

**A BEGINNING CHINESE TEACHER'S DEVELOPMENT  
OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN A SYDNEY  
SCHOOL – AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**

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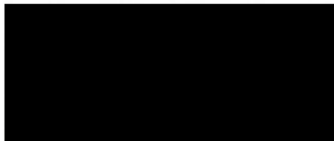
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## **Declaration**

I declare that except where due acknowledgment has been made, this research is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

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September 30, 2020

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## Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgments .....	iii
List of Tables .....	x
Abbreviations.....	xi
Abstract.....	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research background.....	1
1.1.1 Chinese language teaching.....	2
1.2 Research problems .....	3
1.3 Research Question .....	5
1.4 Research Design .....	5
1.5 The aims and significance of the research .....	6
1.5.1 Significance for Chinese background CFL teachers in Australia.....	6
1.5.2 Significance for the field of education.....	7
1.6 Thesis outline .....	7
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
2.0 Introduction.....	10
2.1 Definitions of classroom management .....	11
2.2 Key components of classroom management .....	15
2.2.1 Classroom management theories .....	15
2.2.2 Models of Classroom Management .....	24
2.2.3 Strategies.....	27
2.3 Classroom management strategies.....	30
2.3.1 Classroom environment .....	30

2.3.2 Preventative and reactive management strategies .....	31
2.3.3 Student-centredness .....	32
2.3.4 Group contingencies and STEPS .....	33
2.4 TCFL classroom management .....	34
2.4.1 Classroom management in international classes in China.....	34
2.4.2 Classroom management in TCFL classes outside China.....	35
2.4.2.1 Expatriate postgraduate students .....	36
2.5 Classroom management during collaborative group work.....	37
2.6 Conclusion .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>41</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	41
3.1 Research Design .....	41
3.1.1 Action Research .....	42
3.1.2 Research procedure.....	44
3.2 Site .....	46
3.3 Participants.....	47
3.3.1 Students.....	48
3.3.2 Classroom teacher.....	49
3.3.3 ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers .....	50
3.4 Data collection .....	50
3.4.1 Researcher's reflection journal .....	52
3.4.2 Interviews.....	53
3.4.3 Focus groups .....	54
3.4.4 Classroom observation/checklist .....	56
3.5 Data analysis .....	57
3.5.1 Organising and preparing the data .....	57
3.5.2 Familiarisation with the data.....	57
3.5.3 Coding.....	58

3.5.4 Analysis and Evaluation .....	58
3.5.5 Interpretation of data – the findings.....	59
3.6 Research principles .....	59
3.6.1 Ethical issues.....	59
3.6.2 Triangulation.....	61
3.6.3 Generalisation .....	63
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES, REASONS AND	
STRATEGIES IN MANAGING COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK IN CYCLE	
ONE .....	64
4.0 Introduction.....	64
4.1 Students’ noise level during group work .....	65
4.1.1 Vocalised noise .....	65
4.1.2 Non-vocalised noise.....	71
4.1.3 Personalities .....	74
4.1.4 Summary .....	76
4.2 Talking without permission/off-task conversations.....	77
4.3 Student’s being easily distracted.....	80
4.3.1 Distraction by objects .....	81
4.3.2 Distraction by resources.....	83
4.3.3 The classroom teacher’s authority .....	84
4.3.4 Lack of awareness.....	86
4.3.5 Learning a second language.....	86
4.4 Student’s randomly walking in class .....	88
4.5 Student’s damage to the material.....	91
4.5.1 Students’ attitudes.....	92
4.5.2 Enlisting the classroom teacher’s expertise .....	93
4.5.3 Cooperation.....	94
4.6 Student’s physical aggression to other pupils.....	95

4.7 Other themes emerged in data analysis.....	97
4.7.1 Teacher identity .....	98
4.7.2 Teacher emotion .....	99
4.7.3 Classroom management self-efficacy .....	102
4.8 Conclusion .....	104
<b>CHAPTER 5 THE DATA ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN MANAGING COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK IN CYCLE TWO .....</b>	<b>105</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	105
5.1 Preventive strategies in Cycle Two .....	105
5.1.1 Rules .....	106
5.1.2 STEPS .....	111
5.1.3 Cooperation with the classroom teacher .....	118
5.1.4 Preparation for the class.....	119
5.2 Student’s noise level during group work .....	121
5.3 Talking without permission/off-task conversations.....	122
5.4 Student distractions .....	124
5.5 Conclusion .....	126
<b>CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>131</b>
6.0 Introduction.....	131
6.1 Key findings.....	131
6.1.1 Identifying challenging student behaviour .....	132
6.1.2 Identifying the reasons for challenging behaviour .....	133
6.1.3 Strategies and student responses.....	137
6.1.4 Preventative and reactive classroom management .....	141
6.2 Researcher’s development .....	143
6.2.1 Mastering the literature review .....	143
6.2.2 Personal and academic development .....	144
6.3 Contribution to the research field .....	145



6.4 Implications for managing group work of Chinese class in Australian Stage 3 classes .....	145
6.4.1 Preparation phase .....	146
6.4.2 In-class phase .....	147
6.4.3 After-class Phase.....	148
6.5 Limitation of this research .....	150
6.6 Conclusion .....	151
REFERENCES .....	152
Appendix 1 Interviews – Classroom Teacher.....	176
1.1 Participant Information Sheet – Teacher.....	176
1.2 Consent Form – Teacher (Extended) .....	178
1.3 Interview Dialogue Sheet .....	180
Appendix 2 Focus Groups - Students .....	181
2.1 Participant Information Sheet – Parents/Guardians .....	181
2.2 Consent Form – Parents (Extended).....	183
2.3 Focus Group Dialogue Sheet – Students.....	185
Appendix 3 Focus Groups – ROSETE 11 .....	186
3.1 Participant Information Sheet – ROSETE 11 .....	186
3.2 Consent Form – ROSETE 11 .....	188
3.3 Focus Group Dialogue Sheet – ROSETE 11 .....	189
Appendix 4 Observational Behaviour Checklists .....	190
4.1 Student Problematic Behaviour Checklist.....	190
4.2 Teacher Response Checklist.....	191
4.3 Student’s response to teacher’s behaviour .....	192
Appendix 5 HREA Approval.....	193
Appendix 6 SERAP Ethics Approval .....	194

## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Interrelated components of classroom management.....	13
Table 3.1 Data collection methods .....	51
Table 5.1 Phases of STEPS.....	112
Table 5.2 Modified phase of STEPS strategy.....	115
Table 5.3 Observation Checklist – reduction in problematic behaviour .....	117
Table 5.4 Mapping STEPS Phases with Behaviour Factors .....	118
Table 5.5 Summary of Observation checklist for Cycle One .....	127
Table 5.6 Summary of observation checklist for Cycle Two .....	129
Table 5.7 The frequency (Times) of Student Behaviour in Cycles One and Two .....	130
Table 6.1 Findings: Research Question One .....	132
Table 6.2 Findings: Research Question Two.....	133
Table 6.3 Findings: Research Question Three and Four .....	137

## **Abbreviations**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CBD	Central Business District
CFL	Chinese as a Foreign Language
CSL	Chinese as a Second Language
CWS	Colour Wheel System
DoE	Department of Education
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
HREA	Human Research Ethics Australia
NMEB	Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau
NSW	New South Wales
PPT	Power Point
ROSETE	Research Oriented School Engaged Teacher Education
SERAP	State Education Research Applications Process
TCFL	Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language
WSU	Western Sydney University
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## **Abstract**

This Action Research project emerged from the identification of the need for the researcher to improve classroom management skills during collaborative group work when teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Australian primary school classrooms. This issue was central for the researcher who was a beginning teacher with a Chinese background, who had little understanding of classroom management practices in a western educational context teaching English-speaking students.

Action Research was conducted to research this problem with the aim of improving teaching and learning practice and outcomes. Data were collected over two cycles using this qualitative research approach. Data sources were an observational checklist, reflection journal, interviews with the classroom teacher, and focus groups with students and the peer ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers. Data were analysed and coded and the findings provided evidence of the types of behaviour challenges exhibited by students during group work, the possible reasons contributing to these behaviours and the strategies that were developed to counter these.

The findings indicate that student's noise level, talking without permission/off-task conversations and being very easily distracted were the three most frequent problematic behaviour management issues. The reasons for these behaviours are discussed along with the assessment of strategies implemented in Cycles One and Two.

This research may contribute to a deeper understanding of successful classroom management practices for beginning Chinese language teachers when conducting group work and, in so doing, may contribute to the literature in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language to young children in western contexts.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This research has focussed on a beginning Chinese language teacher's development of classroom management skills in a Sydney school through an action research project. This Chapter introduces the background and research problems relevant to this project, leading to the identification and statement of the research questions. The researcher briefly explains the research design and states the aims and significance of the research in this Chapter and concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

### 1.1 Research background

Globalisation has contributed to the escalating popularity of learning the Chinese language around the world (Odinye, 2015). Globalisation has resulted in the rapid movement of people, ideas and knowledge with a consequential need to appreciate the diversity of societies, cultures and values (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009). The effects of globalisation have also been felt in the field of education so that school communities have become more diverse in terms of teachers, students and community members. In Australia, 5.6 percent of the total Australian population is comprised of Chinese immigrants (Australian Government, 2017). As a result, the Chinese language has become the second most spoken language in Australia (Sturak et al., 2010). The *Melbourne Declaration on*

*Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), a notable document in Australian education was released in December 2008. Foreign languages (FL), including Chinese, have been allocated a key learning area in this Declaration, agreed to by the presiding Ministerial Council representing all states and territories in Australia (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009). In order to achieve this goal, it is vital for educators in general and second language teachers specifically, to develop cross-cultural capabilities so meanings across languages and cultures can be negotiated and implementing in teaching and learning. Native language speakers are therefore valued as the FL teachers.

### **1.1.1 Chinese language teaching**

Chinese language teachers in Australia tend to be Chinese nationals who have been trained as teachers according to the Chinese educational system. There is a significant mismatch between the Chinese and Australian education systems, across teaching approaches and behaviour management. Han (2017) points to student behaviour challenges as a significant concern for teachers from China as most do not share the same cultural background as their students (Zhu, 2012). Similarly, Chen, (2015) has claimed TCFL teachers with a Chinese background, face additional problems to their Australian speaking counterparts in that intercultural issues such being a non-native English language speaker may lead to some misunderstandings between teachers and students.

While classroom management has been predominantly researched within cultures and education systems (Yan, 2015), the researcher found less literature reporting on research on student behaviour management in TCFL classrooms. Learning the skills to manage challenging student behaviour effectively is a difficult task for pre-service (for example, on professional experience) or beginning teachers (Zhou, 2015). Eisenman et al (2015) contend the reasons for such difficulties are due to teacher education programs being deficient in formal preparation opportunities in the field and lacking a focus on reality-

based pedagogical training.

Effective classroom management is difficult to learn as each classroom environment is different. Strategies that work in one lesson with one class may not work in another. Student behaviour management skills appear to be developed over time (Smart and Igo, 2010). There is a need to investigate TCFL classroom management and develop some strategies that are useful for initial Chinese language teachers from China.

This research has explored how one Chinese background teacher developed strategies in behaviour management in an Australian school. The study focussed on students' problematic behaviours during group work, the possible reasons for these, and the development of management strategies to address these challenges. Group work is a positive and popular teaching strategy that provides opportunities for the development of student's academic achievement and socialisation (Frykedal and Chiriac, 2014). Students participating in group activities are generally active as a team approach is the focus for completing tasks and solving problems. For some teachers, classroom activities and processes through group work result in more difficulty in maintaining control and hence may create classroom management issues (Gillies and Boyle, 2010). This research is therefore timely in that it has focused on student behaviour management during group work, and also in an under-researched area, teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Australian school context.

## **1.2 Research problems**

General classroom management issues have been researched and findings are available in the literature, however there is less research available that focusses on classroom management in the particular context of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (CFL). The researcher examined the related English database and CNKI—China National Knowledge Infrastructure, the Chinese scholarship database, and found limited articles



and theses. The research related to this topic has mostly been published in the past decade with the majority produced by postgraduate students researching their own experience. As much of this research has not been peer reviewed, classroom management in TCFL is still considered an area in need of further study (Liu, 2018). Available research has mainly reported on the establishment of classroom rules, the importance of the student's right to choose (autonomy), models of discipline, and the frequency of problematic student behaviour (Liu, 2004; Kang, 2006; Wang, 2009; Xie, 2005; Zheng, 2006; Zhou, 2014; Yao, 2014).

Studies exploring TCFL classroom management in an Australian context are rare, particularly with regards to student behaviour management during collaborative group work. Therefore, there is a need for more research in this area. The reasons for inappropriate student behaviour in the course of group work have not been the subject of much scrutiny and nor has the effectiveness of proposed strategies used in managing group work in TCFL classrooms.

This is an area of particular interest to the researcher in her CFL teaching role as a ROSETE<sup>1</sup> 11 volunteer. Observations of the regular classroom teacher's group work activities revealed that even she had difficulty managing student behaviour during some group work sessions. The researcher also realised that group work was an important component of CFL teaching and that it would be meaningful to her current teaching role and future teaching competencies to investigate students' problematic behaviours during group work, the reasons for these and the possible strategies to manage these challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> ROSETE (Research Oriented School Engaged Teacher Education) is a Chinese language teacher education program offered at the Western Sydney University (WSU). Established as partnership between WSU, the New South Wales Department of Education and the Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau, students from China enrol in either a Master or Doctoral level degree, are trained to teach CFL in NSW primary and secondary schools, and at the same time research their practice and complete a thesis to fulfil their degree requirements. There have been eleven cohorts in this program, which commenced in 2007.

The research questions were then able to be formulated.

### **1.3 Research Question**

The main research question of this study is:

What are students' problematic behaviours in conducting collaborative group work in TCFL in Australian primary classrooms?

The contributory research questions are:

1. What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese?
2. Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work?
3. What kinds of strategies can be used to manage collaborative group work?
4. How do students respond to these strategies?

### **1.4 Research Design**

This research was designed as an Action Research project with two cycles. Each cycle was implemented for half a school term, which was five weeks. The researcher conducted this study in a western Sydney, New South Wales (NSW) government school: Huayuan Public School (pseudonym). The research participants were Stage 3 students, one classroom teacher and four fellow ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers.

Data were collected, triangulated, and analysed across four sources: the researcher's reflection journal, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. Reflection journal data were sorted and categorised according to the problematic behaviours

recorded in the classroom observation checklists. Interviews with the classroom teacher and ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers provided contributory evidence to determine the reasons contributing to the challenging behaviour and to enable the development of the strategies to overcome these. Focus groups with the students contributed to the research investigating the reasons behind the challenging behaviour.

## **1.5 The aims and significance of the research**

Through exploring the challenges existing in student behaviour management during group work and the strategies to solve such identified problems, this research aims to increase an understanding of classroom management in teaching Chinese as foreign language classrooms. It is expected that this research can provide insights for beginning teachers especially those from another culture and with ESL when teaching Australian students. In these ways this research aims to improve the knowledge of classroom management and teaching quality in TCFL classes in Australia.

### **1.5.1 Significance for Chinese background CFL teachers in Australia**

One significant challenge for pre-service Chinese language teachers of Chinese background, such as those in the ROSETE program, is effective classroom management (Han, 2017) as many lack prior knowledge and experience and also may encounter intercultural issues. Pragmatic strategies to manage student behaviour are therefore needed to assist quality teaching and learning. This research analysed students' problematic behaviours, examined the effectiveness of classroom management strategies used in group work, and explored the reasons behind these challenges. These findings could significantly contribute to novice Chinese language teachers in Australia by increasing their knowledge and understanding of classroom management and helping them reduce the uncertainty and anxiety before teaching Chinese. Based on the findings

of this research, future ROSETE Chinese language teacher volunteers, may also become more prepared and confident when teaching in their allocated schools.

This research may also have benefits for the primary school students. If their Chinese language teacher is able to observe and understand challenging student behaviour and respond with appropriate strategies, the Chinese learning experiences provided may be more fluent and interesting. Students will gain more knowledge about Chinese if they can focus on the content of their Chinese language class rather than having class time reduced and diverted when the teacher needs to manage inappropriate student behaviour.

### **1.5.2 Significance for the field of education**

According to Gao (2013) classroom management in TCFL is understudied with most studies of TCFL classroom management occurring in America and Thailand. The study of TCFL classroom management in an Australian context is uncommon, and even more so when it relates to managing students' classroom collaboration. This research adds to the existing body of literature concerned with improving the management of student behaviour during group work in Australian schools. This study also contributes to the studies of language teaching particularly classroom management in second/foreign language classrooms. The literature covers related areas such as emotional engagement from a psychological lens and teachers' identity.

### **1.6 Thesis outline**

This thesis has been structured into six chapters.

Chapter 1 above, introduced the background to this research, including the effects of globalisation on the rise of Chinese language learning around the world and also within the Australian context. The research problems, questions, design and significance have

also been articulated.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on classroom management, classroom management theories and studies in TCFL. Classroom management issues in relation to group work contexts have also been reviewed along with those suggesting strategies to counter inappropriate student behaviour.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology with sections discussing Action Research, some background information on the site and participants and the methods of data collection and analysis. The research principles adhered to, have been confirmed including ethical issues, triangulation and generalisability.

Chapter 4 is the evidentiary Chapter for Cycle One of the Action Research process. It includes a discussion of observations recorded in a checklist and in the researcher's reflection journal of the current student behaviour management challenges that existed in the Australian primary school classroom under study. This Chapter also provides evidence of the reasons contributing to the challenges in classroom management that were identified. It further lists and discusses the strategies used during group work. Throughout the Chapter reflections on the analysis of the data collected in Cycle One provide statements on the directions for improvement in Cycle Two.

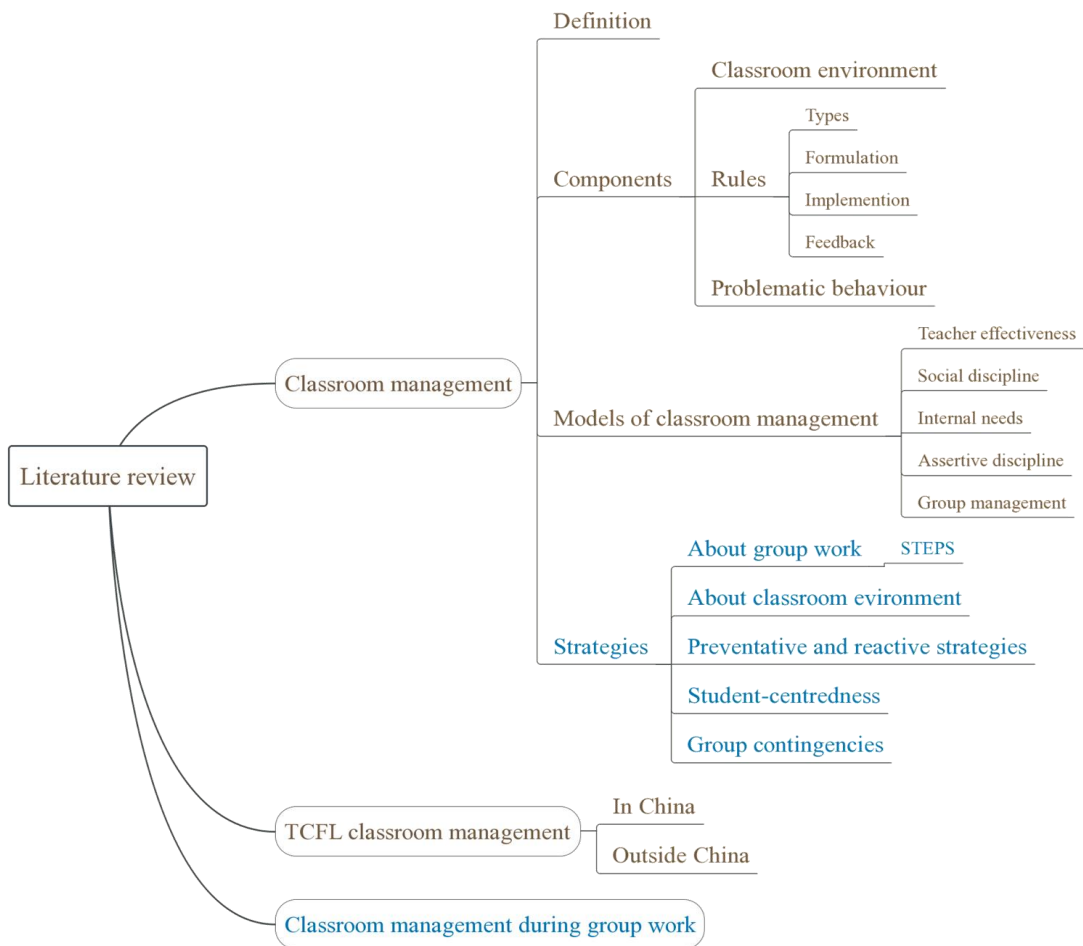
Chapter 5 is the evidentiary Chapter for Cycle Two. It demonstrates and analyses the data collected in Cycle Two and reveals that while improvements in student behaviour were observed across some of the challenging behaviours, others remained and could be addressed in future research. Based on the analysis of the data collected in Cycle One, four preventative strategies and five reactive strategies were implemented to gauge if these improved the researcher's ability to manage student behaviour during group work. The results are discussed.

Chapter 6 summarises the findings from the two Action Research cycles in relation to each contributory research questions. The researcher's own personal and professional development is highlighted along with the anticipated contributions to this field of research. The implications and recommendations for further research are proposed and the limitations of the study are identified and acknowledged.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction



As the conceptual map above indicates, the literature reviewed and presented in this Chapter is structured around three main themes: Classroom management; TCFL classroom management and Classroom management during group work. Four important

sub-themes under “Classroom management” are: Definitions; Key components; Models of classroom management and Classroom management strategies. Each theme was considered important to provide the researcher with a background knowledge of the field prior to undertaking this project. Specifically, the sections on classroom management during group work and classroom management strategies have been beneficial to inform and improve the researcher’s teaching and learning practices throughout this study.

