand the assessment processes and the meanings for themselves as learners in order to maximize learning. They may enjoy sharing their classroom assessment experience with the researcher and take online survey and interview as an opportunity to reflect their perceptions. The research is helpful and supportive for them to involve better in the future classroom assessment, because they will know the obvious differences in classroom assessment between Chinese and Western Universities, and what factors of classroom assessment would hint them from its participation.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive compensation for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the qualitative interviews, your names will be replaced with codes to protect their identities. A thorough safeguard plan will be put in place to reduce the possibility of this or any information leaks: all digital data will be stored in a secure, password-protected folder on the researcher's personal computer, which itself will be password-protected. Once transcription is completed, the researcher will delete all audio data from any computers or digital recorders used during data collection.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You are free not to answer any question and also have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable during the interview. You can contact the researcher to withdraw before the data is interpreted and analyzed. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Only a summary of the interview component of the research will be sent to all the interview participants who take part in the research. The primary output of this research study will be Yue's MED thesis in mid-2018. This will include an oral defense of the thesis, which is open to the general public. The written document will be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Windsor and posted in the UWindsor Electronic Thesis Database. Web address: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca. Date when results are available: 06/30/2018.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics

Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext.

3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions**

of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University as described herein. My questions have

been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a

copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Appendix E: Letter of Information to Participate in Research

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

（Online Survey and Interview）

Title of Study: **Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at a Canadian University**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Yue Gu (Principal Investigator or PI) under the supervision of Dr. Zuochen Zhang**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor**.** This research will contribute to the researcher's thesis project.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Yue Gu at guu@uwindsor.ca or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Zuochen Zhang, at (519) 253-3000, ext. 3960 or zuochen@uwindsor.ca**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study's goal is to determine how Chinese graduate students perceive Western classroom assessment, the differences in Chinese graduate students' perceptions of classroom assessment with respect to gender, program of study, year in the program, and self-perceived level of English proficiency, and what factors of classroom assessment that Chinese graduate students perceive as being able to motivate their learning.

PROCEDURES

There are two parts of this research, online survey and interview. You can voluntarily participate one, both or neither of this study. The online survey will be in English and will consist of four sections, which will take you around 15 minutes. The interview will also be in English and audio recorded, which will take you around one hour.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known potential risks or discomfort in the research. But, there may be potential psychological risks associated with the research. You may feel uncomfortable to share your past experiences, which may recall your unpleasant experience or make you feel a little nervous. Please feel free to skip any questions and end the survey or the interview at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants could understand the assessment processes and the meanings for themselves as learners in order to maximize learning. They may enjoy sharing their classroom assessment experience with the researcher and take online survey and interview as an opportunity to reflect their perceptions. The research is helpful and supportive for them to involve better in the future classroom assessment, because they will know the obvious differences in classroom assessment between Chinese and Western Universities, and what factors of classroom assessment would hint them from its participation.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive compensation for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While completing the online survey, you will be reminded to avoid providing identifying information in order to ensure anonymity. The data will be collected via Qualtrics and all data will be deleted when research is completed. For the qualitative interviews, your names will be replaced with codes to protect their identities. A thorough safeguard plan will be put in place to reduce the possibility of this or any information leaks: all digital data will be stored in a secure, password-protected folder on the researcher's personal computer, which itself will be password-protected. Once transcription is completed, the researcher will delete all audio data from any computers or digital recorders used during data collection.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You are free not to answer any question and also have the right to withdraw from the online survey or the Interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable during the online survey or the interview. For the online survey, there will be no consequences to the participant for withdrawing from the survey. Participants who actively withdraw (for example, do not simply 'close' out of the browser, but select a button that cancels participation) and who simply close the browser window will be removed from the dataset. Online survey participants may withdraw their data at any time before the final submission of the survey. The survey contains no identifying marks or codes in order to protect the participants. This means that the researcher has no way to remove a specific participant's data after submission. After completion and submission of the survey, a participant will not be able to withdraw their data. For the interview, you can contact the researcher to withdraw before the data is interpreted and analyzed. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Only a summary of the interview component of the research will be sent to all the interview participants who take part in the research. The primary output of this research study will be Yue's MED thesis in mid-2018. This will include an oral defense of the thesis, which is open to the general public. The written document will be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Windsor and posted in the UWindsor Electronic Thesis Database. Web address: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca. Date when results are available: 06/30/2018.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEACH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