## **2.1 Definitions of classroom management**

Classroom management, as a sub-field of educational research began to gain momentum in the 1950s (Brophy, 2006). Since then, the research undertaken has expanded knowledge in the field to include research across educational systems, countries, and different student and teacher cohorts. Many themes have emerged from the research in the field such as classroom environment, classroom rules, problematic behaviour in the classroom and the teacher-student relationship. The field is notably broad, and so too are its definitions. Definitions of classroom management range from those based on the actions teachers take in their classrooms to ensure classroom order and quality teaching and learning, to those that centre on the importance of managing all aspects of the classroom environment (Egeberg et al., 2016). Johnson (1970) suggests that classroom management consists of establishing and maintaining processes that guide the class to achieve the educational outcomes planned. Effective classroom management maximises the potential and achievements of all students (Lemlech, 1987). Moreover, according to McCaslin (1992) classroom management is not just ensuring students comply with instructions, but rather needs to promote students’ growth in self-awareness, determination and self-evaluation which finally can lead to self-control. Evertson and Weinstein (2006) propose a definition that covers both the academic and personal development of students stating that effective classroom management is “the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and



social-emotional learning” (p. 4). Martin, Schafer, McClowry and Emmer (2016) have expanded the work of Evertson and Weinstein and teased out some specific components of classroom management in order to understand its composition (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Interrelated components of classroom management**

Classroom Management Aspects, Precursors to Action, and Key Considerations		
Inter-related Aspect of Classroom Management	The Precursor to Teacher Action	Key Consideration
Teacher Emotions and Classroom Management: Managing the Self	Self-regulation/control; management of emotion	Creating and maintaining an image while attending to 'faces' constructed by students
A Relational Perspective of Classroom Management	Constructing an image of caring and authority	Demonstrating a rather high degree of teacher authority and a high degree of care
Temperament-Based Classroom Management	Knowledge of student temperament	Recognizing, reframing, responding, scaffolding and stretching
Developmental, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management	Belief system regarding child development and cultural responsiveness	Managing behaviour and instruction in a culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate manner
Classroom Management as Defined from a Participation-Centred Perspective	Understanding the importance of classroom community	Ritualizing routines and practices that define the classroom community; helping children achieve membership

Source: Martin et al (2016). *Expanding the definition of classroom management: Recurring themes and new conceptualizations* (p. 32)

Table 2.1 provides a useful framework within which to understand the dynamics and interrelated components of various approaches to classroom management. Five approaches to classroom management are identified in column 1, with the expected teacher action featured in column 2 and finally the general key considerations that may assist in preventing problematic student behaviour. This framework could be considered an important resource for teachers.

Classroom management research in China appeared as a field of study in the education literature in the late 1990s with propositions offered by researchers such as Liu (1993) in *Modern Teaching Theory* and Tian's (1996) book, *The Education Theory*. As with western academia, definitions of classroom management in China vary. Chen (2003) argues that effective classroom management assists in building a positive classroom environment, maintains constructive student interactions and promotes students' progress in all areas of education. Liu (2003) focuses more on discipline and compliance alluding that classroom management is a method to ensure classroom regulation and control. By implementing various methods and strategies this notion of classroom management sees the teacher as the intermediary to enforce the students' self-control, in order to ensure the smooth implementation of classroom teaching. Shen's (2012) understanding of classroom management is that various factors are coordinated and controlled in order to achieve learning outcomes. The focus of classroom management for Shen (2012) is establishing positive student behaviours and teacher-student relationships.

Across the various definitions of classroom management, the common theme is the establishment of positive classroom environments in order to achieve the planned objectives and goals for teaching and learning. In summary, researchers from western countries and China have a similar core theme in their definitions of classroom management that includes the creation of a positive classroom environment that engages students towards a range of developmental goals, both academic and personal.

Based on these similarities, the researcher contends that classroom management is the teacher's response to the student's behaviour in order to ensure effective teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **2.2 Key components of classroom management**

The key components of classroom management in both western countries and China are discussed in this section. The discussion of classroom management theories contains subsections on the importance of the classroom environment, classroom rules and problematic behaviour. Finally, the discussion turns to classroom management in China and is structured around the concepts of stage of education, subject matter and research field.

### **2.2.1 Classroom management theories**

The literature reviewed in section 2.1 reveals that researchers have explored issues relating to classroom management from many angles. However, in this study, the researcher used Action Research to investigate the challenges in daily classroom teaching caused by students' problematic behaviours, the reasons contributing to these behaviours and the strategies that the researcher implemented to improve teaching and learning success. Therefore, relevant literature has been reviewed in connection with the aims of this research, namely: classroom environment, classroom rules and students' problematic behaviours.

#### ***2.2.1.1 Classroom environment***

Research exploring notions of classroom environment have existed since the late 1920s. Thomas (1929) was concerned with young children's social behaviour and pioneered improved techniques for more accurately recording these. In the mid-to-late 1960s,

classroom environment research branched out to be more comprehensive in the collection of data to uncover factors influencing classroom environment and in doing so, acknowledged and included the perspectives of students and teachers. During that time, statistical approaches in educational research became vogue with the development and validation of questionnaires. Questionnaires allow large quantities of data to be collected, and some researchers focussed on the actual physical classroom environment to assert its impact on teaching and learning. For example, temperature, light and colours of wallpaper, tables, chairs and such materials were found to be influential in creating a positive classroom environment (Gilliland, 1969).

Quantitative and qualitative methods for research on classroom physical environments continued into the 1970s. Walberg's (1979) study of the influence of the school and classroom environment on students' attitudes towards learning found that there was a positive correlation between with the degree of 'comfort' and their satisfaction with school.

From the 1980s, research showed an increased focus on other components of the classroom environment, such as the psychological aspects. The interconnections between the child and the classroom learning environment and the child with other children in the class is touted by Skibbe et al (2012) as having a direct influence on learning success. Other research confirms the classroom environment has an integral effect on students' development of positive behaviours and academic success, and in this study, improvements in literacy (Day et al., 2015).

The relationship between the classroom environment, student behaviour, and academic success and engagement such as Visser's (2001) study has continued to be investigated up until the present. Classroom organisation as a factor contributing to a positive classroom environment was investigated by Martella, Nelson, and Marchand-Martella

(2003). This study found that a well-organised classroom can empower more positive interactions between teachers and children, thereby decreasing the possibility of challenging behaviours. Changing and removal from the classroom environment for students who show ongoing destructive behaviour can break this cycle and be a successful intervention (Guardino and Fullerton, 2010). Organisation in terms of the physical arrangement of the room itself, has been researched. Banks (2014) found that the physical arrangement of the classroom helps prevent problematic classroom behaviour by ensuring that students had easy, convenient access to materials and resources. An earlier study confirmed the organisation of the physical space of the classroom, in this case the seating arrangement, reflected the methods of teaching being implemented (Nordquist and Twardosz, 1990). Teachers today continue to have students seated where they will have the best opportunity for engaged learning. Students seated towards the front of the classroom generally need the teacher's attention to maintain engagement whereas those towards the back generally exhibit more skills in independent learning. The actual seating arrangement can impact on the success of teaching and learning in class and as Banks (2014) contends, needs to be strategic and therefore based on the students' performance, behaviour and the teaching methods.

#### ***2.2.1.2 Classroom rules***

Classroom management, incorporating student misbehavior, has been identified as a problem for teachers, particularly beginning teachers (Alter and Haydon, 2017). Classroom rules are an integral component of effective classroom management. Boostrom (1994, p. 8) defines classroom rules as “dos and do nots of the classroom – all those guidelines for action and for the evaluation of action that the teacher expresses or implies through word or deed”. Classroom rules are a reflection of the norms that students need to abide by during class and are expressed in terms of the teachers' general expectations and standards for students' behaviour in the classroom. Alter and Haydon

(2017) posit that classroom rules define for the students, those behaviours which are acceptable or unacceptable. As noted by Alberto and Troutman (2013), all classrooms have some kind of rules, but the clarity of their definition depends on the teacher. If the classroom rules reflect those of society, they will likely be an understandable framework for students to recognise how these work and why (Maag, 2004).

Other studies of classroom rules have reported their findings within four areas. These are the types of classroom rules, their formation, their implementation, and the use of feedback, rewards and punishment.

### *Types of rules*

Thornberg (2008, p. 25) identifies five rule categories: “(a) relational rules; (b) structuring rules; (c) protecting rules; (d) personal rules; and (e) etiquette rules”. Relational rules prescribe behaviour in relation to other students. These may include examples such as ‘be nice to one another’, ‘do not fight’ and ‘do not tease others’. Structural rules relate to the organisation and management of classroom and outdoor activities. Examples of these rules would be ‘if you want to speak, please raise your hands’, ‘clean up after group work’ and ‘do not scribble on the wall’. Student safety and wellbeing is the aim of protection rules. Consequently, rules such as ‘do not run in the corridor’ and ‘be careful when playing on the ice’ are set as protection rules. Personal rules require students to reflect on their own actions and take responsibility for these. An example is ‘do your best’. Personal rules also include those related to etiquette, such as ‘do not chew gum’ and ‘do not wear your hat in the classroom’. Often these will reflect community norms. These five categories of rules cover every type of rules and set up a foundation for the formulation of rules in the next step, encouraging teachers to reflect on these different aspects and needs when establishing rules.

### ***Rule formulation***

Another body of research has focussed on the formulation of classroom rules. Classroom rules can be considered as a preventive measure and essential to effective classroom management (Alter and Haydon, 2017). Studies have shown that allowing students to participate in rule formulation will enhance their propensity to own and follow them. Jones and Jones (2016) engaged students in a multi-step process to establish rules for their class. In their study, students' ideas for classroom rules were gathered and provided the framework for the classroom rules for the current year. Jones and Jones (2016) found that the rules created in collaboration with students were more effective than those set up independently by teachers. Studies by Burden (2017) and Maag (2018) reached similar conclusions. These studies indicate that having an initial framework of possible rules can be a springboard for soliciting the opinions of students followed by jointly constructing the final classroom rules.

### ***Implementation***

The third focus of research has been to explore the implementation of classroom rules, that is, the process of encouraging positive behaviours and eliminating problem behaviours. These studies introduced classroom rules, measured the effects, and then introduced an intervention (Greenwood, Hops, Delquadri, and Guild, 1974). In Ali and Smith's (2014) study, three rules initiated to reduce mobile phone use in class were tested. They found that an approach that was not targeted specifically at the offending student was not effective. Students tended to not respond to an overarching statement to enforce the rule to stop mobile phone use. Having written rules or a class policy, the second approach tested, was somewhat effective, possibly as students were concerned about their grades. This study also reviewed the students' reactions to institutional rules and found these to be basically ineffective in terms of mobile phone use in classes (Ali and Smith,



2014). The researcher found this study's content was not relevant to a primary school, however the process and findings could be applied to some situations with younger children, for example, the use of materials and reading books not related to the activities.

Teaching the classroom rules to students is an essential strategy to ensure the rules are implemented through student understanding and commitment (Hester et al., 2009; Scott, 2011). Kerr and Nelson (2010) confirm this approach and also advise that teachers could provide a direct example and explanation for each rule followed by having the students practice the rules through role-play.

### ***Feedback – rewards and punishment***

Research has also focussed on the use of feedback, rewards and punishment as a strategy to enforce classroom rules. Teachers' opinions vary on the preferred approach taken, either to reward or punish, however Alter and Haydon (2017) report that for some, effective classroom rules means that compliance is expected and punishment for violating rules should also be expected. Kerr and Nelson (2010) specified that these consequences for 'rule breaking' need to be more significant than threats or verbal chastisement and should be implemented consistently. Scott et al (2011) suggested that the degree of the consequence or punishment should be consistent with the importance of the rule. A harsher than warranted punishment, for example, if students repeatedly 'yells out' instead of raising their hands, and are relegated to a 5-minute break to practice the rule of raising their hands, may result in the student becoming angry having seen themselves as being treated unfairly. This could have the reverse effect and may damage the teacher-student relationship.

These studies indicate that students need to be aware of the consequences for not complying with the rules, however the value of rewards and positive feedback is also important as strengthening students' relationship with the teacher, and their self-esteem.

By engaging in the process of rule formulation, teaching the rules, and implementing these through practice and modelling, appropriate behaviours can be reinforced to assist classroom management (Kode, 2010). The classroom management approach in any classroom should not focus only on misbehaviour, instead, teachers should specifically seek opportunities to give positive feedback and reward students for engaging in appropriate behaviour.

The research reviewed in this section highlighted a number of important considerations for teachers seeking to enhance the efficacy of classroom rules. The types of rules, method of rule formulation, rule implementation and the necessity of providing feedback both positive and negative are important factors for teachers to consider.

### ***2.2.1.3 Problematic behaviour in the classroom***

According to Little (2005) problematic behaviour is a major concern for teachers and students in many education systems. This is a widely discussed topic, and related literature has used different terms to describe problematic student behaviour, including describing the student as “distressed, deficient, inadequate, incompetent, impaired, problematic, and unsatisfactory” (Goodrich and Shin, 2013, p. 44). Problematic behaviour is when students exhibit negative or unconstructive conduct, including: belligerent behaviour towards peers; arrogance; noncompliance; lack of effort or concentration; withdrawing and self-isolation; tardy class arrival; chatting or joking during the lesson and speaking without permission (Ding et al. 2008). Existing studies, conducted mainly in a western context, show that the most troublesome and frequent misbehaviour is the disruptive behaviour of ‘talking out of turn’. However, this issue was not seen as a serious concern for most Chinese teachers (Ding et al., 2008). On the contrary, Chinese teachers reported that their biggest concern was students daydreaming, losing concentration, and not engaging to answer questions (Ding et al., 2008, p. 315).

Cross-cultural differences in teachers' perceptions of problematic behaviour in the classroom is also an issue requiring special research.

As reported by Elias and Schwab (2006), there are many versions of misbehavior, the seriousness of which, depends on the teacher's perspective. They identified: side conversations; making non-verbal noises; using mobile phones; lack of punctuality and non-participation in class as misbehavior (Elias and Schwab, 2006). In a more comprehensive list, Charles (2007, pp.19–20) outlined the most common types of classroom misbehaviour as:

- Inattentiveness: not paying enough attention in the class.
- Obtuseness: not participating in the class conversations, meetings and discussions.
- Talkativeness: chatting with other students, unrelated to the topic of the lecture, during teacher's introduction or explanation part.
- Moving around the room (energetic students): making forbidden actions, for instance, standing up during a lecture, taking another seat or assembling in one place in the classroom.
- Annoying others: disturbing, making a noise, calling out nicknames.
- Disruption: shouting out during instruction, talking and laughing inappropriately, having confrontations with others, causing "accidents".
- Stealing: taking something without permission.
- Defiance of authority: manifesting disobedience, replying to a teacher in an aggressive form and not carrying out a teacher's order.

In the Australian context, students are expected to meet the high standards for respectful, safe and engaged behaviour. As outlined in the Behaviour Code for Students formulated by New South Wales Government, students in New South Wales schools are expected to (NSW Government, 2020):

- Treat one another with dignity
- Speak and behave courteously
- Cooperate with others
- Develop positive and respectful relationships and think about the effect on relationships before acting
- Value the interests, ability and culture of others
- Dress appropriately by complying with the school uniform or dress code
- Take care with property
- Model and follow departmental, school and/or class codes of behaviour and conduct
- Negotiate and resolve conflict with empathy
- Take personal responsibility for behaviour and actions
- Care for self and others
- Avoid dangerous behaviour and encourage others to avoid dangerous behaviour
- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school and class on time
- Be prepared for every lesson
- Actively participate in learning

Aspire and strive to achieve the highest standards of learning”. This Behaviour Code guideline is comparable with Charles’s (2007) Classroom Behaviour outline. Both clearly focus on inattentiveness, talkativeness, obtuseness and defiance of authority.

#### *2.2.1.3.1 Contributing factors*

Research has also shown that there are many contributing factors to student’s problematic behaviour. Eysenck (1975) believes that genetics plays an important role in the students’ problematic behaviours. In addition, the family background may influence the students’

tendency towards non-compliance. For example, Hill et al (2011) found that maternal job loss sharply increased some students' problematic behaviour but did not affect positive social behaviour.

The teacher-student, student-teacher interconnectedness and the subsequent effect of one's behaviour on the other, has been examined and discussed by Thornton (2015). This study found that more dominant teachers who disregarded students' opinions and limited student choice often experienced student misbehavior in their classes (Thornton, 2015). Further, the teacher's behaviour is then influenced by students' behaviours, and finally they influence each other. The exchanges between students and teachers not only includes behaviour, but also determines behaviour. In view of this, there is continuous transactions/interactions between the students and teacher to be considered. This transaction process affects interpersonal communication and the relationship between students and teachers (Yu and Zhu, 2011).

## **2.2.2 Models of Classroom Management**

In this literature review six models of classroom management were identified. These are discussed below.

### ***2.2.2.1 Teacher effectiveness***

The teacher effectiveness training model was developed by Gordon (2003) with the aim to improve teachers' abilities with social interactions (Talvio et al. 2013). The initial tenet by Gordon (2003) was that people have a pre-existing desire to be independent and responsible, however there is also a need for this to be cultivated. Effective teachers can build on these innate predispositions of the students. Teachers need to learn what to do when students give problems, how to talk so that students will listen, how to resolve conflicts, how to set up classroom rules and how to increase teaching and learning time.

This may require teachers to have ongoing training in order to develop their skills as effective teachers. Gordon (2003) describes the effective teacher as one who can be an active observer and listener and guide students to be responsible, determined and capable of self-direction and control (Gordon, 2003).

#### ***2.2.2.2 Social discipline***

The model of social discipline emphasises that classroom environments need to be created in which children feel recognised and accepted. This model is situated in the notion that misbehaviour is caused by the failure of the child's wishes and needs to be recognised by society (Malmgren, Trezek and Paul, 2005). According to this model, teachers need to acknowledge that children learn to be responsible for their own actions through a process of negotiation. Teachers who are prepared to negotiate with children will tend to have less classroom management issues. Children are then aware that the consequences of their actions could be negative as well as positive (Harlan and Rowland 2002).

#### ***2.2.2.3 Internal needs***

Glasser's (1998) choice theory focuses on the five basic internal needs of humankind: survival; freedom; power; sense of belonging and fun. These intrinsic needs also need to be met by children in the school context (Irvine, 2015). By addressing these basic needs for students the chances that students will demonstrate positive behaviour will be increased. When it comes to children, the young students, the levels of cognition and language need to be considered. Also the parents play an important role in guiding students to make proper choice. Parental participation could lead to a more successful result. In addition, it is critical that students should be aware of the right of choosing healthier behaviours (Sori and Robey, 2013).

#### ***2.2.2.4 Assertive discipline***

The assertive discipline model, proposed by Canter and Canter (2001), suggests that teachers create a learning environment in which they are positioned as confident and positive. Whilst primarily based on rewards and punishments (Bear, 2013), the focus is more on the immediacy of identifying and positively rewarding children's appropriate behaviour (Canter and Canter 2001). To establish and support such an environment, teachers should ensure there is a fair and assertive discipline plan featuring positive reinforcement, standards for positive/negative consequences and seeking the support of the plan from school executive staff, parents and the children themselves (Harlan and Rowland, 2002).

#### ***2.2.2.5 Group management***

Based on extensive classroom observations, Kounin (1970) proposes that a fundamental principle of successful classroom management is the ability of the teacher to manage the students as a group rather than to attend to individual children. This model requires of the teacher to be closely monitoring the behaviour of the class as a whole, to maintain children's participation and engagement in activities, in order to reduce the incidences of misbehaviour, or to intervene rapidly in the event of problematic behaviour (Harlan and Rowland, 2002).

#### ***2.2.2.6 Logical result/consequences***

A basic assumption of the logical result/consequences model is that all students desire positive social recognition. If this demand cannot be met, the student will likely demonstrate improper behaviours based on what Dreikurs (1968) refers to as "mistaken goals" where students will strive for attention, revenge, power or will show avoidance. Dreikurs (1968) suggests that in such circumstances, teachers should always avoid a

power struggle with students.

All these theories advocate for active and positive classroom management where ever possible and involves action on the part of both teachers and students. An active classroom environment, encouraging and harmonious in terms of teacher-student relationships, will assist to meet the needs of students and hence effectively solve problematic behaviour in the classroom (Fan, 1995).

### **2.2.3 Strategies**

This final section concerning the literature relating to the key components of classroom management discusses a number of strategies proposed to address problematic behaviour based on the results of research and the researcher's ideas and philosophical views.

Nye, Gardner, Hansford, Edwards, Hayes and Ford (2016, 43–60) identify six practical strategies for solving problematic behaviour. These are: (I) positive praise and rewards, (II) clear structure and communication, (III) positive relationship, (IV) emotional support and training, (V) alternative tasks and redirection and (VI) separation and restrains to ensure safety.

A preventative strategy, the Colour Wheel System (CWS) was developed by Watson, Skinner, Skinner, Cazzell, Aspiranti, Moore and Coleman (2016). CWS is a preventative strategy which provides a different set of classroom rules relating to various situations and activities in class. The physical object, the colour wheel, provided a visual indicator of which rule set was relevant to which classroom situation. The CWS was divided into three wedges of colour blocks (red, yellow, or green). Students would then rotate the wheel to point to the colour that matched with the current activity or situation. Within that section of the wheel the relevant rules were listed. This system assisted the students to understand which set of rules was valid for the activity being undertaken. The research



conducted into the effectiveness of the CWS found that its use had positive outcomes in reducing problematic behaviour for kindergarten as well as second- and fourth-grade students (Watson et al (2016)).

Still other researchers have been able to generate lists of strategies that can be employed to manage challenging student behaviour in the classroom. Examples are Debreli et. al (2019) who have listed five strategies observed during their research as the strategies most often used by teachers: establishing classroom rules; enforcing punishment; body language; raising volume and being positive.

Erdogan et. al (2010, p.881) produced a list of eleven strategies for managing challenging behaviour based on the results of their study which sought the opinions of their participants. These were: (1) increasing teachers' teaching and subject knowledge; (2) re-defining the nature of a problematic course in the curriculum; (3) using activities that can strengthen students' motivation; (4) using software programs that help control the use of faulty computers; (5) effectively managing the class; (6) administering punishment; (7) ignoring some students; (8) investigating the reasons that cause these problem; (9) making rules with students; (10) contacting parents and (11) working with other groups of teachers in the school. This study focussed on an IT, internet-based class and therefore some of the strategies listed above may not be generally applicable, particularly in primary school.

### ***2.2.3.1 Strategies and group work***

Sri (2018) has developed a novel strategy specifically for managing problem behaviour during group work. Sri (2018) studied the characteristics of active, able students and less able students and observed the problematic behaviours that were created by a conflict between how the students interacted during the group activity. To overcome this conflict between group members, Sri (2018) generated a new strategy – STEPS, the acronym for

Separate-TEam-Provoke-Solo. This novel strategy accentuates the cooperation of different group members, reduces the likelihood of conflict and thereby increases the efficacy of group work. In the Separate phase, the group leader is removed from the group and is situated at a different table. The group leader works independently to solve the problem or complete the task. Meanwhile the remaining group members discuss the allocated task, together. In the TEam phase, the group leader re-joins the group to assist the other group members to complete the task. In the Provoke phase, one student from the group (not the leader) is selected by his/her peers as the spokesperson. In the Solo phase, this student delivers the solution or product to the whole class, in front of the class. The teacher would then assess the presentation, or the item constructed and allocate a score that is recorded for the entire group. The STEPS process has the advantage that the active, most able students do not dominate the group or become bored waiting on other members. Group unity is strengthened as the group shares the same score.

The researcher was interested in this strategy as the research to be undertaken was to explore group work management during Chinese language teaching. More general information sourced from the literature relevant to behaviour management during group work was gleaned from the research by Lamb et al (1987) whose study found that unethical behaviours were sometimes displayed within the group or across groups or were the result of interpersonal relationships (the group dynamics) (Lamb et. al, 1987).

Gladding's (2012) research identified many negative behaviours that group members may exhibit during collaborative group or team activities. For example, they discussed that some students resist collaborating in groups due to a reluctance to share information or knowledge or may find the process intimidating and become withdrawn (Gladding, 2012). Group dynamics also may result in negative behaviour amongst group members. Leddick's (2011) research noted hostile attitudes, the need to be dominant in the group or drawing negative attention to fellow group members, as unfavourable outcomes of group

work with older students. If left unresolved, this type of negative behaviour can hinder the group process, specifically trust levels within the group will likely be reduced and any possible advantages of the group activity, countered. Fellow students and teachers can be negatively impacted by negative behaviour that is not carefully managed (Goodrich and Luke, 2012).

## **2.3 Classroom management strategies**

Classroom management can be a significant problem for novice teachers (Han 2017). Beginning teachers are often concerned about how they will maintain a similar level of classroom management as experienced teachers. They also might worry about pleasing students so they will enroll in their courses (Hamid Marashi and Faezeh Assgar, 2019). Most apprehension relates to student misbehavior and how to dispense discipline when necessary. However, this method is reactionary, that is, reacting after the event in a similar manner to an umpire calling a foul on a player during a game (Graham, Holt-Hale and Parker, 2013).

### **2.3.1 Classroom environment**

According to Graham et al. (2013), a positive learning environment needs to be built on a framework of maintaining appropriate behaviour. This can create an arduous task for the novice teacher. These teachers need to develop strategies that produce a positive and constructive learning environment, especially strategies that allow for students to be active in the learning process with clear and concise instructions and content.

Classroom management enables the creation of an appealing and productive learning environment for all students. Classroom management strategies are tools that teachers can draw upon to create such a classroom environment. These strategies can range from those targeting improvement in teacher-student relationships to rules that aim to regulate

student misbehaviour. Effective classroom management strategies will promote and maintain effective teaching and learning environments. Effective behaviour management will ensure a positive classroom environment can be established which in turn will assist in supporting positive teacher-student relationships (Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk, and Admiraal, 1999).

### **2.3.2 Preventative and reactive management strategies**

Classroom management strategies can be categorised as preventive and reactive. Distinguishing between preventive and reactive management strategies is important as when the implementation of preventive management strategies do not achieve the desired results, teachers can then switch to reactive, control-based strategies to manage the class (Menzies and Bruhn, 2010). For example, rules and classroom procedures appropriate to the age and development of the students and the establishment of good teacher-student relationship can be grouped as preventive strategies, while disciplinary interventions such as a verbal reprimand, warning or removal of the misbehaving child are considered to be reactive strategies. Similarly, Froyen and Iverson (1999) used the labels, content management (including the use of space, resources, movement and lesson content) and contract management (based on student engagement – dynamics and interpersonal connections) as preventive strategies, and behavioural management (noting the discipline to contain inappropriate behaviours) as reactive strategies when discussing classroom management.

Lewis and Sugai, (1999) contend that a focus on preventive behaviour management processes in comparison to reactive strategies will have more positive effects on long term behavioural change patterns in students. However, teachers often feel the need to implement reactive strategies in the face of inappropriate behaviour, and for example, may punish a student being disruptive at the time of the disruption (Rydell and Henricsson,

2004; Shook, 2012). The success of reactive strategies as being effective to change student future behaviours is unclear.

Reactive strategies are those management strategies that will be immediately dispensed at the time a student displays improper behaviour (Little et al., 2002; Safran and Oswald, 2003). In these circumstances teachers are more likely to respond negatively to misbehaviour rather than noting and responding positively to commendable behaviour (Korpershoek et al., 2016). The over use of reactive and often negative strategies may be due to a teacher's lack of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of preventive strategies (Peters, 2012; Smart and Igo, 2010). When teachers are not convinced about the usefulness of preventive strategies (O'Neill and Stephenson, 2012), they will normally continue to use reactive strategies even though the student's behaviour may not consistently improve (Rydell and Henricsson, 2004; Woodcock and Reupert, 2012).

### **2.3.3 Student-centredness**

Educational practices change rapidly and over the last two decades researchers have commended placing students at the centre of the teaching and learning context. Student-centred learning methods, incorporating student choice and self-regulation (Dignath et al., 2008) and cooperative learning (Kagan, 2005; Wubbels, et al., 2006) are recommended in preference to teacher-centred pedagogies where teachers control all aspects of the learning environment. Such a change in teaching focus has a subsequent influence on the classroom management techniques needed as activities such as collaborative, outdoor or problem-based learning require a different approach to rules and procedures. The use of preventative management strategies would more consistently match the notions of student-centredness.

### **2.3.4 Group contingencies and STEPS**

Group contingencies is another approach to managing student behaviour, where the individual's behaviour is reflected upon the whole group (Korpershoek et al., 2016). Group contingencies are classified into three groups by Kelshaw-Levering, Sterling-Turner, and Henry (2000) each being based on a reward system. These are: independent; interdependent, and dependent group contingencies. Independent group contingencies are rewards or interventions where all students in the group are treated in the same manner. For example, each student must pass the examination prior to receiving a certificate. The group is praised depending on how many individuals receive the reward. Conversely, dependent group contingencies refer to activities where one or a few students achieve a certain goal or standard, that then enables the whole class to be rewarded. An example would be if one student scored 100% on a difficult test, the class all receive a positive reinforcement (sticker, free time). Interdependent group contingencies are team-based where the team works together and are scored as a comprehensive unit. Group members work together to produce an outcome or solution and all members receive the same score regardless of their contribution.

Based on the notion of group contingencies and behaviour management, Sri (2018) generated the STEPS model to solve students' challenging behaviours in group work. This model combines reactive management approaches with interdependent group contingencies. The intention of having groups of students follow the STEPS process is to build group cohesion by having each group member feel a responsibility to his/her peers in the group as a whole. The STEPS process has been previously reviewed in section 2.2.3.1 and is mentioned again in this section as it was an important piece of literature implemented by the researcher in Cycle Two of this project.

## **2.4 TCFL classroom management**

Although the research focusing on classroom management in China has become more extensive, as discussed in section 2.3 above, understandings of classroom management in TCFL classrooms has been less researched. This section presents a review of the literature sourced on this issue and is structured into two sub-sections – classroom management in international classes in China and classroom management in TCFL classes outside China.

### **2.4.1 Classroom management in international classes in China**

This body of research has focussed on students' problematic behaviours in international classrooms. Peng (2008) used a case study approach to conduct classroom observations of nine teachers of the Beijing University of Languages. The inappropriate behaviour of students and the responses by teachers were under study. Student problematic behaviours were identified as: using mobile phones in class; talking with peers during lectures; physical movements such as changing seats; walking in late for class; not turning up for class; not completing assigned work and being easily distracted.

Based on the research undertaken at another tertiary institution, the International Chinese Language Institute of Sun Yat-sen University, Zhang (2012) explored and summarised students' challenging behaviours with a focus on the classes being taught by beginning teachers. Using the data analysis framework of student behaviour and consequential teacher reaction, the author made the recommendation that mentoring for newly appointed lecturers in addition to attending professional development programs, establishing positive relationships with students and establishing rules could assist in the prevention of some of the behaviour identified.

Li's (2007) research on classes of American students studying in China took a cultural analysis approach by identifying the differences between both, in order to propose

teaching strategies to address the different teaching and learning styles. Recommendations were that there was a need for Chinese background lecturers to: improve their English language level; acknowledge that American students had different learning styles and personalities to Chinese students; be open-minded to these cultural differences and continue with their professional learning around these topics.

Yao (2014) implemented a research methodology that analysed the teaching journals of four Chinese teachers working in China and a second cohort teaching overseas. The aim of this research was to explore these teachers' practical knowledge of classroom management. Again aimed at beginning teachers, the research findings documented the suggestions to: continually maintain a reflection journal; incorporate group work when possible; develop more self-confidence and project this in class and strive to know and understand the students individually.

#### **2.4.2 Classroom management in TCFL classes outside China**

Many local students in countries outside China may not have had much exposure to Chinese culture, its people, language and traditions. Coupled with other internal and external factors, such as compulsory Chinese language learning in some schools, and perceiving Chinese as a difficult language, Chen (2018) found students' motivation to learn Chinese varied and in many cases was not strong. For Chinese background teachers working as language teachers abroad, the western approach to teaching and learning is more open with student-centered approaches (Zhao, 2010). Gao (2013) studied this cross-cultural teaching phenomenon for beginning Chinese background teachers in western schools and reported many of these teachers, found themselves with serious behaviour management challenges during class.



#### **2.4.2.1 Expatriate postgraduate students**

There is a body of literature which foregrounds the difficulties in behaviour management for Chinese expatriate teachers. These include many Doctor's and Master's theses as many of the Chinese language teachers are also postgraduate students, as is the case with the ROSETE program, of which the researcher is a student (see Section 1.2). Many theses report findings from 'researching practice' projects based on the personal teaching internship experience of these postgraduate, Chinese language teachers. Such research, for example, (Pu, 2017: Dong 2016) resounds with this study and therefore such literature has been meaningful and valuable. In addition to postgraduate students' theses, Gao's (2013) peer reviewed research, indicated that Chinese language teachers in Australia must rethink their traditional concept of classroom management and suggested that including Chinese cultural activities can be effectively incorporated into lessons which not only has the potential to increase student interest and engagement, this in turn, can reduce disruptive behaviour.

Other studies have been embarked upon in countries where the Chinese language is taught from an early age and in most schools. Particular examples are Thailand and the United States. Shao (2010) studied a class of high school Chinese language learners in Oklahoma, U.S.A., and investigated the causes of classroom conflicts attributed to cultural differences. Suggestions were offered to counter this phenomenon.

Wu (2013) conducted a study of classroom management rules operational in a Chinese language class in Thailand. The finding was that most of the Chinese teachers had little control over students. He then compared the formulation and implementation of classroom management rules in language classes in China and Thai classrooms. These data were collected via surveys. Wu (2013) concluded with suggestions for colleagues in Thailand by offering a three-phase model that included: the initial establishment of

achievable and meaningful rules; rules are then consolidated and maintained and rule breaking and non-compliance need to be managed immediately.

As more research is conducted in the field of TCFL evidence-based knowledge is becoming more accessible. For example, Zhu's (2013) book, available in both Chinese and English, *International Chinese Teaching Cases and Analysis* identifies and lists the classroom management problems confronted by expatriate Chinese language teachers as observed in their daily teaching practice. Detailed descriptions of individual cases provide vivid overviews of the challenges faced by teachers – situations that other teachers could relate to. From the analysis and findings provided in this book, teachers and notably beginning teachers, have the opportunity to read and consider evidence-based strategies they could be implemented in their own settings.

Wen (2013) has produced a very comprehensive and detailed description of classroom management from the five aspects of teachers, students, language teaching, activities, and classroom rules. In this book, the classroom rules and activities are highlighted because they are able to engage the students to reduce the possibility of negative management issues.

Reviewing these two books provided the researcher with some ideas of what behaviours might be exhibited by students during TCFL classes and what possible strategies might be implemented to counter those that became challenging. These two books are recommended to other ROSETE volunteer and expatriate Chinese language teachers.

## **2.5 Classroom management during collaborative group work**

Collaborative group work has become a pedagogy to promote student engagement and learning in the classroom (Hofmann and Mercer, 2016). Here, the researcher agrees with the following definition of group work as:

...the synchronous activity that occurs as individuals engage in collective thought processes to synthesise and negotiate collective information in order to create shared meaning, make joint decisions, and create new knowledge (Borge and White, 2016, p.324).

By interacting with others, students have the opportunity to be inquisitive, exchange ideas, evaluate different points of view, and construct new understandings (Frykedal and Chiriac, 2014).

Although collaborative group work is frequently planned as part of a lesson, there can still be many challenges that arise during these sessions. With problem-based learning in group work, students may have difficulty forming their own ideas, articulating these and then synthesising the main ideas from across the group (Borge and White, 2016). In addition, the personalities of the individuals in a group, can potentially create fractures between students in terms of their motivation to communicate and to socially engage (Sung, 2018). For example, a shy child who is not confident to express his/her ideas to the group may be targetted as being unwilling to participate or lazy. Natoli et al (2014) contend that poor participation by some students in group work can be attributed to their lack of motivation or having no commitment to contributing to the group effort

Due to the complexity and challenges arising during group work, many teachers may find behaviour management issues a struggle and some prefer to reduce the amount undertaken during lessons (Frykedal and Chiriac, 2014). Group work may produce lively, noisy and overwhelming student reactions that may be difficult for the teacher to control (Gillies and Boyle, 2010). In Gillies and Boyle's (2010) study, ten middle-years teachers were interviewed regarding the collaborative group work implemented in their classrooms. These teachers expressed concerns about the students' off-task, social activities occurring during group work, time management, and the amount of preparation

required. Reasons for classroom management difficulties were offered by Gilles and Boyle (2010) and the suggestions were that teachers may not have mastered the skills of how to organise the students and space in a productive manner and more specifically how to implement the group work.

Natoli, Jackling and Seelanatha (2014) propose there are five parts to group work management: (1) group work; (2) group roles; (3) individual expectations; (4) use of time and (5) conflict resolution strategies. According to Natoli et al's (2014) study, the most significant factor across all five elements is the degree of the teacher's support. The teacher's role is to maintain a balance between being supportive and providing too much help. The authors further suggest that the teacher's role is to guide students' attitude and emotional on-task engagement which directly and indirectly impact on group work results and achievements.

Frykedal and Chiriac (2018) also promote the importance of the teacher's role in the successful management of group work. These researchers categorise the roles teachers assume in managing group work as: the authority figure; the problem and question solver; the situation controller, and the one guiding the overall procedures. Frykedal and Chiriac (2014) maintain this can be achieved when teachers exhibit the skills of leadership and teachership. Leadership draws on the teacher's skills to motivate the students towards achieving the set goals, and also includes teacher knowledge of content and pedagogies to enable the group work to be managed productively. Teachership refers to the overall professionalism and function of a teacher and in relation to group work knowing the content and how to structure or scaffold it to the students' needs and to convey the instructions clearly (Frykedal and Chiriac, 2014).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In summary, research into classroom management in the field of teaching Chinese as a

foreign language is in a growth stage. There is a need for more in-depth research studies to be conducted in order to advance knowledge within academic communities. Academics and international Chinese language teachers have attempted to address classroom management and students' problematic behaviours, but more is needed. With the promotion by the Australian Government to include second language learning (particularly Asian languages) in all Australian schools (MCEETYA, 2008) the number of Chinese background teachers is increasing, as is the number of students learning CFL (Orton, 2008). Therefore, there is a need for strengthening and increasing the research exploring Chinese language teaching in Australian schools and specifically in terms of managing students' behaviours.

The review of the literature relating to various facets of classroom management, including its definition, theories, issues during TCFL and collaborative group work, and some current successful strategies has provided the researcher with many important insights to assist in the conduct of this research.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research design, site, participants, data collection, data analysis and research principles. In the research design section, the researcher discusses the Action Research procedure. In the site and participants sections, the researcher provides some background information about the primary school – Huayuan Public School and the participants. The section on data collection and analysis illustrates the four relevant data sources and the steps to analyse data. In the concluding section, the ethical issues associated with the project are discussed. Issues of credibility and validity of this research are also discussed with reference to triangulation and generalisability.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research was designed as an Action Research project with two cycles. In each cycle, the researcher (i) observed the classroom and identified existing classroom management issues which arose during collaborative group work, (ii) made a plan to address the existing challenges, (iii) implemented the plan, and (iv) collected the data and evaluated the effectiveness of the implemented plan for the improvement of next cycle.

### **3.1.1 Action Research**

Action Research is a reflective process of step-wise process undertaken by individuals or teams where the goal is to improve teaching practice by addressing issues and solving problems. In 1946, Kurt Lewin proposed the concept of Action Research as a means of addressing social change issues and making social improvements. According to Lewin, Action Research was of great value for collaboration and group inquiry and explorations into social issues in order to inform action/practice plans within the field of sociology (Lewin, 1948). Lewin described the Action Research model as a spiraling process, comprising planning, action, observation and reflection in each cycle. Since the 1970's, Lewin's model has been adopted in other fields including education.

Action Research has been used as a method for solving site-based challenges in order to improve specific teaching and learning incidences and to support teachers to develop inquiry learning in their classrooms (Elliott, 2007). Throughout subsequent decades, numerous researchers have proposed their own Action Research models (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Kemmis, 2009; 2013; Mills 2003). However, most approaches continue to have some similarities with Lewin's model. According to Kemmis (2013) a general model of Action Research derived from the work of Lewin is likely to include six steps: problem statement; data collection; analysis and feedback; action planning; taking action and evaluation and following-up. In contrast, McLean (1995) suggests that Action Research consists of three phases: conceptualisation; implementation and interpretation. McLean (1995) emphasises that this sequence should not be altered. This could be considered a misinterpretation of Action Research, as this 'locked step approach' ignores the value of continuous data collection and analysis. However, it needs to be pointed out that McLean (1995) has referenced this notion of Action Research in relation to statistical analyses of quantifiable data, where a 'locked step approach' may be more suitable. In qualitative research, Action Research can be adjusted as needed according to the real

situation and its impact on continuous data collection (Webber, 1998).

The overarching purpose of Action Research is to solve problems researchers experience in their daily life through implementing a problem-solving approach.

Action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the actor in improving and/or refining his or her actions (Sagor, 2000, cited in Sagor, 2010, p.1).

Within the field of education, teacher Action Research often focuses on issues or problems concerned with their own teaching experiences. Common problems can usually be identified through students' behaviour and engagement in the classroom, or noted in students' identity and self-development (Flynn, 2016).

The purpose of Action Research is to assist teachers in developing a clearer understanding of their classes and students, identifying influential factors within the specific classroom settings and making adjustments to their approaches to students and teaching methods. Additionally, it is not just about what teachers gain for themselves, but the aim is to ultimately benefit the students through improved learning and teaching. However, teacher researchers need to be mindful that there are critiques of Action Research in practice, such claims that the method is based on subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality (Strong, 2014). Moreover, in recent years, Action Research has been criticised for not necessarily being relevant to the urgent needs and requirements of teachers' in-service and professional development requests (Flynn, 2016). Another criticism draws attention to the teacher researcher's capability, in that the research conducted by teachers may sometimes lack credibility and validity.

This project utilised an Action Research design as the preferred method to investigate the



problematic behaviour of students with the aim to develop successful class management strategies. This research aimed to initially discover the students' problematic behavior and then based on this evidence, decide what actions should be taken to improve teaching quality, student engagement and behaviour.

The Action Research model for this research is a four step cyclical process of 1) Observation: Through observing the class, the researcher diagnosed the problems for improvement; 2) Planning: After affirming the issues that need improvement, the researcher made a detailed but flexible plan; 3) Implementation: The researcher executed the planned approach and content in order to effect positive change; and 4) Reflection and evaluation: The researcher reviews the first cycle in order to determine what to do in the next cycle. This version is an adaptation of the general six step model of Action Research referred to by Kemmis (2016), as the full sequence of steps was not appropriate for this research.

### **3.1.2 Research procedure**

This Action Research project implemented two cycles. Cycle One commenced from week one to week five in Term 3 of the school year. Cycle Two commenced in week six to week ten in Term 3, of the same year. The four steps were applied in each cycle.

#### ***3.1.2.1 Cycle One***

In step one, observations of other Chinese language teachers' classes were conducted. The researcher was vigilant to record observations of any classroom management challenges that arose during collaborative group work activities into the reflection journal. The observation checklist and the reflection journal data were the main data sources in this step.

In step two, the planning phase, the researcher collected and identified the strategies to be implemented to deliver the lessons and to manage the class. The classroom management strategies were based on what the researcher learned from the literature and the observations of the classroom teachers' practices. These were subsequently modified according to the situation under investigation – how to manage the class during collaborative group work.

In step three, the researcher implemented the strategies identified in step two during the Chinese language classes. During step four, the 'regular' classroom teacher of the class under investigation, was asked to maintain the observation checklist form, as a record of her assessment of actual student inappropriate behaviours exhibited during the researcher's teaching. In addition, the researcher self-reflected in order to discover the possible reasons for the classroom management challenges with the aim of generating improved behaviour management strategies for the next cycle.

Step four, the reflection and evaluation stage, involved additional data collection from focus groups with students from the class, fellow ROSETE 11 Chinese language volunteer language teachers and an interview with the classroom teacher.

The focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers aimed to draw on their previous experiences to uncover possible solutions to the behaviour management challenges experienced in step three, and to assist the researcher's self-reflection, for example, to possibly identify some issues not noticed previously. The focus group with students intended to uncover possible reasons for the challenging behaviour students were exhibiting during group work. The intention was also to illuminate students' attitudes towards the strategies being implemented during the Chinese lessons. These data were adopted as the evidence upon which to base the next cycle's improvement.

### ***3.1.2.2 Cycle Two***

According to the analysis of the data collected in Cycle One and related literature, the researcher refined the research plan for Cycle Two. In step one, the classroom teacher observed the researcher implementing group work during Chinese teaching. Her observations were recorded throughout Cycle Two on an observation checklist. The researcher continued with the reflection journal reflections.

In step two, the researcher developed the teaching and learning plan to address those remaining challenges identified through the examination of the step one data. In addition, the data collected in Cycle One data were also used to modify the plan. For example, based on the students' responses to the researcher's teaching during Cycle One, the classroom rules were modified for Cycle Two. This modification included the plan to implement the STEPS strategy sourced through the literature, in addition to enlisting and enhancing further cooperation with the classroom teacher during class.

In step three, the researcher implemented the plan and observed the responses of the students. The research maintained the reflection journal as the main data source in this step.

In step four, the entries in the reflection journal, the classroom teacher's feedback and the focus group with the ROSETE 11 colleagues were the data to be analysed to evaluate Cycle Two success in terms of the research questions.

## **3.2 Site**

Huayuan Public School is situated in Western Sydney NSW, approximately fifty-five kilometers from Sydney's central business district (CBD), and the local government area to which it belongs has an estimated population of 209,210 in 2018 (ABS, 2016). The school is situated in the suburb of Huayuan and is the feeder school for the local Huayuan

High School. The suburb of Huayuan has an Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage in 2016 of 999 (ABS, 2016) Locations with an Index less than 1000 experience higher levels of disadvantage compared to the national average in terms of the number of families with lower incomes, less training and more likely to work in unskilled jobs.

Huayuan Public School currently has around 450 students enrolled with twenty-two classroom teachers, and a further twenty staff comprising specialist teachers, executive and administration staff.