THE DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In order to clarify some technical pedagogic terms which some participants may not know, the definitions of terms which will be shown in the online survey are as follows. Classroom assessment is a systematic process of gathering information relating to student achievement and interpreting assessment results and students' responses, and then using the findings to adjust teacher instruction with the aim of enhancing students' learning. Assessment tasks/forms are not learning and teaching units, but they do suggest, in broad terms, what learning needs to have

taken place before students undertake the provided assessment tasks, such as multiple-choice, presentation, essay and so on. During the interview, please feel free to ask the researcher to provide clarifications and explanations of the terms to you when necessary.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix F: Initial Recruitment Email

INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Line: Participate in Research about Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at UWindsor!

Message:

Dear Students,

My name is Yue Gu and I am a graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I invite you to participate in an online survey and an interview, designed to identify the Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at the University of Windsor. This survey and interview are part of my M.Ed. research, and will contribute toward my M.Ed. thesis.

There are two parts of this research, online survey and interview. You can voluntarily participate one, both or neither of this study. The online survey will be in English and will consist of four sections, which will take you around 15 minutes. The interview will also be in English and audio recorded, which will take you around one hour. The online survey will include questions asking you to describe your perceptions of classroom assessment during the past academic year at the University of Windsor, and demographic information. The interview questions will include your perceptions of classroom assessment, use of assessment, kinds of assessment and knowledge about assessment.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study with no effect. You may exit the survey and decline to answer any interview questions if you feel do not wish to answer. Your responses will be kept confidential. There are no known risks to participating in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me (Yue Gu) at guu@uwindsor.ca.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

You may save or print this email for future reference. Thank you for considering participating in this study. If you are willing to complete the survey please click on the link below:

[Link to the web survey]

Sincerely,

Yue Gu, Master of Education Candidate

Faculty of Education, University of Windsor

guu@uwindsor.ca

Appendix G: Reminder Email

REMINDER EMAIL

(Sent 2 weeks after Initial Email)

Subject Line: Participate in Research about Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at UWindsor!

Message:

Dear Students,

My name is Yue Gu and I am a graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I invite you to participate in an online survey and an interview, designed to identify the Chinese Graduate Students' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment at the University of Windsor. This survey and interview are part of my M.Ed. research, and will contribute toward my M.Ed. thesis.

There are two parts of this research, online survey and interview. You can voluntarily participate one, both or neither of this study. The online survey will be in English and will consist of four sections, which will take you around 15 minutes. The interview will also be in English and audio recorded, which will take you around one hour. The online survey will include questions asking you to describe your perceptions of classroom assessment during the past academic year at the

University of Windsor, and demographic information. The interview questions will include your perceptions of classroom assessment, use of assessment, kinds of assessment and knowledge about assessment.

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If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me (Yue Gu) at guu@uwindsor.ca.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

Please attention. If you have participated the online survey and/or the interview of this research, please ignore this reminder email and do not participate the part of this research again which you have took part in.

You may save or print this email for future reference. Thank you for considering participating in this study. If you are willing to complete the survey please click on the link below:

[Link to the web survey]

Sincerely,

Yue Gu, Master of Education Candidate

Faculty of Education, University of Windsor

guu@uwindsor.ca

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Yue Gu

PLACE OF BIRTH: Xingtai, Hebei, China

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1987

EDUCATION: PLA Dalian Navy Academy, B.A., Dalian, China, 2010

                         University of Windsor, M.Ed., Windsor, ON, 2018