Whilst Huayuan Public School did not have a dedicated Chinese language teacher on staff at the time of this research, the ROSETE Chinese language volunteer teachers were central to the Chinese language program being operational in the school. That is, the researcher and one other ROSETE volunteer taught all Chinese language lessons in the school across all classes.

Within New South Wales government schools, Chinese (Mandarin) is the most popular language other than English taught to primary school students (Department of Education, NSW, 2019) According to the Department of Education, New South Wales (2019, n.p.) “79,704 primary students studied a language other than English, with Chinese (Mandarin) the most popular language”.

### **3.3 Participants**

The participants in this research were the Stage 3 students in the researcher’s Chinese language class, one classroom teacher and four other ROSETE 11 Chinese language volunteer teachers.

### **3.3.1 Students**

As the researcher was responsible for teaching Chinese to all year level classes, choosing the student participants for this research was based on one main consideration – the age and therefore developmental level of the students. The researcher chose the Stage 3 students, who were in Years 5 and 6, as they were considered to be more able to participate in the focus groups and understand more about being a research participant. The student participants were drawn from one class of 24 students and were aged 10-12 years. Four students were chosen at random for the focus groups by placing all student names into a software program that chose four of the twenty-four names and ‘spat’ these out. The same four students were in the Cycle One and Two focus groups.

The participating students in the Year 5/6 class at Huayuan Public School were noted as having a relatively high Chinese language level based on the researcher’s observation and in agreement with the regular classroom teacher’s information. These students had been learning Chinese since their kindergarten class, that is, for five years. They were able to learn Chinese relatively quickly.

In addition, student’s family background has been investigated previously and through this action research. A student’s family background is very influential on their lives including their performance in class. Data revealed that not only was their family background and parents influencing their behaviour at school, but also what happened in their home before they came to school could set the tone and their attitudes for the day. Students’ moods also will impact on their performance or behaviour in class. If they have had a quarrel with their parents or an unhappy incident occurred these have the potential of upsetting the child, influencing their mood and impacting on their behaviour in class. In the interview with the classroom teacher, this was highlighted:

Also, what the students bring from home... what happened to them before they came to school can cause lots of problematic behaviour – both family background and what happened the morning before going to school. And some kids have a disability or need to take medication. If they don't have their medication, and they come to school, you know what I mean! It will cause a lot of problems. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

These insights from this classroom teacher illustrate how factors beyond the teacher's control can impact on students' behaviour and overall classroom management, particularly in group work. Furthermore, the educational background of parents has a profound impact on students' behaviour. Families where parents have a tertiary qualification generally perceive education as necessary and worthwhile. The parents' attitudes towards learning will influence students' attitude and motivation (Vaillancourt et al, 2018). In the focus group, one ROSETE 11 volunteer mentioned it:

C: I know one boy's mother because she always picks up her kid. We have had several conversations about the boy's performance in class and I find that this kind mother is very tolerant and encourages her child to learn more new things. I think this may explain why this boy is always willing to participate in Chinese class and behave well in my class. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer C, Cycle 1)

This mother's attitude influenced her boy's engagement in class and his motivation for learning. Therefore, sometimes it is important to gain parents' support for learning Chinese and thus potentially reducing the students' problematic behaviours.

### **3.3.2 Classroom teacher**

The regular classroom teacher responsible for this Year 5/6 class was an experienced,

qualified teacher and consented to be a participant in this research. The classroom teacher was familiar with the students and the researcher's performance, and due to her own rich teaching experience, interviews with her provided valuable feedback for this research project. One formal interview with the classroom teacher was conducted at the end of each Cycle. However, feedback received informally from the classroom teacher at the end of lessons, was recorded in the researcher's reflection journal.

### **3.3.3 ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers**

Sharing the same background with the researcher, the other ROSETE 11 Chinese language teaching volunteers were an important group of participants in this research. Four ROSETE 11 colleagues provided informed consent to participate in focus group discussions as part of the data collection in this research. These volunteer teachers taught at six different primary and secondary schools for approximately ten hours per week and therefore had been exposed to various teaching experiences and supervising teachers. The focus groups with this participant group was included to provide additional information on their experiences of challenging student behaviour during group work, the reasons for these and possible strategies to implement to reduce such challenges. The focus groups were conducted at WSU at the end of Cycles One and Two.

## **3.4 Data collection**

Four data sources comprised the data collection method in this research. These were: the observation checklist (classroom teacher documented ongoing through Cycles One and Two); the researcher's reflection journal maintained throughout the Action Research in Cycles One and Two; the interview with the classroom teacher (end of Cycles One and Two), and the focus groups with ROSETE 11 colleagues and students (end of Cycles One and Two). The data collection methods are summarised and aligned with their relevant

research questions in Table 3.1. The data collection methods are explained in detail in the following sections.

**Table 3.1 Data collection methods**

Research question	Data collection method	Action research cycle
What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese?	Observation Checklist; Interview with classroom teacher; Reflection journal of researcher	Cycle 1, Step 1 Cycle 2, Step 1
Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work?	Interview with classroom teacher; Focus group with students and ROSETE 11 classroom volunteer	Cycle 1, Step 4 Cycle 2, Step 4
What kinds of strategies are used in managing collaborative group work?	Observation Checklist; Interview with classroom teacher; Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers	Cycle 1, Step 2&3 Cycle 2, Step 2&3;
How do students respond to these strategies?	Observation Checklist; Focus group with students; Reflection journal of researcher	Cycle 1, Step 4; Cycle 2, Step 4;



### **3.4.1 Researcher's reflection journal**

The researcher's reflection journal was adopted as a key data source. As a data collection document, the reflection journal enabled the researcher to record examples of students' behaviours and to reflect on these. Based on note taking and written reflection this data collection method saves the researcher the turnaround time and expense of transcribing (Creswell, 2018). Reflection journals provide researchers the opportunity to record their responses to classroom practice in order to construct a narrative over time. Mertler (2008) contends teacher reflection journals provide an honest and powerful data source for researchers.

According to Riley-Douchet and Wilson (1997), the reflection journal should include three steps. Firstly, a critical reflection journal epitomises self-directed learning which empowers teachers. At this point Riley-Douchet and Wilson (1997) suggest teachers become engaged in discussions with colleagues focussing on their reflections, leading to the second step which foregrounds information specific to teachers' reflections on the scope as well as practical and realistic aspects of their teaching. This collaborative approach is based on the teachers being comfortable to share questions generated from their self-reflections on their daily practice considered worthy of attention. The final step is where teachers direct their attention to their own self-awareness which then leads to self-evaluation. The final step requires teachers to focus inwardly. In their reflection journals, teachers document any distinctive aspects of their own learning. This three-step process enables teachers to engage in the dynamics of self-reflection while acquiring the skills of self-evaluation (Riley-Douchet and Wilson, 1997). One criticism of this approach is that it assumes teachers are part of a community of practitioners committed to participating in the discussions, and this may not necessarily be the case for some teachers.

In this research, the researcher updated the reflection journal during and after each school visit, recording entries in both English and Chinese relating to classroom observations and Chinese teaching episodes. The reflections focussed on student management strategies implemented during group work and included notes on, if or how these impacted on Australian Stage 3 students in a public primary school. The researcher was able to discuss these reflection records with the ROSETE 11 peer group and the classroom teacher during the focus group discussions and interviews and by considering the opinions of others, more details and reflections were added in the reflection journals.

### **3.4.2 Interviews**

Generally face-to-face oral exchanges, interviews are situations where an interviewer, “attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person” (MacCoby et al., 1954, p.449). Interviews can also be conducted over the telephone or the Internet (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). However, this research was conducted at Huayuan Public School and the interviews with the classroom teacher were conducted in person, on site. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), the person to person interview allows flexibility and sensitivity to be maintained throughout the interview. In the context of this research it was also the preferred method in order to avoid intercultural misunderstanding and to obtain the most comprehensive data possible.

Brinkman (2015) refers to three types of interview—structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. In this research, a semi-structured interview approach was adopted. The semi-structured interview is defined as one which aims to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret their understanding of the phenomena being investigated (Brinkmann, 2015). Compared to structured interviews, which have a prepared and rigid question sequence, semi-structured interviews can provide more flexibility during the conversations, allowing the

interviewer to delve more deeply into the topic and thoughts considered crucial. Compared to unstructured interviews, which have no guiding questions or framework, a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to facilitate the conversation towards the issues important to answering the research questions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

In this research project, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the regular classroom teacher of the students who participated in this project at Huayuan Public School. Classroom teachers are experienced and have a unique understanding of classroom management. The interviews with the classroom teacher were aimed to collect data about the challenges that occurred during the Chinese classes and the researcher's own teaching practices, including the advantages and disadvantages of how the researcher chose to manage the class during collaborative group work activities. The researcher could then use this pragmatic advice about classroom management strategies gleaned from the interviews to inform the next cycle in this Action Research project.

The classroom teacher provided informed consent to participate and was shown the interview schedule prior to the interviews (see Appendices 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

### **3.4.3 Focus groups**

A focus group is usually understood to be a group of individuals invited by a researcher to interact as a group – interaction being the key component of this methodology (Traynor, 2015). Krueger and Casey (2014, p.7) state, “The focus group presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others—just as they are in life”.

Facilitating a focus group requires the researcher to be alert in order to allow for interesting conversations and information to emerge (Traynor, 2015). Kitzinger (2005) advises that with multiple speakers in a focus group having an audio recording is most

useful to assist with having an accurate data source for analysis.

In this research, there were two participant focus groups – a focus group with students and another with ROSETE 11 Chinese language volunteer teachers.

#### ***3.4.3.1 Student focus group***

The focus group with students consisted of only four randomly selected students (see section 3.3.1) in order to allow enough time for each student to fully participate. Each of the two student focus groups (Step 4 in both Cycles One and Two) continued for approximately twenty minutes, was conducted during the rest time at a time nominated by the classroom teacher and was audio-recorded. Students' assent and parental consent were obtained before data collection. The student focus groups were facilitated using the semi-structured approach with open-ended questions (see Appendices 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3).

#### ***3.4.3.2 ROSETE 11 focus group***

The ROSETE 11 Chinese language teacher volunteers were also invited to participate in a focus group in order to gauge their opinions about successful, practical classroom management strategies, implemented in their own teaching and/or those suggested by their classroom teachers. Insight into why some strategies were not successful was also a point for discussion. The focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers more specifically was intended to reveal data around managing inappropriate student behaviour during collaborative group work and the possible reasons why these issues arose. The focus groups were conducted in a quiet room at WSU, for twenty-five to thirty minutes. The two focus groups were facilitated by the researcher at the end of Cycles One and Two (see Appendices 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3).

#### **3.4.4 Classroom observation/checklist**

Classroom observation is a powerful instrument that provides an unobstructed assessment of teaching and learning practice (Millman and Darling-Hammond, 1990). Observational data can shed light on understandings around how teachers operate on a day to day basis in a real-life context (Putnam and Borko, 2000). Classroom observation is useful because it allows novice teachers to observe and become familiar with various teaching pedagogies exemplified by different teachers. The teachers' own background, personality, interests, knowledge, career trajectory and goals will influence their teaching practice. By carefully observing a teacher's practice the observer is privy to the strategies they employ in different situations, the timing and type of questions and explanations enacted, what they recognise as, and how they respond to inappropriate behaviour (Wragg, 2012). Therefore, observing different teachers' practices can expand the observer's horizon and provide possible solutions to important issues.

The classroom observations in this research were conducted during students' group work time. A behaviour checklist was constructed as the observational data collection instrument in this study (see Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). It contained three sections—student problematic behaviour checklist, teacher behaviour checklist and students' responses checklist. This checklist was adapted from the Exeter Schedule created by E.C. Wragg (2012) and was modified to suit the context of this study. The Exeter Schedule was devised at Exeter University during the Leverhulme Primary Project in order to understand how pupils' behaviours were managed. The Exeter Schedule has two sections: the first deals with pupils' misbehaviour and how the teacher does or does not respond. The second consists of an individual child study which allows the observer to construct a profile of the case student's on and off task behaviours and if inappropriate behaviour results.

The behavioural checklist in this research adopted the first part of the Exeter Schedule, with some deletions of items not relevant, such as playing with mobile phones. According to the schools' rules, students are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school, and therefore, the problematic behaviour – playing mobile phone would not be an issue. On reflection at the conclusion of Cycle One, the researcher deleted two more items that were not relevant to the context under investigation. These were 'crawling' and 'eating'. As the students are twelve years old, they did not crawl in the classroom, and eating in class was not permitted, as a class and school rule.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data analysis processes adopted in this research were couched in Creswell's suggestion: "As a research tip, I urge researchers to look at qualitative data analysis as following steps from the specific to the general and as involving multiple levels of analysis" (Creswell, 2018, p.151).

#### **3.5.1 Organising and preparing the data**

On completion of the data collection, the researcher transcribed the audio files of the interviews and focus groups. In addition, the entries on the behavioural checklists (student behaviour, teacher behaviour/responses and children's responses) were typed up to enable more efficient analysis.

#### **3.5.2 Familiarisation with the data**

Once the data had been organised in a systematic and meaningful way, the next step was to become familiar with the data in order to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2018). At this stage, the researcher began to write notes of general thoughts/findings about collected data.

### **3.5.3 Coding**

According to Rossman and Rallis (1998, p. 171) coding is the procedure followed in order to organise data into slabs or segments of text before bringing sense to information. It involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, separating key words, sentences, or paragraphs into categories, and assigning a code or category name to the selected data. The coding processes should basically continue until no new codes are needed to allocate to the data. This process enables the interview data to be deconstructed into ‘chunks’ of similar information (information with similar codes) and then reconstructed into a form that provides evidence that responds to the aims of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

In this research, the codes to allocate to data were identified by becoming familiar with the data through reading and reflection. Initially, six frequently observed misbehaviours were identified from the observation checklists. These six codes were then allocated to data recorded in the researcher’s reflection journal. In addition, the data from the interviews and focus groups were labelled and categorised according to the codes identified in the observation checklists that were relevant to classroom management strategies. The next level of coding was to have all data related to the same problematic student behaviour and possible strategies to address these, coded under a higher level category. This method of coding continued until all data were coded under their specific sub-codes and higher level general codes.

### **3.5.4 Analysis and Evaluation**

Throughout the process described above, the goal of the analysis was to reduce the overall data set, by merging similar data into the coded sets which then allows for interpretation of the findings in order to gain new understandings of the issue under investigation. In this step, all categorised data were reviewed to ensure that the coded data could contribute

to the identification of meaningful themes. Re-examination of the data occurred multiple times, over time, which lead to a deeper understanding of the data as the themes emerged.

### **3.5.5 Interpretation of data – the findings**

The final phase in the data analysis process was to report the findings, based on the interpretation of what the data meant and how it answered the research questions. Direct quotes and excerpts from the data sources; reflection journals, interviews and focus group transcripts, serve as evidence to support the interpretation of the data and the findings generated.

## **3.6 Research principles**

### **3.6.1 Ethical issues**

It is acknowledged that issues of an ethical nature arise in qualitative research as a feature of “the emergent, dynamic and interactional nature of most qualitative research” (Iphofen and Tolich, 2018, p.1). Qualitative research involves people and their communities and hence confidentiality and protection of their rights and well-being is enacted through researchers taking their ethical responsibilities very seriously. Reflection on ethical issues is a core feature of qualitative research as ethical questions may continually arise during every phase of the research investigation (von Unger, 2016). For example, researchers should ask themselves: Who will benefit from this research? What are any likely risks to the participants? What are the researchers’ roles and responsibilities?

The researcher was also mindful of a specific ethical issue reflective of ‘relatively’ new cultural practices emerging in response to, and with the availability of, technology (Roth and Unger, 2018). The collection of data using technology such as video cameras or zoom meeting spaces, has flagged concerns regarding confidentiality of the participants (Roth



and Unger, 2018). In this study, the research involved the audio recording of students, the classroom teacher and the ROSETE 11 Chinese language teacher volunteers. After making these recordings, the researcher transcribed the audio files and kept these and the transcriptions securely on a password protected computer in order to protect the data and confidentiality of the participants.

The central participants in this study were the primary school students from Huayuan Public School. Due to the age of the participants, their parents needed to provide consent to participate and therefore received detailed information about the research prior to its commencement. Before students were able to participate, their parents or caregivers were required to sign a consent form to confirm their understanding of what the research entailed and to provide permission for their child to participate (see again Appendices 2.1 and 2.2). Verbal assent was also sought from the students themselves. Not all students provided assent, or had parental consent to participate. Therefore, the researcher divided the class into two groups and asked the students who agreed to participate to sit together at one side of the classroom. Whilst observing the class, the researcher only observed and recorded the behaviour of the participating group. The researcher was aware of her own identity in terms of being a volunteer Chinese language teacher and also a researcher with the Stage 3 children. The researcher was in a position of power as a teacher, but was mindful that the students felt no coercion to be part of the research. Every student's will and opinion was respected. As the research was part of the 'normal' Chinese language lessons, the researcher taught the students equally whether the student was, or was not, a participant.

The other participants in this study were the classroom teacher and the ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers. Preceding the research, the potential participants were provided with information and consent forms (see again Appendices 3.1 and 3.2). Written consent was sought prior to the interviews and focus groups. When using the data collected from

participants, all personal information was de-identified. A pseudonym was allocated to the school and ROSETE 11 colleagues were given an alphabetical letter to signify their data. As there was only one classroom teacher, data and references to her was labelled 'classroom teacher'.

This study was approved by the HREA (Approval number: H13320) (Appendix 5) and the SERAP (State Education Research Applications Process) of NSWDoE (Approval number: 2019319) (Appendix 6). The researcher was committed to abiding by the ethics protocol for conducting Master of Philosophy research, as outlined by the Western Sydney University's Human Research Ethics Committee.

### **3.6.2 Triangulation**

Triangulation is a qualitative research method where data are collected from at least three different sources from within the same research context. Triangulation hence provides a cross referencing of information to support the findings.

Triangulation has also been viewed as a strategy to examine the validity of the data through the merging of information from alternative sources. Denzin (1970) and Patton (1999) identified four categories of triangulation: (a) method triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data source triangulation (Carter et al, 2014, p.545).

In this research, conducted by one person, the researcher has found method and data source triangulation to be relevant to this project.

#### ***3.6.2.1 Method triangulation***

According to Polit and Beck (2012), method triangulation refers to the inclusion of several methods/types of data collection being conducted within the same research

context. This research implemented method triangulation in that data were collected via the researcher's reflection journal, interviews, focus groups and an observational behaviour checklists with the same class at the same school.

### ***3.6.2.2 Data source triangulation***

Research dependent on one participant source runs the risk of being constrained by a possibly biased view, perspective or opinion. Data source triangulation in qualitative research is important in order to gauge a deeper understanding of the phenomenon by considering multiple viewpoints. Carter et al, (2014), suggest this approach provides a measure of validation and the range of data sources can extend across various individuals, family, community and interest groups.

This research was able to incorporate data source triangulation in that data were collected from school students, the classroom teacher and the ROSETE 11 Chinese language teacher volunteers. The age and role of each participant group varied significantly and added to the advantageous of having multiple perspectives on the one context under study.

### ***3.6.2.3 Combination of triangulation types***

Carter et al (2014) contend that in-depth interviews and focus groups both have specific advantages in terms of collecting significant data. They refer to Brown (1999, cited in Carter et al 2014, p.545), who suggests focus groups differ from interviews in that they produce a “dynamic and interactive exchange among participants” revealing “multiple stories and diverse experiences” (p. 115). In-depth interviews can also provide individuals the opportunity to share real-life experiences revealing rich data on sometimes sensitive matters where they may not be confident to do so in a focus group. Both can therefore be used as complementary methods.

By combining both method and data source triangulation, this research made a considered attempt to gather data that was useful and meaningful to address the research questions.

### **3.6.3 Generalisation**

Generalisation refers to “the extent to which findings from an investigation can be applied to other situations ...” (Merriam, 1995, p.58). Qualitative researchers need to seriously consider this issue. This research used Action Research which provides a snapshot of a specific context at a particular point in time. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be highly generalisable.

The findings from this research focus on practical and realistic student behaviour management strategies for beginning Chinese teachers. Consequently, the findings may be useful for other novice Chinese language teachers to extend their knowledge of possible student behaviour management and to attend to their daily teaching practice with more confidence. Beyond this, the findings of this research contribute to the study of classroom management in TCFL, thereby addressing the gap in the research on the management of collaborative group work in TCFL classes in Stage 3 Australian primary schools.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **DATA ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES, REASONS AND STRATEGIES IN MANAGING COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK IN CYCLE ONE**

### **4.0 Introduction**

In Chapter Two, a review of the literature relevant to classroom management issues and problems was provided. The following two chapters are evidentiary chapters and aim to address the research questions of this study, which are: (1) What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese? (2) Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work? (3) What kinds of strategies are used to manage collaborative group work? and (4) How do students respond to the strategies that teachers use?

Chapter Four demonstrates and analyses the data collected throughout Cycle One of this Action Research project. Data were collected from four sources – the interview with the classroom teacher and her observations, the focus groups with ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers and the students and the reflection journal of the researcher. Based on these data, six categories of students' challenging and inappropriate behaviours emerged. These were: Students' noise level during group work; Talking without permission; Distraction; Student's damage to the materials; Student's random walking in class and Physical aggression to another pupil. Insights into the reasons for these challenging behaviours were formulated through data analysis. Each theme is discussed

in terms of the challenging behaviours observed, the possible reasons for these and the strategies the researcher implemented to address these. Each section then concludes with the researcher's reflections on how these strategies might be reconfigured for improvement in Cycle Two.

Section 4.7 then moves the focus from the behaviour management issues of the students to factors impacting on the teacher. Teacher identity, emotions and self-efficacy are discussed in terms of how these impact on students' inappropriate behaviours. A final subsection Student's family background acknowledges that there are some factors impacting students' behaviours that are beyond the control of the teacher, but none the less must be managed on a day to day basis. The following Chapter follows a similar process with reference to data collected in Cycle Two of this Action Research study.

## **4.1 Students' noise level during group work**

Through three different sources of data, it was revealed that the students frequently exhibited two categories of noise: Vocalised noise including 'yelling out' and imitating animals; and Non-vocalised noise, including tossing papers and moving chairs.

### **4.1.1 Vocalised noise**

In today's class, when I was explaining the procedure of making Zongzi, one boy kept making distracting noises. He first dragged his chair to another corner of the class and made a very loud noise. I just glanced at him and back to the clarification of the procedure. After a while, he imitated the sound of animals. His behaviour caught many other students' attention and influenced the class order. So, this time I went to his table and said "Stop". Then he stopped for a while and chose to make noise again when I walked away. (Researcher's reflection journal, Lesson 3, Cycle 1)

Data reveal that this unwarranted behaviour was exhibited by only one student who was also observed displaying this disruptive noisy conduct during the classroom teacher's lessons. The classroom teacher's strategy was to give him a chance to correct his behaviour, by waiting. However, this approach did not always achieve the desired effect. The researcher chose to walk close to him physically and give direct instruction to him to stop the noisy behaviour. This strategy was successful only for the time the researcher was physically close to the student. The greater the distance between the student and the researcher or teacher, the more likely the student would revert to the noisy behaviour. Therefore, the element of physical distance or closeness was determined to have most impact on the student complying with acceptable behaviour. For this child there was direct link between having the authority figure in the class close by or at a distance. It could be argued that this student intentionally sought to have the closeness of the teacher or researcher by exhibiting the unacceptable behaviour in order to have attention.

This is congruent with findings of Reupert and Woodcock (2010), whose study focused on identifying classroom management strategies pre-service teachers employed and how confident they felt in implementing these strategies. The study found that the most frequently used strategies were "the use of physical proximity" and "moving closer to a student". Similarly, de Jong (2005) found that physical proximity, was an empowering and positive classroom management strategy that could support students' on-task behaviour. This finding provided the researcher with insight into improving the degree of noisy behaviour in Cycle Two. In the next cycle, the researcher might consider that being more active in the classroom and moving around and close to the students while students were working collaboratively in groups, should maximise more on task behaviour and less disruptive noisy behaviour. Another strategy could be to maintain a close proximity with students likely to exhibit inappropriate behaviour by having those children sit at the front of the class.

Another category of unsolicited verbalising by students was ‘yelling’ or calling out. When students had questions or problems during group work, most of the time, they chose to yell out instead of raising their hand to indicate they needed help or to ask a question. The most common samples were “Miss! Can you help me?” and “Miss! I have a question!” When several students behave this way, the yelling escalates the noise level and makes it very difficult to control the class and have maximum on-task behaviour. In the researcher’s reflection journal, it was illustrated:

The process of making Zongzi is a disaster. I showed the students how to make it before they started, and I asked them if they understood and could continue. They replied that they understand. However, when the students were asked to make Zongzi in their groups, it was a totally different thing. They all began to shout and yell: “Miss, can you help me wrap the zongzi?” “Miss, why can’t I fold the bamboo leaves?” “Miss, how do you fasten this knot?” There was only myself and the classroom teacher in the room, but at least fifteen students were yelling. I had to raise the volume of my voice to stop these students yelling. I said quite loudly: “Everyone, quiet! If you have problems, raise your hand and I will come to help you. If everyone is yelling, no one can get help”. Then the class calmed down and I was able to assist the students to solve their problems one by one. (Researcher’s reflection journal, Lesson 3, Cycle 1)

Through the reflection journal entry above, it was clear that the yelling out issue is a group behaviour. The students would ‘yell’ for help immediately during group work because they wanted assistance to complete the task or the game and once someone ‘yelled’ others wanted their needs met urgently also. They ‘yell out’ to demand the researcher or the classroom teacher’s help. By drawing the children’s attention to being considerate of others, that everyone can be helped if they wait their turn, the students responded positively and raised their hands to indicate they required help.



To understand why so many students needed help during this lesson on making Zongzi, the researcher also reflected that it may have been due to inaccurate instructions being provided to the students due to the researcher's having English as a second language (ESL). Most native English-speaking teachers do not likely have difficulty giving instructions, however, for a novice teacher, a native Chinese speaker like the researcher, it did present a barrier to the students' understanding when giving instructions. The fluency and the accuracy of the language both have a great impact on instruction. The focus group data collected from the ROSETE 11 peers, also supported this finding:

C: After I explained the main rule for today's group work, I asked the students if there were any questions. Nearly one-third of the students raised their hands and asked me "What did you say?" "What should I do next?" "What's the meaning of this paper?". I didn't think it was because I did not give them clear instructions. I thought most probably it was because of the differences between the languages. At that time, my classroom teacher would help me paraphrase the instructions and then all the kids were able to understand. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer C, Cycle 1)

The inaccuracy of the language used as the medium of instruction caused a gap between the student's understanding and the Chinese teacher's explanation. An inappropriate word or wrong sentence structure is directly and negatively related to teaching effectiveness which then compounds into a reduction in the novice teacher's confidence. With less confidence the researcher is likely to be less expressive and then the students again misunderstand. A type of vicious cycle is created for the ESL teacher. Absorbing the experience from Cycle One, the researcher proposed two solutions to the language barrier in providing clear instructions to students. These were: noting and modelling the instructional language used by the classroom teacher; and providing the students with a

visual display of the procedure to follow—step by step using the PowerPoint (PPT) slides or hand-made cards.

Another reason for the students' being prone to yelling out in class could be that they do not have a sense of how to obey the class rules. In Cycle One, the rules the researcher established did not work well. At the beginning of the first lesson, the researcher set up the rule: "If you want to talk or ask questions, please raise your hand." However, the students continued to yell out when they had a problem that required assistance. The lack of rule awareness or a disregard for the class rule led to problematic behaviour being exhibited by the students with an associated disruption to the lesson. This led to the researcher reflecting on the usefulness and appropriateness of the rule itself of 'raising hands'. A new strategy to address the disruption caused by the students 'yelling' out needed consideration for implementation during the following cycle of teaching. Rules are appropriate if they address the students' age and development and then can assist the teacher reduce the frequency of student's problematic behaviour, almost before it occurs. Conversely if the rules are not accepted by the students and not followed, challenging behaviour may cause problems for the teacher and other students.

Eby (1997) advises on the design of class rules contending that initially on the first day of class, basic rules and procedures need to be established. Experienced second language teachers, draw on their past personal and teaching experiences, their teacher training and collaboration with peers to initiate and confirm with the class the expectations and guidelines to ensure a safe and positive learning environment. If the rules the teacher planned at the beginning are not compatible with the students, they will not fulfill their original intention. The focus group with ROSETE 11 provides corroboration of this point:

B: I do set up rules, but the rules I established at the beginning of my teaching with the class were not useful. At that point I just planned the rules by myself,

instead of communicating with the classroom teacher. So, at first, my class was a little confused and did not follow the rules well. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteer, volunteer B, Cycle 1).

From this excerpt of evidence provided by the ROSETE 11 volunteer, we can see that establishing appropriate rules is essential. Another important consideration is when to implement the rules. The research by Ralph (1994) indicated that the commencement of the school term provides a critical opportunity to consolidate and class rules (Ralph, 1994). Given that a term is generally ten weeks, which equates to ten Chinese language lessons, establishing the rules in the first or second week is essential.

Sometimes teachers provide their students with a training period during which accountability is not enforced directly as the students are learning how to respond to the rules and behave accordingly (Kode, 2010). It could be argued that this approach is actually conveying the message that the rules are suggestions and not important enough to be obligatory. The researcher made this mistake at the beginning of Cycle 1 and recorded in the reflection journal:

One rule I set up was ‘Raise your hands up if you want to talk.’ In the first class, some students wanted to answer the questions I asked, but they did not raise their hands, calling out or talking to each other about the answer. I still let them talk because I thought they needed time to learn the rules and so I did not correct them. However, this proved to be the wrong approach. The talking became more frequent for more students. Now there are more students talking without raising hands. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

A key principle of classroom management is to consistently provide feedback to students, both positive and negative depending on the context from the commencement of classes to ensure consistency (Ralph, 1994). Therefore, it is important that the teacher

implements the rules consistently and provides feedback to reinforce appropriate student behaviour, allowing students to become familiar with and review the rules from the first day of class. The researcher followed this approach in Cycle Two, and it was revealed to be more effective than Cycle One. The detailed data to verify the researcher's attempt to improve teaching practice is demonstrated in Chapter Five.

#### **4.1.2 Non-vocalised noise**

Data also reveal that other less disruptive non-verbal noise was made by students during group work. These were often small movements, almost movements like scratching the table or knocking the book with a finger or fist. It appeared these young students were deliberately making these noises to attract the teacher's and other students' attention. These actions were not loud, and they did not disrupt the class or cause a problem with behaviour management. Initially the researcher reacted to the noise making and engaged the students in a conversation to ask them why they were making the noise. However, after raising this issue in the interview with the classroom teacher at the end of Cycle One, the researcher learned to simply ignore these students. Ignoring is an effective strategy when attempting to solve such minor attention seeking problems. Graham et al. (2013) stated that increasing appropriate behaviour can be achieved by ignoring inappropriate behaviour when the problem is of minor concern. In the last two lessons of Cycle One, the researcher implemented the strategy to not give the students any attention when they exhibited these minor noise making actions, and the frequency of such behaviours did decrease. Therefore, in Cycle Two, the researcher would continue to ignore such minor problems in the class.

The sharing of roles in group work is another factor influencing student on- or off-task behaviour. It was observed that some students had nothing to do in group work because other group members in their group were very independent and completed the tasks on

their own. Therefore, those students who were marginalised from the activity likely felt bored and deliberately made some noise to overcome their boredom.

When I was checking the students' answers as I normally did, I observed that a boy was tossing the paper around and not participating in his group's discussion. I asked him why and he told me that Sam, the group leader, finished the worksheet quickly and subsequently told the others the answers so they could complete the worksheet, so there was nothing to discuss. After realising this situation, I only told the boy to stop tossing the paper and to try to think about the answers to the questions himself. As this was the concluding activity and the class was due to finish I hurried to the next group to check on other groups' answers. In this process, I found that three groups had a similar procedure for completing the worksheet—one student in the group had nothing to do and just tossed the paper or was distracted to do something else. (Reflection journal, Lesson 2, Cycle 1)

As the reflection journal revealed, the category of making disruptive noises, like scrunching, shuffling or tossing paper could well be the result of the unbalanced distribution of the task across members of the group. The researcher did not give enough work to the talented students to keep them busy during the entire group work time and perhaps too much work to the less talented students. The degree of difficulty may not have been appropriate for all students. When the task given to students is too easy, they will finish it very quickly. In the researcher's reflection journal, it was observed:

In this class, to review all the characters we have learned previously, I designed a worksheet for the students. This worksheet contained three parts: the pictures that present the meaning of character, the English translation and a blank space for student responses. As we had reviewed these ten characters many times before and practiced writing them, I planned that the students would finish this

worksheet in ten minutes. Beyond my expectation, most of them finished it in five minutes and then began to chat with each other or toss the paper. After communicating with some students, I realised that I had made this worksheet too easy. A boy told me that most of the pictures I chose were very similar to the character, and so they did not need to think too much about how this character appeared. They therefore finished very quickly. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

From the reflection above, it is obvious that the design of the task is quite important. If the task is too easy, students will feel bored and easily distracted to counter their boredom. However, if the task is too difficult, they feel that it is beyond their ability and they cannot complete it. They are likely to feel frustrated and will be distracted to off-task behaviour. Therefore, the degree of difficulty of the task is an important factor that influences students' behaviour. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains this issue. Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the ZPD has stemmed from his concerns about what children can achieve with the help of others that cannot be achieved on their own. He described the ZPD as: "the distance between the actual developmental level (independent problem solving) and the level of potential development (problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers) (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). More simply put, it is within the ZPD that the learner comes to know 'what he/she is' (the level of development already reached) and strives to become 'what he/she has not yet reached' (his/her potential development) achievable through collaboration with more skilled peers (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). From a constructivist point of view, it is generally under the guidance or in collaboration with a more knowledgeable person, that learners progress from a lower to a higher level. Vygotskian terminology refers to this assistance or guidance as scaffolding learning. The person assisting the learner might be an expert, such as a teacher, or a peer at a similar or more competent level. Scaffolding is very helpful for a learner as it breaks a more complicated task into achievable and

understandable sections or steps (Alkurtehe and Dzakiria, 2018). In the field of language learning, Van Lier (2004, p. 90) notes six features of scaffolding:

- 1) Continuity: repeated occurrences over time, with variations connected to one another;
- 2) Contextual support: a safe but challenging environment, errors are expected and accepted as part of the learning process;
- 3) Intersubjectivity: mutual engagement and support, two minds thinking as one;
- 4) Contingency: the scaffolding support depends on learners' reactions, elements can be added, hanged, deleted, repeated, etc.;
- 5) Handover/Takeover: there is an increasing role for the learner when skills and confidence increase;
- 6) Flow: communication between participants is not forced but flows in a natural way.

Upon further reflection, the researcher did not provide sufficient scaffolding for the group work activities. The materials (resources and worksheets) provided did not take into consideration every student's ability and therefore did not cater for different students' needs. In Cycle Two, the researcher planned to implement the practicalities of ZPD by including more scaffolding in the lessons and having worksheets adjusted accordingly.

#### **4.1.3 Personalities**

The researcher also reflected on the personalities of the students as another reason for students being off-task and displaying inappropriate behaviour. Students with different personalities behave differently in group work. Some students naturally took on a leadership role which led to them being quite dominant and controlling the group and the assigned tasks. This left reduced opportunity for other students to participate and complete the tasks. In the classroom teacher's interview, it was mentioned as follows:

We also have issues with personalities. There are strong personalities and there are also children who are not motivated who do not do any work in a group and there are ones that like to do all the work and they become very dominant.

(Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

The Focus Group with students also revealed supporting data. The students themselves agreed that their classmates' personalities will influence their group work and engagement.

A: Yeah, in my group, I always do most of the work, because others are unwilling to take responsibility and put up their ideas.

B: Actually, such things happened in my group too. Miss, when you give us the worksheet to finish, there is always one person who barely speaks. But I think he is not unwilling to participate. He's just too shy to do it.

D: Miss, I admit I do not talk much in my group. Actually, I want to participate in the group work, but X always speaks out his ideas and does not leave space for other members to talk.

(Focus group with students, Question 3, Cycle 1)

When asking the students about their perspective on how they participate during group work, most of the students indicated they 'put up with' the personality of other group members. In the focus group with students above, most students complained about this problem. This issue prompted the researcher to reflect on the group composition. From the analysis of the data collected from the student focus group and the interview with the classroom teacher, the researcher learned that group formation could be done two ways. One is to let students form the group by themselves, and the other is for the teacher to assign the group members. The second approach would generally be more common in classrooms. When it comes to forming groups, the teacher should consider many factors, like age group, students' characteristics and friendships. During the interview with the



classroom teacher she explained her approach to forming the groups for collaborative work:

I group the students, and don't let them group themselves. Otherwise, they will form friendship groups and then basically get nothing done. You need to ensure each group has the students with the personalities you need: a strong personality, a hard worker, a quiet person and also academically what you are after. If it's a group activity related to Maths, I would choose the students with the same abilities and have them in the same group together. So that they will build from there. If it's an English lesson, History or Geography I tend to split the academic level across the group so they can learn from each other. So that's the way I get around most of those management issues. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

From this teacher's explanation, the researcher learned that knowing the students' personalities is an important first step, followed by the need to choose one student that has the ability to be the group leader and three or four other students to form a group of four. Depending on the subject being studied the students can be basically of the same level (Maths), and across other subject areas it was suggested that at least one student of higher academic level should be included to lead the whole group.

#### **4.1.4 Summary**

The researcher's strategy for responding to the excessive level of students' noise was to attempt to stop the student's behaviour directly, but this strategy proved to be a temporary solution rather than being able to effect a permanent resolution. As discussed previously, direct instruction to the student in combination with close physical proximity is effective in the short term but may not last very long, as the reasons for the noise making need to be addressed and the findings indicate that these can stem from the unbalanced

distribution of work within the group either because the tasks have not been scaffolded appropriately or may be due to student personality clashes.

## **4.2 Talking without permission/off-task conversations**

The researcher found that students talking without permission was a challenge and occurred very frequently throughout the group work activities. As the students needed to collaborate, they discussed the tasks and talked about the materials and resources they received in relation to their tasks. On-task discussions developing cooperation and teamwork was encouraged as part of the objectives of group work but on occasions the students would chat or talk about issues irrelevant and unrelated to the task at hand. This kind of talk was discouraged. It was not that ‘no talk was allowed’ – on-task discussions were encouraged. The challenge was to minimize the off-task discussion during the allocated group work time. The researcher was concerned about this issue and pointed it out in the reflection journal entry below:

From across the five lessons, I observed that there always were students talking about irrelevant things while they were supposed to be doing their group work. Most of the time students were discussing the topic I gave them, but almost every class there were one or two groups that would consistently talk about other matters. For example, what they watched on television last night, their favourite stationery or their pets. When I walked around to check their participation, I would always hear such irrelevant conversation. Normally I would ask them, “What are you guys talking about?” and they would stop these kinds of conversations. I also noted that when two students were chatting, the students sitting close to them would also join in and begin to chat. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

Students’ off-task talking is a serious problem as it attracts other students to join in, and

become off-task also. As the reflection journal showed, if one student in the group begins to talk with another student, many other students will be enticed to participate. This can then lead to time management issues for the researcher to complete the planned lesson within the allocated time. When the researcher was teaching the Chinese language lessons, thirty minutes was the assigned time. Group work activities would normally be allocated ten to fifteen minutes. Time management across the lesson format is important and the need to keep students on-task during group work is a contributing factor to delivering a successful lesson. When students were given too much time, after they completed tasks they were easily distracted towards activities or talking not related to the Chinese language lesson. When students were not given sufficient time, they rushed to finish the activities, ultimately not doing their best work. In the interview with the classroom teacher she commented on this issue:

When I ask students to do group work, I found that the time management is quite important. When I gave them 15 minutes to finish a worksheet in groups, about ninety per cent of students would finish it in eight to twelve minutes, and then do whatever they want to do. But when I gave them less time, not enough time, the final presentation or work was not satisfactory. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

From this data excerpt the classroom teacher identified the dilemma for teachers to be able to manage the time allocated to group work, so that students' engagement in class is maximised. In Cycle One, the researcher allocated the students too much time to complete group work activities which resulted in irrelevant chatting and disruption of other group members. In Cycle Two, the researcher would seriously consider the time allocation for group work based on the experience gathered in Cycle One with the view to minimise time wastage.

One point to note was that the students who were engaged the most in off-task

conversations were the group leader or very positive students who are highly engaged in their work. These students often completed their work more quickly than other students, and whilst they waited for others to catch up, were often keen to discuss irrelevant topics. The data from the interview with classroom teacher revealed this point.

In my class, there are always three students talking or discussing other things in group work. You know, they are not the so-called bad students, they are the talented students in my class. They have the ability to finish the work quickly, so they have more time to chat. Of course, other students would chat too.  
(Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

The data example above demonstrates that the incidences of talking about unrelated topics is often the case when the talented students have completed the set activity and are waiting. It is then difficult for the other students who have not completed the allocated tasks, to concentrate and they may be attracted by the ongoing conversations around them. As previously proposed, this issue of off-task discussions can also be attributed to unbalanced distribution of the group work tasks. The capable students will often finish the task more quickly than other group members, become bored and rather than help or discuss the set tasks with the other group members, they tend to strike up an unrelated conversation with their peers.

Several strategies came to mind, when the researcher looked to solutions to this problem. Providing the talented students with an extra small task or developing a new group rewards system to encourage these talented students to help their group members were both considered as possible solutions. Addressing the chatting students directly, was a strategy the researcher had initially implemented when attempting to manage group work activities. The researcher would approach the group directly and say, "Now, stop!". This direct way is useful, however, the researcher needed to raise the voice and use a serious tone, to say "Stop" in order to be heard. The researcher had cause to reconsider this

approach after the Focus Group with students revealed the following:

B: Miss, do you remember that in one class, you directly came to my table and said “Stop” quite seriously. Actually, I was very upset, even a little terrified.

(Focus group with students, student B, Cycle 1)

The strategy the researcher had observed the teaching using to solve student’s off-task talking was to be silent herself and wait for students to stop talking or to just stand and wait, without engaging the students. This strategy was not successful as the students did not realise why the researcher stopped speaking and that perhaps the wait was not long enough for the students to become aware of the severity of the problem. The classroom teacher also indicated this problem:

You need to make them quiet before you talk. And if you are waiting, keep waiting. I know you are setting up rules. I heard you say: “I am waiting for you”. But you then backed off too easily. You know, be firm to give the students the idea that you are in charge and you listen to me. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

The time length to stop and wait is critical for managing success. In Cycle Two, the researcher would consider waiting a sufficient length of time to ensure the students would cease chatting and show their attention.

### **4.3 Student’s being easily distracted**

According to the researcher’s observations and reflections, the students were easily distracted whilst undertaking group work.

### 4.3.1 Distraction by objects

Students' attention was easily grabbed by objects in plain sight, for example, cards used for another class, toys and books in their classroom. One entry in the researcher's reflection journal noted:

This week I designed a matching game to revise the numbers we learned before. First, I invited three students to play the matching game with me as a demonstration. Most of the students were watching carefully. But I noticed one girl obviously did not focus on me. Initially the girl was focussed, but then her attention was caught by a toy. She started to play with the fluffy unicorn toy. She pinched and played with the toy consistently. I sought to make eye contact, and when she saw me she put the toy down. Five minutes later, I saw her grab her toy again. This time I tapped her on the shoulder and pointed to her school bag. She understood my meaning and put the toy in her bag at the corner of the classroom. (Reflection journal, Lesson 1, Cycle 1)

The data above demonstrated one situation of distraction. The girl's attention was grasped by the toy. The researcher's strategy was to use eye contact and body contact. Both strategies were successful, however the body contact seemed to be more direct and effective because it conveyed more clear information compared to just eye contact. The body contact strategy was used most often by the researcher. When walking around the class to monitor the students' on-task behaviour, if the researcher found some groups were not focussing, a tap on the student's shoulder generally brought them back to the task at hand. This strategy had an immediate response as the students would stop whatever had distracted them, and return to the task. However, after a short while the students would again become distracted. Therefore, it remained to be improved in Cycle Two.

Eye contact was the other strategy the researcher used many times. Year 6 students were

most responsive to eye contact as being a year older than the Year 5s, they seemed to understand the implication. Eye contact is a way to alert students without influencing the other students or causing any embarrassment. In the researcher's reflection journal, an entry provided an example:

Today I observed one student chatting with his classmate during the group work. I noticed him whilst I was talking with another group to help them complete the matching game. I only made eye contact with that boy. Luckily, he caught my eye also and understood that I was asking him to refocus back to work.  
(Reflection journal, Lesson 2, Cycle 1)

In this classroom episode, the strategy of eye contact proved to be useful. However, this may not always be the case. If a student does not happen to catch the eye contact, or the student does not understand what it means, this strategy becomes redundant. An example of this situation was also recorded in the researcher's reflection journal:

Later, I observed another student sitting quite aimlessly, doing nothing. So I used eye contact again, but this student did not catch my gaze until I walked close to him and tapped him on the shoulder. (Reflection journal, Lesson 2, Cycle 1)

In the description above, the eye contact strategy was not useful in this case as the student was 'zoned' out and was not really aware of his surroundings and did not notice the researcher. The effectiveness of the eye contact strategy proved to be a bit random and therefore in Cycle Two, this strategy needs to be improved, perhaps by considering the proximity of the researcher to the student. When the researcher is closer to the group, the chance of making eye contact with one of the students may well increase. Being closer also means that eye contact and body contact can both be applied to address students who have become distracted and guide them back on task.

### **4.3.2 Distraction by resources**

The students were sometimes distracted by the resources needed for their lessons. The researcher's Chinese lessons were normally a combination of reading class writing sections, so there were always many reading books on the students' tables. During group work, some students did not participate in the group, but were distracted by and preferred to read other books.

Today's Chinese class had activities which switched from reading to writing, so there were many books and reading materials on the students' tables. When it came time to write the characters for the name of the cities on the worksheet, they all discussed this very seriously. After five minutes, I found that nearly eighty per cent of the group had finished. So I said there was one minute left and could the students check their answers together in their groups. When I was helping the group who had not finished, I observed that some groups were reading books from their previous English class, rather than following up with their peers. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

This entry in the researcher's reflection journal above confirmed that students had become distracted from the group work task and found other books (not related to the lesson) and were reading these books individually – perhaps they felt they had nothing else to do. The researcher had not foreseen this distraction as her attention was concentrating on assisting the students who were having difficulty. This situation did not escalate as the researcher was able to gather the attention of all students to check the answers after one minute. However, the researcher did consider that students finding their own books on different topics was unacceptable behaviour. Therefore, in the upcoming classes during Cycle Two, the researcher would set up a rule about reading the Chinese book resources provided, and not allowing the students to be distracted with other reading materials not specifically related to the Chinese lesson.



It was also noticed that all manner of interruptions and incidences distracted the children's attention. Students delivering a message from another class, items falling to the floor and even insects making their way into the classroom were all quite distracting to these students aged 10-12 years. Macias and Sanchez (2015) also reported that students could easily be distracted by students from other classes and when cultural, physical and social lessons were being held outdoors

One anecdote recorded by the researcher in the reflection journal demonstrated how the whole class can be easily distracted:

Today's class was initially out of control. When I came to the class, I found the classroom teacher was absent and the whole class was obviously noisier than usual. The disruption was caused by a bee flying into the classroom. All the students had scattered afraid of being stung. After I managed to drive the bee out of the classroom, the class were still very excited and noisy for what seemed like a long time. I attempted to have the students quieten down, without success until I remembered the way the classroom teacher managed to gain the attention of the whole class. I began to clap a regular rhythm and the students started to follow my actions. After this clapping routine and the class was settled, there was only ten minutes left and I was unable to complete my teaching goal for the day. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

#### **4.3.3 The classroom teacher's authority**

On reflection, the researcher came to the realisation that the classroom teacher had more control over the students. Apparently, the researcher lacked the same degree of classroom teacher authority. Classroom teacher authority is a common problem for many beginning teachers who may be young as well as inexperienced. Experienced teachers have a toolbox of strategies and can also convey a certain professionalism which conveys to the

students that the teacher is 'in control.' They are assertive without being threatening, authoritarian, or aggressive. For example, in Woolfolk's (2012) finding, experienced teachers draw on the use of eye contact to defuse likely misbehaviour before it escalates. However, novice teachers do not have such an ability as evidenced in this study, where the researcher often needed to use body contact with eye contact and in close proximity to have the desired effect. The lack of the classroom teacher authority will influence classroom management and reduce the efficiency of managing class order.

In this project the researcher has considered two possible reasons for her lack of the classroom teacher authority. One, is lack of experience. When a student's problematic behaviour occurred, the researcher tried to manage this challenge, but without previous experience of classroom management strategies and not knowing the class really well, some attempts were not effective. Compounding this, the students may not obey the researcher's instructions because they do not consider the researcher as a teacher with authority. Therefore, the second possible reason is that the researcher's status as a second language teacher and a volunteer and not a regular classroom teacher has reduced her authority. The Chinese classes for students at Huayuan Public School comprise one lesson per week and therefore it is likely the researcher's authority is decreased as students may not recognise the status of Chinese teachers. This was the case with one student as the researcher's reflection journal records:

I chatted with my students about my teaching and the status of the Chinese class. One boy's words really hurt my feelings. He directly said he does not take the Chinese class seriously and I was just a volunteer appearing in school once a week. From this conversation it was obvious he did not think of me as a teacher equal to his classroom teacher. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

This excerpt is a record of one student's opinion however it is likely others have a similar view – that there is an unequal status between the Chinese the classroom teacher and the

classroom teacher. This attitude was directly shown in the totally different behaviours of the students when their classroom teacher was not present in the room. In order to raise the researcher's teacher authority, a new strategy would need to be implemented in Cycle Two teaching.

#### **4.3.4 Lack of awareness**

Another factor that may explain this challenge is that the researcher was underprepared in terms of student behaviour. When confronted with students being easily distracted it took the researcher a long time to settle the class. If the researcher was prepared for such challenges before the class, the potential of misbehavior may be reduced. Preparation is a critical factor that can impact on classroom management effectiveness. In Cycle One, the researcher made concerted efforts to prepare and plan the teaching content and material, but paid little attention to prepare for the behavioural challenges that may happen in the class. Therefore, when some challenges occurred, the researcher did not know how to handle the situation and tried several different measures which ultimately led to a waste of class time. Consequently, in Cycle Two, the researcher will draw on the challenges experienced in Cycle One, and assume similar or different challenges will very likely occur in Cycle Two and be prepared with relevant strategies as solutions.

#### **4.3.5 Learning a second language**

##### ***4.3.5.1 The difficulty***

Students in this research were frequently distracted during group work. Since Chinese is a very different language to English, some students felt it was a difficult task to learn it. The researcher observed and recorded this in the reflection journal:

I chatted with three students after class. It was a rare opportunity to know my

students because I usually have classes in the afternoon. Through the conversation with these students, the boys were complaining they cannot remember the pronunciation of the words and how to write the characters. I asked them why they thought Chinese was difficult. They said it was because they never learnt Chinese before and it is quite different from English, not only from the speaking side but especially from the writing side. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

The difficulty of learning Chinese made many students unwilling to learn, which naturally lead to student's almost looking for a distraction during the group work. In the next cycle, the researcher will consider reducing the degree of difficulty of the tasks and add some interesting elements to the activities

#### ***4.3.5.2 Importance of learning Chinese – motivation***

As the Chinese language classes at Huayuan Public School are not taught by, or part of regular classroom teacher's lessons, students may think it is unimportant and unnecessary to learn. Therefore, their motivation may not be intrinsic enough to support their learning and on-task behaviour through the entire lesson. A lack of interest and motivation on the part of students can be accompanied by boredom and frustration, leading to disruptive and other inappropriate behaviour (Macías and Sánchez, 2015). The researcher did observe that, for many students, their motivation was not sufficient to support their Chinese language learning in a dedicated and attentive manner. A description of this issue was recorded in the reflection journal:

Every class at Huayuan has one Chinese class per week, and it lasts twenty to thirty minutes. From chatting with some of the students they indicated that they think Chinese is just for fun. I realised this as when they are assigned some afterschool work, only around one-fifth of the students will complete it. During

the Chinese class, there are still some students reading books on other subjects. These behaviours appear to illustrate that students are lacking internal motivation. Coupled with this, the students also lack external motivation, which normally comes from the rewards of others. Huayuan Public School does not have a related reward system connected to the Chinese classes. This approach is also reflected at the class level. There was no identified reward system in this Year 5/6 class. The only reward system was established by the researcher. In addition to material rewards, spiritual reward also plays an essential role in increasing students' motivation. All students respond to praise and encouragement. The lack of both internal and external motivation has the potential to lead to students' problematic behaviour. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

#### ***4.3.5.3 Negative attitudes and motivation***

Perhaps another reason for the lack of motivation could be the students' attitudes towards a second language in general or Chinese in particular. Students' negative attitudes towards a second language, a different culture, or a linguistic group may reflect the beliefs held in the home or by peers. Thus, second language teachers under such circumstances may face additional pressures as they need to implement their teaching and learning duties – some delivering these in their own second language – and in addition are confronted by disruptive or hostile students who act out due to their negativity towards the second language and/or the second language program (Ralph, 1994). This is consistent with the researcher's finding that some students held a negative attitude towards Chinese language lessons and displayed subsequent distractive behaviours.

### **4.4 Student's randomly walking in class**

Group work in the Chinese language lessons required the students to leave their usual

seat and walk to another table to join their assigned team so together the group work tasks could commence. However, some students took this as an opportunity to continue to walk around the classroom after the group had been formed. They walked over to their friends' tables who were in different groups and undertaking their group work or some walked randomly in class for no apparent reason. In the researcher's reflection journal, this observation was recorded:

When I was showing the students how to play today's game, a boy was walking across the classroom. I did not ask him to go back to his table because I did not think it was of concern. However, later on, I discovered this boy walked around in the classroom many times. (Reflection journal, Lesson 1, Cycle 1)

I was walking to every group to give students the worksheets and noticed a boy walking around the classroom. For the first time, I asked him, why and he answered that he was going back to his own seat to get his rubber. After two minutes, he walked again. I saw him going to the next table to talk with his friends. He realised I was watching him and so he went back to his group and continued to finish the work. Towards the end of the group work, I checked the students' worksheets and glanced to see where he was, and again he was wandering around the room. I asked him to stop walking and to return to his group table again. This time he did follow my directions and he continued with the set group work for the remainder of the time. In addition to this student, another two boys also kept walking around the classroom during group activities. When all three had left their groups I felt that the class was out of order, so I clapped my hands and counted backwards from three to one using my fingers in order to calm down the entire class. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

The two extracts from the reflection journal above demonstrate two different approaches to responding to students randomly walking around the classroom. It is obvious that the second response was more appropriate as the student stopped roaming around behaviour and returned to work. Based on the success of this approach the researcher will continue. For a teacher, showing consistency in the approach and how to interact with the students, is very important. Just as the reflection above indicates, the researcher treated the boy with the same firm attitude about his walking around the classroom until he responded appropriately. In contrast, the researcher did not stop the boy in Lesson One and the student continued with the same problem. In the classroom teacher's interview, she explained:

You need to be firm and also fair. And have high expectations. I expect them to listen, and I expect to... and then it gives me the opportunity to say: You didn't live up to my expectations and therefore there is a consequence for doing that. If I am talking, you need to be quiet every single time. So same rules every day. Not one day it's okay. The next day not okay. So, you know when you come in, I say 'shush!' I expect them to be quiet when you give them your instructions. And then move on from there every single time. The student's home life might change. They may not get their medication. All types of other factors may change, but you stay the same. The students all get the same treatment at school. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1).

Consistency is a very important factor that influences students' behaviour. If the teacher has a consistent approach every day, the students will know what to expect and are more likely to follow the teacher's instructions.

#### ***4.4.1 Gestures***

The researcher's strategy to stop the student's random walking around the classroom was

to use gestures. There are many possible gestures, for example, using fingers to show three, two, one; finger snap/clicking fingers; holding the palm up to gesture 'stop' and a hand clap. When using fingers to indicate a countdown towards zero at which point the inappropriate behaviour should stop, the gestures can be accompanied by oral counting in order to catch the students' attention and make it more effective. The classroom teacher mentioned this:

Because it involves three kinds of senses, the eyes, mouth and hand it has a good effect. When you use these three together, it may make your brain react faster and then quieten down faster. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

The multi-sense strategy enabled the students to calm down more quickly and more effectively. In the ROSETE 11 focus group, volunteer C mentioned one way of gesturing:

Many classroom teachers use hand claps. It is a useful way. My classroom teacher told me, and I used it. When you are involved in body movements, especially for younger children, that will be more effective. Compared with language, in fact, I found that kids follow the strategy more easily when some action, gesture or body movement is added. So my strategy is to use gestures accompanied by waving hands. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer C, Cycle 1)

The gesture that the researcher used in Cycle One was useful, but it took a relatively long time to make all students calm down. In the next cycle, the researcher would continue to think about how different gestures could be incorporated and used more frequently.

#### **4.5 Student's damage to the material**

This type of behaviour did not occur frequently. Some students did tear up the worksheet



that the researcher gave to them just for fun. This situation only happened two times during the researcher's observation. This observation was noted in the researcher's reflection journal:

I was quite angry with this class. I gave each group a worksheet. After explaining what we need to do, all the students began to work. Then a student came to me and asked for another paper. I gave it to him without hesitation. But two minutes later, he came to me again for the third paper. I asked him "Why?" Although he did not answer I still gave him another paper but then I made a concerted effort to find out what was happening. I went to his group and asked the other group members. They told me that boy tore up the two worksheets for no apparent reason. I felt upset and asked the classroom teacher to intervene. After class, I communicated with the classroom teacher and she shared that this student behaved this way in other classes as well as in the Chinese class. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

#### **4.5.1 Students' attitudes**

The above reflection revealed that a student's will or attitude plays a critical role in group work and can affect their own and the behaviour of others. If students are not willing to participate in group work, being asked to do so may elicit resistance on their part. Deliberately damaging property can be one way students display this resistance in a negative way. This specifically was the action displayed by the boy in the Chinese class who deliberately tore up the worksheet for no apparent reason other than he did not want to complete it. In the focus group with ROSETE 11 Chinese language volunteers, the attitude or will of the students was discussed with relevance to forming groups in preparation for group work:

A: Sometimes students are more willing to do it by themselves. I let them form a group of four, sometimes, students would ask me if they can make the groups on their own. Sometimes, I found that they liked to be in a group of two more.

B: Yeah, I noticed this situation too. I think maybe it was because these students have strong personalities. When you are in a group, you need to communicate, negotiate or even give in. It is too troublesome. So, it is more convenient to complete a task by one's own, and it will save more time. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

From this focus group data, it is shown that some students do not want to be involved in group work, feeling the activities are time- and energy-consuming. This attitude or unwillingness means the teacher/researcher will need to encourage and support those students to take part.

Cooperation is a key point offered by ROSETE student B as contributing to successful group work. After forming a group, the students need to cooperate to solve a problem. If a student is not willing to participate in a group to achieve the common solution, he or she may show resistance by deliberately delaying the progress the other group members can make. The behaviour of a student who does not want to participate in group work may also affect other students' emotions, and consequently disrupts the progress of the group towards solving the common problem.

#### **4.5.2 Enlisting the classroom teacher's expertise**

The researcher gained further inspiration in that it became clear that a novice teacher should enhance the opportunities to cooperate with the classroom teachers. In Cycle 1, the researcher rarely communicated with the classroom teacher. Most contact occurred prior to the first class. The researcher talked with the classroom teacher in order to gauge

some background information about the class and the students. As the Chinese language lessons were around twenty minutes, once per week, this was insufficient time to get to know the students very well. Not having this background information provided by the classroom teacher can lead to a novice teacher generating inappropriate rules not suited to the students, and not being familiar with the students (for example, knowing their names), can result in students manifesting inappropriate behaviour. In the researcher's reflection journal, it was documented:

Yesterday's class was totally a mess. One boy kept yelling out, and I didn't know what to do. I didn't remember this boy's name and why he suddenly acted like this. To make it worse, the classroom teacher was not in the room. She had responded to a call and had gone to another class. Luckily, she came back and was able to stop this boy's behaviour quickly. After class we had a quick chat and the teacher confirmed the boy's name is Y, and that he just wants attention from the other students. The classroom teacher also told me that Y would calm down if you went to him and tapped him on the shoulder. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

#### **4.5.3 Cooperation**

This situation could have been avoided if the researcher had cooperated with the classroom teacher earlier to know the students by name and to have knowledge of some special strategies targeted at some specific students. It is an important task to develop a collegial mindset that promotes collaboration to the benefit of both the classroom teacher and researcher. Learning how to work together requires a change in operation away from being individualist to becoming collaborative. Classroom management can be enhanced when the responsibility moves from the single teacher to partner teachers who embrace joint decision-making (Scott, 2017). This cooperative approach allows for the

implementation of different approaches offered as both teachers work together to focus on their teaching and students' behaviours. In Cycle Two, the researcher will further strengthen cooperation with the classroom teacher from many aspects to avoid replicating the challenges from Cycle One.

#### **4.6 Student's physical aggression to other pupils**

This type of behaviour rarely happens and as it comprises the safety of the child being inflicted upon, there are overall school rules to manage this serious behaviour. This situation did occur once during the researcher's Chinese language teaching at Huayuan Public School. This issue was raised in the focus group with the ROSETE 11 volunteers, and data revealed that they had not witnessed this behaviour during their teaching experiences. In the researcher's reflection journal, this episode was recorded:

Today two boys were fighting in the class because they had different opinions about one question. At first, they were just quarrelling with each other and then one boy pushed the other and then it escalated into a fight. I was quite terrified, but I managed to pull the two boys apart, and the classroom teacher also reacted quickly and directed these two boys to go to the cool zone in the classroom. The whole class then needed calming after this incident in order to continue with the lesson. I reflected on this issue and thought that I may need more experience and training from the mentor or other experienced teachers (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

The researcher was unable to manage this physically confronting and combative behaviour. Due to the classroom teacher's intervention, the incident was halted and the students became calm and back on task. On reflection the researcher attributed the reason for being unable to manage the situation to lack of experience and training. Both researchers and in-service teachers, have indicated classroom management is essentially

a challenge for novice teachers (Garrett, 2014; Greenberg, Putnam and Walsh, 2014; Simonsen and Myers, 2015). Even for experienced teachers, classroom management is frequently considered one of the contributing factors to teacher burnout (Freiberg and Lapointe, 2006; Friedman, 2006; Simonsen and Myers, 2015). Insufficient training in classroom management during initial teacher preparation courses has been touted as a primary source of this problem (Chesley and Jordan, 2012; Garrett, 2014; Greenberg, Putnam, and Walsh, 2014; Stough and Montague, 2014). Greenberg, Putnam and Walsh (2014) harshly criticise existing teacher education programs that downplay the significance of including classroom management courses and units as core elements in program, citing that many pre-service programs have components of classroom management embedded in optional courses. In their opinion there is a disconnect between the importance placed on classroom management and the accountability pre-service teachers face when implementing management practices during professional practice (Greenberg, Putnam, and Walsh, 2014). The researcher reflected that the current ROSETE program could have been strengthened with more focus on classroom management.

The ROSETE program provided teacher training and included organised visits to local schools for class observation prior to ROSETE volunteers commencing their teaching assignments. In retrospect, the time allocation and content on classroom management was limited. Much of the time actually allocated to observing classroom management strategies was limited as most of the time was spend on becoming familiar with the school, the class and the teaching content. The ROSETE program also included a weekly workshop at University with the majority of this content focussing on the Australian school system and teaching theory. There were only one or two workshops directly related to classroom management in the Australian context. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

The focus group with ROSETE 11 at the conclusion of Cycle One, confirmed this reflection:

A: Actually, I have little knowledge of classroom management. The things I know about were obtained from my past teaching in China, but things are quite different here. First, we are not allowed to teach on our own here. There is a classroom teacher in class. That makes a lot of difference. So, before I really taught in class, I had no concept of what classroom management was like here in Australia

B: I have the same feeling. You know, even though we have a workshop every week, most of the time we are discussing what to teach, and how to develop units of work and lesson plans, and communicating what happened in school this week.

D: I think we don't have systematic learning about classroom management in Australian, which causes a lot of problems in my teaching. Through this term, I found most of the challenges I confronted were coming from classroom management. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteer, volunteer A, B and D, Cycle 1)

These data indicate there is a lack of training in the ROSETE program dedicated to the study of classroom management and this does cause problems for the beginning ROSETE Chinese language teachers. This is compounded as the ROSETE volunteers are unfamiliar with classroom management in the Australian context.

#### **4.7 Other themes emerged in data analysis**

The sections above reported on the data analysis revealing there were six categories of students' problematic behaviours, the reasons behind these challenges and the strategies

the researcher implemented in attempting to manage these. It also provided initial thoughts on how to improve or build on the behavior management strategies trialled in Cycle One, into Cycle Two. This next section demonstrates and analyses other reasons that caused the challenges that existed during group work but moves the focus from the students' behaviours onto the researcher as a classroom teacher and individual.

#### **4.7.1 Teacher identity**

Another factor contributing to the difficulty of classroom management, especially for beginning teachers, is that they cannot see themselves as teachers in the class (Macías and Sánchez, 2015). The beginning teachers have such feelings as the students may not regard them as their teacher either. Novice teachers feel that they are more inclined to be challenged and disrespected by the students. Therefore, they may doubt their identities as a classroom teacher and may feel that they need to be firm and assertive in order for their students to take them more seriously. As claimed by Pellegrino (2010, p. 3), “novice teachers, who are viewed by most students as temporary and not a supreme authority in the classroom, have a more difficult time establishing traditional authority in the classroom”. The researcher also experienced these feelings at the beginning of this project:

Although I have seen the students and classroom teacher during the past two terms, today was the first lesson I had delivered. I still felt quite nervous and not sure whether my actions and teaching would be right or wrong because the students have changed. Actually today's class had many problems. I observed that some students were talking or distracted by other things. When I tried to stop them, they would return to the task, but before long they would continue talking again. Therefore, I am questioning whether I am a real teacher now. (Reflection journal, Lesson 1, Cycle 1)

In the researcher's reflective journal, the researcher's identity as a teacher was being questioned after being in the class and observing the students for over a term. During the focus group with the ROSETE 11 volunteers, a comment in agreement was made:

C: At the beginning, I always doubted my identity as a teacher. This was not only because I just graduated and did not have much experience, another reason was the frustration I felt in the classroom. I always tried to keep serious and firm with the students, and I tried to manage the class very well. But there was always something happening unexpectedly. These situations really make me feel down. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteer, volunteer C, Cycle 1)

As the first term of teaching progressed, the researcher did begin to regard herself as a classroom teacher and was firmer with the students in class. In Cycle Two, the researcher's identity was rarely challenged and confidence did accumulate as time went by.

#### **4.7.2 Teacher emotion**

Teachers are confronted with a plethora of emotions during teaching and learning episodes. Researchers such as Frenzel et al. (2009), Sutton (2007) and Taxer and Frenzel, (2015) have identified many teacher emotions, such as satisfaction, pride, stress, annoyance and frustration as emotions likely to influence classroom management and impact on students' learning. Frenzel et al., 2016; Sutton, 2007; Taxer and Frenzel, 2015)

When the teacher's goals are being met during teaching and learning they are likely to experience positive emotions such as pride and satisfaction. If the day's lessons are not meeting the planned objectives and goals, it is only human for negative emotions such as frustration, disappointment and even anger to be experienced. More specifically, teachers



might feel a sense of accomplishment when students obviously understand what they have been taught, and satisfaction when students successfully complete major assessment pieces with confidence. They might feel stressed when students are unable to grasp concepts, anger when the lesson is delayed due to students' misbehaviour, and frustration when limitations beyond their control impact on student learning, such as time and resource limitations (Lee and van Vlack, 2018). These daily emotions experienced by teachers will impact both on teaching implementation and classroom management. If teachers experience more positive emotions in class, their confidence in classroom management will grow and a constructive interaction cycle can be established. Conversely, if teachers constantly feel negative emotions in classroom interactions, they may lose confidence and question their competence in teaching, learning and classroom management. This can set up a vicious negative cycle for the classroom teacher and students with consequential misbehavior escalating. The seriousness of this negativity is cited by Aloe et al. (2013), who contend that one major contributor to teacher burnout is constantly dealing with students' inappropriate behavior.

The manner in which teachers manage their emotions has a major impact in the classroom (Taxer and Frenzel, 2015). If teachers cannot manage negative emotions, teaching and learning quality and management efficiency will deteriorate. On the other hand, uncontrolled positive emotions, could result in overconfidence blinding a teacher's eyes towards students learning outcomes and behaviours that may not be of a sufficient high standard. One of the volunteers, during the ROSETE 11 focus group, mentioned the influence of negative emotions she had experienced:

A: I was quite upset for several weeks. There were two students who kept talking during my class no matter how many times I asked them to stop. I really do not know what else I can do and my classroom teacher told me that I pay too much attention to this and it has influenced my normal teaching pace.

(Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer A, Cycle 1)

Being unable to manage the students' chatting behaviour caused volunteer A to feel upset and to continually ask these students to be quiet. The time this took, influenced the pace of the lesson and was seen as a negative by the classroom teacher. How teachers manage their emotions, in turn, affects their classroom management and discipline (Lee et al., 2014; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003). For instance, an empirical study by Becker, Keller, Goetz, Frenzel, and Taxer (2015) suggests that teachers' emotions are based on their self-perception of classroom episodes and that it is important to regulate emotions during lessons. Students can very easily discern a change in a teacher's emotions and may respond positively or negatively to further influence the teacher's emotions. Keeping emotions under control, especially negative emotions is critical to a balanced classroom. The researcher had a similar experience recorded in the reflection journal:

I was upset that there were still students talking in the class. But I told myself "It's ok! It's not a big problem! I can handle it!" I did try my best to cope with my emotions in this situation. The result was good. These students stopped talking. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 1)

The self-management of emotions and a positive perception of the classroom situation influenced the researcher's way of managing the group work and finally a positive outcome was reached. This is not to say that all emotions need to be suppressed. Teaching is emotional work. Schutz, Cross, Hong, and Osbon (2007) sound a warning that teachers should be mindful if they believe they need to provide a role model for students expressing only positive emotions and subduing the negative. Protracted suppression of feelings can lead to emotional exhaustion impacting on mental health and well-being (Lee and van Vlack, 2018).

### **4.7.3 Classroom management self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy in classroom management is defined by Brouwers and Tomic (2000, p. 242) as “teachers’ beliefs in their capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to maintain classroom order.” Classroom situations perceived as not aligning with planned teaching goals due to students’ inappropriate and challenging behaviour would render teachers more likely to evaluate their classroom management self-efficacy as low (Lee and van Vlack, 2018).

Teacher self-efficacy demonstrates what teacher’s think of their own ability to organise and manage students’ behaviour. (Zee and Koomen, 2016). An example is provided by Liljequist and Renk (2007) who report that preservice teachers with a high sense of personal self-efficacy report higher levels of control over students’ externalising behaviours compared to teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy.

Moreover, in elementary school, practicing teachers who rate themselves highly on self-efficacy scales were shown to cope well with student behaviour across a range of challenges including low achievement, shyness, defiance, aggression, and hyperactivity (Almog and Shechtman, 2007). Conversely, when teachers’ own assessment of their efficacy was hindered by student behaviour, Lambert, McCarthy, O’Donnell, and Wang (2009) found many were likely to critique their own teaching abilities.

Potentially teachers’ perceived their ability to cope with challenging students may partly determine which classroom behaviour management strategies, and teaching styles they ultimately adopt. Preservice teachers with high personal and classroom management self-efficacy have also been found to use more positive strategies, that is, increasing the focus on desirable student behaviour and rewarding these, when compared to teachers whose self-efficacy was low (Emmer and Hickman, 1991).

In the researcher's reflection journal, the relationship with teacher self-efficacy and classroom management was evident throughout the teaching term:

Today was the first class of this term, I was not sure if I could manage the class well or not, because there were many problems existing in my classes last Term. Hopefully, I can manage my class better this term. (Reflection journal, Lesson 1, Cycle 1)

Over the past two weeks, I found that my students were more engaged, and the frequency of student's problematic behaviour had reduced. So, maybe I can do better in the classes to come. (Reflection journal, Lesson 3, Cycle 1)

I feel more confident at the end of Cycle One. I am more aware of the things I do that are effective, and what things still need to be improved. Now I feel the achievement of being a teacher. (Reflection journal, Lesson 5, Cycle 1)

The change in the researcher shows that self-efficacy is related to classroom management and student behaviour. The stronger self-efficacy is, the better the teacher's management ability is. The interview with the classroom teacher also points this out:

You know, I have been a teacher for fifteen years. The first year I was not sure I could be a good teacher or not because there were always naughty children in my class that I could not control. But I told myself I could do it, and things got better. Now I know I can handle my class. So sometimes you need to believe you have the ability to do it. Trust yourself. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 1)

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated and analysed the data collected in Cycle One. Through the researcher's analysis, six categories of students' problematic behaviours were identified, listed and discussed. The reasons for these behaviours were also analysed and reported. The strategies implemented by the researcher to manage these issues and their effectiveness were observed, and these have provided the framework for the intended improvements to managing collaborative group work in Cycle Two.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **THE DATA ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN MANAGING COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK IN CYCLE TWO**

### **5.0 Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter Four, the behaviour management strategies which need to be improved have been identified through the analysis of data collected in Cycle One. Therefore, in this Chapter, the researcher demonstrates the improved version of strategies and reveals the themes emerged in the data analysis of the evidence collected from four sources – the observation checklist completed by the classroom teacher, the interview with the classroom teacher, the focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers and reflection journal of the researcher. Three themes emerged from the analysis of the Cycle Two data. These were Student's noise level during group work, Student's talking without permission and Student distractions, however, the frequency of these issues reduced compared with Cycle One.

### **5.1 Preventive strategies in Cycle Two**

After reflecting and analysing the data collected in Cycle One, the researcher observed that most of the behaviour management challenges during collaborative group work were

a consequence of the unbalanced distribution of tasks, students' personality clashes and inappropriate rules. To address these issues the researcher modified the rules established in Cycle One, implemented a new approach to managing group work – STEPS, strengthened lesson plan preparation and increased collaboration with the classroom teacher.

### **5.1.1 Rules**

In Cycle 1, the researcher set up the following rules for the whole class:

- 1) If you want to talk, please raise your hand.
- 2) If I ring the bell, please go back to your seats and be quiet.
- 3) Receive a point when you answer the question correctly or complete the task well.
- 4) Deduct a point when you break the rule and do not participate in the group work.
- 5) Receive a reward at the end of the term if your points are in the top five.

These five rules were initiated after observing the teaching practice and behaviour management of the classroom teacher. Rule No. 2 was maintained as it was one of the classroom teacher's rules specifically for group work. The researcher established general class rules for turn taking with talking and an incentive system for appropriate behaviour. Data analysis during Cycle One, revealed that the rules had flaws and did not work well. Therefore, in Cycle Two, the rules needed to be amended in order to have a preventative element. The idea came from the classroom teacher:

Yes. I will set up rules before the class commences, depending on what class.

Today I have to take the students to the computer room to do a test. So, it's different. Before we left our room, I set the rules: no speaking and no looking on other peoples' screens. I showed them how to log in, how to log out, and then we went. And before we went into the computer room, I said "what are the

rules? What am I expecting you to do?” And then the students repeat it all back, and I say, “Now off you go.” Yeah, clear, firm and recheck them. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 2)

The data presented above alerted the researcher that the rules could be shorter but at the same time needed to be easily understood and delivered in a firm manner. By having the students repeat the rules, the teacher is able to check that all students understand and remember the rules. This was also illustrated in the focus group:

A: With my rules I tend to keep pace with the classroom teacher, because I have eight different classes, and these classes have their own classroom management rules. If I set up my own rules, students may be confused.

B: Basically, the same as the classroom teacher. Although my classes have some different rules. Some rules are universal, like the hand clap, head, shoulder, knees and head.

C: Yeah, I also will use their own rules, but I have one rule of my own. I set up a word ‘sushi’. If I say this word, it means all students need to be quiet and sometimes you need to be tough. You need to stick on your rule. I remember once I promised the students would be able to watch “Journey to the West” if they behaved well throughout the ‘tea’ lesson. Although they were very loud they were still eager to watch “Journey to the West”. I was unsatisfied with their performance and no matter what they said, I did not let them watch “Journey to the West”.

(Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer A, B and C, Cycle 2)

The focus group gave the researcher further inspiration that the teacher should be firm and consistent when implementing rules. In addition, the rules already in place and



created by the classroom teacher might also be continued as useful rules. Therefore, as per the classroom teacher and ROSETE 11 classroom teachers' advice and the literature reviewed (Chapter 2), the researcher was confident to modify the Cycle Two rules according to the following core principles:

### **1. Keep it simple**

In Cycle Two the researcher was committed to implementing useful classroom rules as the basis for the successful behaviour management. Establishing up to five rules as a maximum, enables students to easily understand and retain these and for the teacher to easily reinforce them. It has been suggested that rules for the classroom should not be too specific possibly relating to one activity at one point during the day (Kode, 2010). For example, "Raise your hand when you want to speak" works well as a rule when students are working independently or during whole class lessons, but an alternative might be to rephrase as: "Respect your classmates." This may be a more general rule but is an effective way of having children think about their responsibility to others and to avoid interrupting the teacher or their classmates. The way the rule is phrased can have multiple benefits according to Kode (2010). Therefore, in Cycle Two, the researcher tried to make the rules shorter and simpler. The Rule No.1 and No.2 have been changed to "Raise hands if you want to talk" and "Be quiet when the bell rings".

### **2. Incorporate Positive Reinforcement**

Expressing the classroom rules in terms of positive behaviours is more powerful than having a series of negative ones. For example, the rule "Don't speak while others are speaking" might be better phrased as "Raise your hand and wait until called on." Reinforcing rules that have been positively expressed is much easier and more likely to result in appropriate behaviour, and hence maintain an orderly classroom (Kode, 2010). The behaviour management strategies should not focus only on the children displaying

challenging behaviour. Instead, approaches that reward students for exhibiting appropriate behaviours are more likely to be successful. In Cycle Two, the researcher avoided using negative words to phrase the rules in preference to stating the positive behaviours expected. With this approach, the researcher hoped the students would become more willing to participate in the group work activities in ways that were more respectful and collaborative with their peers and the researcher.

### **3. Make simple changes first**

Kode (2010) also offers advice on how to implement change or establish new rules in classrooms. Rather than introducing substantial change at one time, which has the potential to cause stress and confusion, smaller steps leading to bigger effects may be more effective. In Cycle One, the researcher encountered many challenging behaviours exhibited by the students during group work activities. To consider making a small, simple change to establish a new rule, the researcher initiated a 'special word' only to be used in the Chinese language class that could assist with managing students' behaviour. The researcher chose the word “静(jing)”, which means “quiet” in Chinese. This word is simple to pronounce and remember and it could be used in many different situations. When some students were talking without permission, the researcher could say “静(jing)”. When students were rowdy and calling out, the researcher again would say “静(jing)”. The researcher also used this special Chinese word when students did not stay on task or were distracted by other students or objects. This word “静(jing)” became an exclusive vocabulary in the Chinese class. After introducing the word “静(jing)” to alert students to the noise level, the frequency of needing to call students' attention to quieten down was reduced. Students were more willing to respond to the researcher's instruction when it was “静(jing)”. In the second lesson of Cycle Two, it transpired that when the researcher said “静(jing)”, the students would reply “静(jing)” together and the whole class would return back to the task. This was a pleasing result.

#### **4. Start now**

In Cycle One, the researcher anticipated the students would need two weeks to adopt and learn the rules. During that time, the researcher did not expect the students to adhere strictly to the rules allowing them time to learn the rules. This proved problematic. Since the researcher did not provide feedback on ‘breaking’ the rules, some students did not take them seriously. The researcher quickly observed that the students will be aware of the expectations for their behaviour if they are held accountable from Day One. Unless this is adhered to, the researcher is sending the message that the rules established are unnecessary and it is not important that they be followed.

Therefore, in Cycle Two, the researcher emphasised the rules at the beginning of the class and responded to challenges to the rules every time they occurred. Students understood the researcher’s expectations and intentions from the beginning, and some students would remind the other students when they were talking or not on-task.

According to these changes, the new version of classroom rules was established with the class. These were:

1. Raise hands if you want to talk.
2. Be quiet if the bell rings.
3. Return to task when you hear “静(jing)”.
4. Follow the rules from now.
5. Receive a point when you answer the questions or complete the task well.
6. Receive a reward at the end of the term if your points are in the top five.

After modifying the rules, the frequency of students’ problematic behaviours decreased. The frequency of student’s talking without permission reduced from nine to three (see Table 5.7).

### **5.1.2 STEPS**

In Cycle One, the researcher noticed many challenges were caused by personality clashes among some group members and the unbalanced distribution of the task. The more competent students finished the task quickly without collaborating with other group members and then with no follow up activity to occupy them, they became easily distracted by other activities or talked without permission. The shy or less motivated students lost the opportunity to fully participate in the assigned group work as the students with stronger personalities had dominated the group and completed the work on their behalf. To address this phenomenon, and after reviewing the literature, the researcher was alerted to a method – STEPS – and modified it according to the challenges the researcher faced. In collaboration with the classroom teacher, the researcher was able to implement this approach into Cycle Two group work processes.

To counter these challenges and to build a positive learning environment Sri (2018) proposed a strategy to refocus students' attention and behaviour in the classroom. STEPS is the acronym for "Separate – TEam – Provoke – Solo."

The methodology and approach of the STEPS process as outlined by Sri (2018) (see Table 5.1) covers a 50-minute lesson and if followed specifically would be relevant to much older students than those participating in this study.

**Table 5.1 Phases of STEPS**

STEPS strategy	Activity	Time span (min)
0	Discussion on the conceptual and problem statement by the instructor	10
1	Team Formation (learners with mixed characteristics preferred, that is, slow learner, active learner, strong personality etc)	5
2	Elect a student leader	4
3a	Provide a Problem-based exercise in the classroom to solve	6
3b	Separate team leaders from the team and allow them to sit in front of the instructor (do not allow them to discuss with their own group). The other members of the team can discuss among themselves.	
4	Team leaders who get correct solution can join with their member to guide them.	20
5	Team leader can select one member from the team to verify the result with instructor.	15

The STEPS strategy developed by Sri (2018) is more frequently implemented as a consolidation strategy. The teacher would generally conduct a lesson introducing a topic before conducting STEPS in class, and the consolidation through STEPS can also be implemented in outdoor settings. After the content and knowledge has been taught the teacher can use STEPS to introduce problem-based activities for students to ponder and solve. Sri (2018) contends a maximum group of four essentially is most successful as larger groups can result in reduced motivation for some group members. The purpose of

the STEPS strategy is to enhance the success of the group by allowing all group members to contribute. It can also reduce the possibility of personality clashes between the group leader and other group members.

In this research, although the researcher did not have the opportunity to conduct outclass/outdoors activities, the group work activities provided to students were still based on the concepts previously learned. The researcher taught the concept in the previous lesson and reviewed the content with students again before conducting the group work utilising the STEPS model, as a reinforcement tool. The researcher also followed the suggestion of four members in each group. The modified STEPS strategy is described in detail below.

### **Separate Phase**

According to Sri's (2018) research, during the Leader Election phase, students who are highly engaged in the work are more likely to be chosen by the other group members. As these leaders, who are more motivated and engaged in the task, may initially dominate or 'take over' the group, or become irritated if the other group members are slower to comprehend and complete the task, so they are removed from the group into a group of their own. Group leaders then discuss the problem and should arrive at a clear understanding of the task before moving back to their groups. Leaders who complete the task can join in their team. Struggling group leaders are able to be assisted by the researcher and guided to the solution. Whilst the group leaders were separated from their groups, the other group members were able to discuss the problem with their peers and work on the task until their leader rejoined the group. This phase took fifteen minutes in Sri's (2018) research. To adapt this to the researcher's circumstances, the time would need to be limited to eight minutes. As a Chinese language class is limited to thirty minutes in total, the group work time is restricted to twenty-five minutes. Therefore, the time spent on choosing the group leader would need to be two or three minutes, and the remaining

five or six minutes would be allocated to the group leader finishing the task on their own whilst the remaining group members continued to discuss the task. In Cycle Two the groups remained fixed as they were in Cycle One, when the groups were established.

### **TEam Phase**

After the leaders rejoin their groups, their role was to consider and analyse their members' work, discuss their efforts and consider their own solution in relation to the other members' solutions. As a part of this activity, there should not be any ego clashes between leaders and less active members as all are working towards the same goal: to finish the task in the most efficient way (Sri, 2018).

In this project, this phase was adopted by the researcher in the same manner as proposed by Sri (2018). Leaders were able to return to their groups to complete the task together. During this time, the researcher walked around the groups to assist where necessary and to encourage engagement in the groups. The time spent on this phase was ten minutes.

### **Provoke Phase**

In this phase, Sri (2018) explains that the group leader selects one member of the group to share the findings/solutions in front of the class or to report to the teacher. This phase is designed to ensure slower learners or those who were not actively engaged on the task, realise they may also be called upon to report the group's findings (Sri, 2018).

In this research when the provoke phase was implemented the researcher needed to ensure the group leader was aware he/she could not choose himself/herself, and that over the next several lessons, every group member would have at least one chance to present the group's work. This phase in the Chinese language lesson had to be no longer than two minutes.

### **Solo Phase**

In this phase, the child chosen, whether they have been off-task or slower in their problem-solving contributions to the group, would come to the front and deliver the finding/solution to the problem. The results shared and the motivation shown during the presentation are assessed. In terms of incentives, the member delivering the report at the solo phase would be awarded a mark/score which is then allocated to all group members. Every member is then responsible for the group's achievement and hopefully feels a sense of responsibility. This phase takes three to five minutes.

Some phases, and specifically the time allocation, of the original STEPS strategy have been modified by the researcher based on the teaching and learning context of this research. The modified STEPS strategy is shown in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Modified phase of STEPS strategy**

STEPS Phase	Activity	Time span (min)
1. Separate Phase	Elect a group leader	2-3
	Provide a task based on the content learned before in the classroom to work on	5-6
	Separate group leaders from the group and allow them to sit in front of the teacher (do not allow them to discuss with their members). The other members of the group can discuss among themselves.	
2. TEam Phase	Group leaders join with their member to help them after finishing the task by themselves.	10



3.Provoke Phase	Group leader can select one member from his or her team to verify the result with the teacher.	2
4.Solo Phase	One of the group members deliver the result and teacher marks his or her result as the group mark.	3-5

After implementing the STEPS strategy, the researcher observed that the group leaders had a few complaints about the process whereas other group members were more inclined to be engaged in the group activities. One or two group leaders complained that they spent more time on task than before and their group members sometimes finished the task a little bit slowly. The Separate Phase provided time for the group members to study and discuss the topic. The TEam Phase reduced the possibility that these group leaders would complete the task quickly and individually and become distracted and talk. In the STEPS process at the TEam Phase the leaders needed to help their group members and also to think about who would be chosen for the next phase. The Provoke Phase increased a sense of group responsibility and therefore enhanced student's engagement, as every student realised they would need to present their work at some point. They understood the need to participate in every phase of the group work to solve the problem and have an answer. The Solo phase enabled students to understand they were in the same group. The presenter's score applied to all group members and so the notion of a 'team effort' became important. Every member's effort was important, and the personality clashes could then be seen more openly as distracting the work of the group as a whole.

The STEPS approach for group work in Cycle Two achieved success as noted by the scores on the researcher's observation checklist. The frequency of students' problematic behaviours was reduced in Cycle Two across three categories. The number of instances where students were contributing to a high noise level during group work reduced from seven to five. Instances of students talking without permission/ off-task conversations

dropped from nine to three, and the instances of students being distracted fell from five to two.

**Table 5.3 Observation Checklist – reduction in problematic behaviour**

Problematic Behaviour	Cycle One Score	Cycle Two Score
Students' noise level during group work	7	5
Talking without permission	9	3
Distraction	5	2

Sri (2018) evaluated students' behaviours during the implementation of the STEPS process by mapping the level of behavioural (strong, medium, low) activity against the behavioural components exhibited by the students. The behavioural components identified included: Self-Assessment (SA), Communicative (C), Relationship (R), Trust (T), Responsibility (Re), Optimism (O), Challenge (Ch), Enthusiasm (E), Motivation (M), Honesty (H). The results of Sri's (2018) research is displayed below in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 Mapping STEPS Phases with Behaviour Factors**

STEPS	SA	C	R	T	Re	O	Ch	E	M	H
1	s	s	s	s	s	m	m	m	m	s
2	s	s	l	m	s	l	m	m	s	-
3	m	s	s	m	s	s	l	s	m	s
4	s	s	l	m	s	s	s	m	s	m

*Source Sri (2018, p.179): Key (s: Strong, m: Medium, l: Low)*

From the results of Sri's (2018) research it can be seen that multiple behaviours are enacted by students when they work together on problem-based group activities. The types of behaviours the students exhibited, as shown in Table 5.4 above, can be considered worthwhile for all students to develop. The success of the STEPS strategy is that it allows all group members to contribute, take responsibility as a group member towards finding solutions to the problems posed and to be prepared to report the findings on behalf of the group.

### **5.1.3 Cooperation with the classroom teacher**

As evidenced in Chapter Four, insufficient cooperation with the classroom teacher led to the researcher being in a position of being unfamiliar with the students and their personalities which then impacted negatively in some instances of collaborative group work. In order to address this lack of background knowledge about the students, the researcher strengthened cooperation with the classroom teacher.

Throughout Cycle Two, the researcher more directly sought the classroom teacher's suggestions when establishing and then modifying the classroom rules. The classroom teacher provided examples and ideas on establishing classroom rules, and these were incorporated into the final modified versions discussed above in section 5.1.1. In addition,

the researcher made a concerted effort to cooperate with the classroom teacher more before, during and after the class. Prior to commencing teaching, the researcher presented the lesson plan to classroom the classroom teacher and was prepared to change any procedures according to her suggestions. During class, the researcher and the classroom teacher worked together to manage the students during group work. This included walking around the class, checking students' on-task behaviour and handling any unexpected issues and challenges. After class, the researcher had a brief informal conversation with the classroom teacher if time was available in order to receive valuable feedback.

After drawing on additional cooperation with the classroom teacher, teaching efficiency was improved. The researcher had support to manage students' specific problematic behaviours, thus accumulating more experience and refining the strategies that could be used in the future.

#### **5.1.4 Preparation for the class**

In Cycle One, the researcher reflected that there had been inadequate preparation for the Chinese language lessons. This resulted in challenges to keep the class on-task and completing lessons in the set time. Students' inappropriate behaviour were not managed and the lessons were often disrupted, and objectives not achieved. To improve the teaching and learning outcomes the researcher realised it was essential to be more fully prepared.

In Cycle Two, the researcher spent almost double the time on lesson preparation. The preparation on teaching content was still of major importance as knowing what to teach and keeping the pace to match students' comprehension will assist in the smooth flow of the lesson (Erdogan et al., 2010). This in turn will keep the students interested in and keen to engage with, the new knowledge and present with less problematic behaviour.

Guiding students to be more engaged in their learning requires the teacher to be more focused on the details not only of the content, but also the pedagogy and processes. Details such as minimising the transition time between lesson segments and distributing and collecting worksheets can be considered at the lesson planning stage in order not to waste teaching time. A lesson which is planned and implemented with steady momentum will hopefully assist with students' motivation and engagement. If the students are engaged in the activities and the lesson is running smoothly, they are less likely to be distracted and misbehave in class. The necessity of detailed planning cannot be understated. According to Marashi and Assgar (2019), effective teachers are those who are well organised, provide immediate feedback to students on their learning and behaviour and maintain consistency with the expectations set for students.

Careful and considered classroom planning and organisation, in response to the chosen content and the needs of the students in terms of their age and development, will contribute to lesson success. Although these are not a panacea, planning and organisation provide the necessary framework to facilitate teaching and learning. The implementation is also critically important. Being prepared in terms of behaviour management strategies is also important. If a teacher has prepared for all possible challenges that might occur at various points throughout the lesson, then related solutions can be thought through. If or when, challenging behaviour does occur, the teacher will be mentally prepared and feel less stressed at the time the problem has arisen and hopefully manage the situation efficiently.

Therefore, in Cycle Two, the researcher began to think proactively in terms of what challenging behaviour had occurred in Cycle One, and assumed these may be displayed by students again in Cycle Two. The researcher then prepared what strategies would likely be needed to address these challenges. Through the reflection journal and the discussion with the classroom teacher, the researcher was able to predict what might occur and be

able to respond more appropriately. With this level of preparation both with content and organisation and also with behaviour management strategies the researcher was then notably calmer throughout Cycle Two, and the frequency of challenging behaviour decreased, as was shown in Table 5.3.

With the preventative strategies in mind, the teaching and learning commenced in Cycle Two. Even though the challenging behaviour overall decreased, there were still three themes that emerged from the data collection and analysis during Cycle Two. These were the continued unacceptable noise level during group work, the talking and chatting during group work that was not related to the task at hand, and the distracting situations that resulted in students becoming off-task.

## **5.2 Student's noise level during group work**

In Cycle Two, there still were students who created unnecessary noise during group work, however the observation check list data revealed the frequency declined from seven to four (see full results in Table 5.7). In the researcher's reflection journal, an incident supports the success of changing the rules to address the noise level in class and being prepared to handle challenging behaviour:

At the beginning of the first class of Cycle Two, I explained the new rules to the students, and they all listened carefully. So, I was expecting today's class could be very smooth. However, I still noticed one boy was making noise during the group work. Actually, the sound was not very loud. I heard it because I was near his table. So, I just ignored this boy and went to the next table, and he stopped scratching the table shortly after I went away. (Reflection journal, Lesson 1, Cycle 2)

From the data above, it would appear that this boy just wanted the researcher's attention,

because he stopped immediately after the researcher left. Therefore, the strategy of ignoring the behaviour was successful in this instance. Reflecting on the experiences in Cycle One, the researcher learned to ‘ignore’ minor challenges and implemented this approach from the beginning of the cycle. After testing this strategy in Cycle Two, the researcher believed that ignoring attention seeking behaviour that was not disrupting the whole class was the preferred strategy. The classroom teacher also pointed to this strategy as being successful:

You can just ignore her. She will be okay in a minute. You know, these children are sensitive and emotional. They may feel sad or agitated now, but they will adjust themselves quickly. Another way is to let them calm down in the quiet zone in the corner. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 2)

In the ROSETE 11 focus group, volunteer D also provided an example:

There is a student in my class who sometimes feels good when she’s in class. She raises her hand to answer questions, but sometimes she finds herself in a bad mood and her behaviour changes. During those situations, I just ignore her to let her calm herself down. It is useful. (Focus group with ROSETE 11 classroom volunteers, volunteer D, Cycle 2)

As the classroom teacher and the ROSETE volunteer D mentioned above, most classrooms have a quiet zone or cool zone where students can take time out and calm themselves down. This physical space allows the students to be away from the others while they can reflect quietly and once calm, return to the group.

### **5.3 Talking without permission/off-task conversations**

This challenge rarely happened in Cycle Two, because everyone had a task to do during the group work and contributed more to the group, particularly when STEPS was

implemented.

Today I observed two girls sitting together and talking. I joined the group to listen to what they were talking about. Not surprisingly, they were talking about their pets. So, I made eye contact with them first. They noticed me because I was staring at them for a long time. Then I tapped one girl on her shoulder to remind them both that they should attend to the task allocated in the group work. (Reflection journal, Lesson 2, Cycle 2)

The combination of eye contact and body contact has a positive influence on ending students' off-task conversations. At times, the researcher used these two strategies independently according to the situation. The eye contact strategy proved to be somewhat useful in Cycle One, thus the researcher retained this strategy with some modification. The researcher extended the length of time making eye contact. In Cycle One, the researcher made eye contact with the students for around two or three seconds. In Cycle Two, the time was increased to five or six seconds. On occasions the researcher kept waiting and 'staring' until the students returned to their task. Extending the time in making eye contact was effective in Cycle Two as illustrated in the researcher's reflection journal entry below:

There were two boys continually talking in the group work today. This time I kept staring at them for a long time and they noticed my face looked angry and my eyes contained disappointment. They stopped their talking and returned to finish the task for the rest of group time. (Reflection journal, Lesson 4, Cycle 2)

Using eye contact can achieve a positive change behaviour when the students are aware of the rules and realise they are not following them. The children's responses to the researcher's eye contact may infer there is more respect for her authority in Cycle Two



compared to Cycle One. However, if the researcher needs to wait and maintain eye contact with several students throughout the lesson it can interrupt the normal flow causing other students to feel bored waiting for the researcher who is waiting for their peers engaged in off-task talking. It is therefore not recommended to use this strategy frequently.

Cycle Two saw the researcher also attempt to improve the body contact strategy. In Cycle One, the researcher just tapped the students on their shoulder and moved on. In Cycle Two, the researcher extended the number of times a shoulder tap occurred from one to either two or three depending how quickly the student responded. In addition, the researcher spoke to the student at the same time as drawing their attention using the shoulder tap. The problem of students having conversations not related to the set group work activities improved slightly with the implementation of the above strategies modified from Cycle One. The problem still persisted throughout Cycle Two in that, whilst students refrained from talking on unrelated topics when the researcher was close by, their quiet on-task conversations did not last once the researcher moved away. The need to chat to their group members outweighed any internal restraint. This could be a factor related to their age and development.

#### **5.4 Student distractions**

Students being easily distracted by other students, objects or resources was one of the behaviour problems that the researcher found hard to manage in Cycle One. The ease with which the students became distracted continued throughout Cycle Two, however the researcher did feel some improvement was made in the frequency of students being distracted and the time the researcher spent on encouraging the students to be back on-task. In the reflection journal, an incident of students being distracted very easily was recorded:

I was giving out the worksheets to the students today, and some of them who did not get the worksheet immediately began to look at the books on their tables. It wasn't just one. It became an issue, so I clapped my hands with a fixed rhythm to attract the attention of the entire class. The students then followed my clapping patterns and then were able to wait more patiently until they received their worksheets. (Reflection journal, Lesson 3. Cycle 2)

Using the rhythmical clapping pattern to catch the students' attention was a strategy that was successful to redraw children's attention as shown in the journal entry above. In Cycle One, the researcher implemented two strategies to refocus students' attention. These were counting backwards using fingers to denote the number and clapping hands in a rhythmical pattern. The researcher observed that the clapping pattern approach was more effective than counting backwards expecting all children to be attending by the time zero was reached. The researcher hence decided that in Cycle Two, just the clapping patterns strategy would be used, as once the students' started joining in and copying the clapping patterns they were focussed on the researcher and no longer distracted. After communicating with the classroom teacher, the researcher learned the rhythm of hand clap: "da/da/da da da". The students responded to this strategy and would calm down quickly. Another strategy the researcher used when too many students were distracted was to stop and wait. As discussed in Cycle One, the researcher has vocalised "stop" to a single student, which hurt his feelings. Having learned from Cycle One, the researcher made the following changes. When calling "Stop" to the class the researcher would ensure it was not directed to a specific student. It would be an instruction to the whole class. Secondly, rather than talk over the top of the distracted students, the preferred strategy in Cycle Two was to stop and wait. The classroom teacher provided the researcher with some feedback on this issue during the interview:

Well, I noticed you stopped and waited for a longer time to show the students nothing more would happen until they settled down. And that really worked. I

think that's good, so keep doing. (Interview with the classroom teacher, Cycle 2)

The researcher was encouraged by this positive feedback and continued to implement this strategy with improvement being noted. When the whole class became noisy as many students were distracted and not taking account of the instructions being delivered for the group work tasks, the researcher would cease talking and make a 'poker' face, waiting until all students were quiet. The students began to realise that this silence meant something was wrong and they would become attentive to the researcher. Another interesting outcome was that some students who noticed the silence from the researcher quite quickly would remind their peers by saying "Shh", and this also assisted for the whole class to quieten down.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

A range of students' challenging behaviours were exhibited throughout their participation in collaborative group work as part of the Chinese language lessons in Cycle One and Cycle Two of this Action Research project. The behaviours were identified, and the possible reasons for these challenges were discussed along with the strategies implemented by the researcher to counter these challenging and inappropriate behaviours. These have all been analysed and discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The data collected from observation checklist from both cycles are summarised in Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 below.

**Table 5.5 Summary of Observation checklist for Cycle One**

Lesson	Student Behaviour	Teacher Strategy	Student Response
Lesson 1	Distracted	Eye contact	Return to task
	Distracted	Raise questions <sup>2</sup>	Return to task
	Distracted	Roll call <sup>3</sup>	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Ignore <sup>4</sup>
Lesson 2	Distracted	Eye contact	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Make noise <sup>5</sup>	Ignore	Ignore
	Make noise	Ignore	Return to task
Lesson 3	Talk without permission	Ask the student to stop	Return to task

<sup>2</sup> Raise questions means when the student is distracted, the teacher will directly ask this student a question about the task.

<sup>3</sup> Roll call indicates the teacher calls the student's name to remind him or her that he or she is distracted.

<sup>4</sup> Ignore means the students ignored the teacher's instruction at that moment until they finished their conversations or were reprimanded by the classroom teacher.

<sup>5</sup> Make noise means the students are yelling or making meaningless noise.

	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Damage to material	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Walk around	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
Lesson 4	Talk without permission	Gesture	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Body contact	Return to task
	Make noise	Ignore	Ignore
	Make noise	Stop and wait	Ignore
	Make noise	Stop and wait	Ignore
Lesson 5	Make noise	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Make noise	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Physical aggression to another pupil	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Distracted	Eye contact	Return to task

**Table 5.6 Summary of observation checklist for Cycle Two**

Lesson	Student Behaviour	Researcher's Strategy	Student Response
Lesson 1	Make noise	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Distracted	Gesture	Return to task
	Distracted (irrelevant books)	Eye contact	Return to task
	Distracted	Eye contact	Return to task
Lesson 2	Talk without permission	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Eye contact	Return to task
	Make noise	Stop and wait	Return to task
Lesson 3	Walk around	Ask the student to stop	Return to task
	Make noise	Eye contact	Return to task
Lesson 4	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Talk without permission	Stop and wait	Return to task
	Distracted	Raise questions	Return to task
Lesson 5	Make noise	Ask the student to stop	Return to task

These two tables summarise the complete data set from the observation checklists. Table 5.7 below displays the number of times students exhibited the behaviours identified. These data are from the observation checklist completed by the classroom teacher. The researcher expected a higher number of these incidences as it seemed so during the lessons. The lower than expected numbers tallied in the table below might be a consequence of the teacher not observing the whole class for the whole lesson, as sometimes she needed to leave the classroom, and at other times was assisting other

students. Even so, it can be seen from the numbers in the table below, that the incidences of inappropriate behaviour in Cycle One are higher than those recorded in Cycle Two. This indicates that there was some increase in the development of the behaviour management skills of the researcher over this project.

**Table 5.7 The frequency (Times) of Student Behaviour in Cycle One and Cycle Two**

	Cycle One	Cycle Two
Distracted	6	4
Talk without permission	9	3
Make noise	7	4
Damage to material	1	0
Walk around	1	1
Physical aggression to another pupil	1	0

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This Chapter summarises the major findings of the research project and explains how these findings answer the four research questions that have been investigated. In addition, it proposes what this research can offer as a contribution to the research field and the implications for further research intended to explore classroom management during collaborative group work in Chinese language teaching and learning in Australian schools. The limitations of this research project are also identified. This Chapter concludes with a discussion of the summarised findings explored in Cycle Two, through the focus group with students, the interview with the classroom teacher and the researcher's reflection journal.

#### **6.1 Key findings**

The key findings of this research address the four research questions:

- (1) What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese?
- (2) Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work?
- (3) What kinds of strategies are used to manage collaborative group work?



(4) How do students respond to these strategies?

In the following section, the key findings which address each of the research questions are listed and summarised in the subsequent three tables followed by a detailed explanation. These findings have been analysed in detail in Chapter Four and Chapter Five and are summarised in this section.

### 6.1.1 Identifying challenging student behaviour

Table 6.1 provides the summary of the findings related to the first research question: What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese?

**Table 6.1 Findings: Research Question One**

Research Question	Cycle	Findings
What classroom management challenges exist in collaborative group work in Stage 3 Australian classrooms during the teaching of Chinese?	Cycle One	Students' noise during group work
		Talking without permission/off-task conversations
		Student's being easily distracted
		Student's randomly walking in class
		Student's damage to the material
		Student's physical aggression to other pupils
	Cycle Two	Students' noise during group work
		Talking without permission
		Student's distraction behaviour
		Student's random walk in class

The six challenges in students' behaviour that emerged through the analysis of Cycle One data have been described in detail in Chapter Four. Through implementing the Action Research process, four of the initial six challenges continued and were again identified in the teaching and learning contexts in Cycle Two, and three of these were discussed in detail in Chapter Five. These challenges, listed in Table 6.1 above have been ranked according to the seriousness each provided to the researcher: Student's noise level during group work, Talking without permission/off-task conversations, Student's being easily distracted and Student's randomly walking in class. The frequency of these challenges reduced from Cycle One to Cycle Two (as outlined in Table 5.7 in Chapter Five).

### 6.1.2 Identifying the reasons for challenging behaviour

Table 6.2 provides the summary of the findings related to the second research question: Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work?

**Table 6.2 Findings: Research Question Two**

Research Question	Findings
Why do such challenges arise in conducting collaborative group work?	Physical distance*
	Inaccurate instructions*
	Language problems*
	Inappropriate rules*
	Unbalanced distribution of the task*
	Degree of difficulty of the task*
	Time management issues*
	Lack of the classroom teacher authority*
	Lack of preparation*

	Consistency*
	Lack of cooperation with the classroom teacher*
	Lack of experience and training*
	Teacher identity*
	Teacher emotion*
	Classroom management self-efficacy*
	Personality clash of the students**
	Students' attitudes/will**
	Student's lack of motivation**
	Student's family background**

\* Fifteen instigating factors attributed to the teacher

\*\* Four instigating factors attributed to the students

In Chapters Four and Five, the researcher discussed the reasons for these challenges and concluded that these instigating factors were from both the students' and the researcher's positions. There are fifteen identified reasons that can be attributed to the researcher – physical distance, inaccurate instructions, language problem, inappropriate rules, unbalanced distribution of the task, difficulty degree of the task, time management issues, lack of the classroom teacher authority, lack of preparation, lack of consistency, lack of cooperation with the classroom teachers, lack of experience and training, teacher identity, teacher emotion and classroom management self-efficacy. There are four instigators of challenging behaviour attributed to the students – Personality clashes, attitudes, lack of motivation and family background.

### ***6.1.2.1 Role of preparation***

The researcher contends that across the fifteen identified reasons that contribute to students' challenging behaviour in group work, lack of adequate preparation on the part of the researcher plays a very significant role. Inadequate preparation of the teaching content, such as inappropriate degree of task difficulty, influences students' motivation and concentration. This finding resonates with Erdogan et al (2010) research pointing out that pedagogical and content knowledge concerns reflected lesson planning ensures the smooth flowing of the class with students being more engaged and less likely to misbehave. Therefore, planning group work with task difficulty considering the needs of the specific class, age, developmental and achievement levels needs to be considered carefully.

### ***6.1.2.2 Teaching in a second language***

The researcher's English language competency is another reason that likely contributed to students' problematic behaviour, particularly managing students' challenging behaviour in a second language. For ESL teachers in general, providing clear instructions in English may be difficult. This is further compounded when trying to understand students' responses, particularly during episodes of challenging behaviour and when the teacher has limited experience, as was the case for the researcher. Additional training, specifically in student behaviour management, would provide novice teachers with strategies that could be drawn upon in challenging situations and assist with teacher confidence.

### ***6.1.2.3 Teacher identity***

Teacher identity is another factor identified as impacting on the researcher's capacity to manage challenging student behaviour. The researcher was a novice the classroom teacher

and students tend to challenge the novice teacher more than often. With more experience the researcher and novice teachers in general will become more able and increase the positivity of their identity as a teacher. Many of the difficulties listed in Table 6.2 contribute overall to the teacher's/researcher's identity. When the researcher was not able to establish and manage adequate rules in Cycle One, classroom management was reduced in efficiency and effectiveness. This then impacted on the researcher's emotional well-being, which feed into adjustments of identity and classroom management self-efficacy. During Cycle One the researcher, as a novice, identified the reasons for challenging student behaviour in group work, but the impact, from time to time, was quite negative on identify and reduced self-efficacy as a successful Chinese language teacher. The Action Research process and reflection on Cycle One to address and attempt to improve student management in Cycle Two was found to be a successful process for the researcher to achieve a more positive outlook at the conclusion of this project.

#### ***6.1.2.4 Student factors***

Four of the contributing factors to student behaviour management challenges were identified as existing with the students. These were personality clashes between students, family background, student's attitude/will and their motivation. On one occasion, a physical altercation occurred as a result of personality clashes in a situation where there was disagreement and miscommunication. Whilst this situation was rare, it had a very significant impact on group work efficiency and student's social ability. Other student characteristics that were identified in this research as impacting on their ability to conform to the rules set for group work were their attitudes/will and motivation to complete the tasks assigned, and to work cooperatively with their peers. The researcher needed to be aware of these and respond accordingly to try to provide interesting tasks, and to monitor the groups during their collaborations.

Family background also is influential on how students behave at school. In this research the classroom teacher confirmed that factors such as medication, family dynamics that play out in the morning before school and reflecting family values can all impact on student's behaviour.

### 6.1.3 Strategies and student responses

Table 6.3 provides the summary of the findings related to the third and fourth research questions: What kinds of strategies are used to manage collaborative group work? and How do students respond to these strategies?

**Table 6.3 Findings: Research Question Three and Four**

Research Question	Cycle	Findings
What kinds of strategies are used to manage collaborative group work?  and  How do students respond to these strategies?	Cycle One	Walk close to students
		Stop the student's behaviour directly
		Ignore
		Say "stop"
		Stand and wait without saying anything
		Body contact
		Eye contact
		Gestures
		Cooperation with the classroom teachers
	Cycle Two	Use of rules

		STEPS
		Cooperation with the classroom teacher
		Preparation well for the class
		Ignore
		Eye contact with long time
		Body contact with long time
		Hand clap
		Stop and wait

Based on the data analysis of the contributing factors to students' challenging behaviour and the students' responses to the strategies used in Cycle One, the researcher developed new, improved strategies to be implemented in Cycle Two. Throughout Cycle Two the researcher explored the effectiveness of each strategy used according to the identified students' responses, as indicated in the observation checklist data (see Tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7). The results are described below.

Firstly, after applying the modified classroom rules in Cycle Two, the students' responses were observed to be more agreeable to the rules and to respond more quickly. The amended rules featured shorter instructions, constructive phrases and feedback had a more positive effect on students and hence improved the managing the group work for the researcher.

Secondly, in Cycle Two, the researcher adapted the STEPS model of group work management (Sri, 2018) with pleasing improvement. This new strategy improved the teaching efficiency and reduced the challenges caused by dominating group leaders.

When using the STEPS strategy, the researcher focussed attention on time management across the steps and observation of the group members' participation. Each phase is interconnected, so a smooth transition between the phases of the whole process was critical for managing lesson effectiveness and completing the lesson on time. In order to monitor student engagement, the researcher walked around the classroom to observe student's participation and answered the questions raised by group leaders or other group members.

Thirdly, the cooperation with the classroom teacher proved to be effective in sourcing advice for improving classroom management. Throughout Cycle Two, the researcher discovered a more effective way to communicate what had occurred during the lesson was to have an informal conversation with the classroom teacher immediately after class if possible, or if not, then during recess. Although this research was based on the teaching with one class (the Year 5 and 6 students), the researcher had a full teaching load for the day across other classes. The daily updates with the classroom teacher assisted the researcher to more keenly focus on specific details of the research class, to consolidate these for recording in the reflection journal

Fourthly, as discussed above in section 6.1.2.1 the researcher needed to improve the level and details in lesson preparation in Cycle Two, compared to Cycle One. Preparation in Cycle Two made more of preparation for challenges that might happen and strategies to mediate these risks were highlighted. Resources such as the worksheets and cards for games were also designed in Cycle Two to be more interesting and eye catching to assist with student engagement.

Table 6.3 above also recorded that 'ignoring' minor misbehavior was a finding in this research. In Cycle One the researcher tried to manage every small challenge and this caused delays in lesson progression and became a time wasting issue. On the advice of



the classroom teacher, the researcher became more comfortable with ignoring minor misbehaviours and by moving the lesson along, the students were drawn back towards engagement.

Body contact was another strategy proposed in the findings as being a strategy to bring students' attention back to the task at hand. Whilst this strategy was considered for improvement in Cycle Two, but increasing the number of taps to the student's shoulder, by the end of Cycle Two, this strategy was not overly successful. The students did not appear to realise the implication of one body contact (shoulder tap), as when the researcher left their vicinity the distraction from the task reappeared.

Similarly, whilst the researcher was able to improve the effectiveness of the eye contact strategy in Cycle Two, by increasing the time the researcher was prepared to wait until gaining the attention of the student, any improvement seemed to be related to the increase in the researcher's authority in Cycle Two. Although the students responded more positively to the intentions of the researcher after gaining their eye contact, the efficiency of this strategy was offset because it did take lengthy 'stares' in some cases, and it only targetted one specific student. The strategy of "stop and wait" until students were quiet and focussed on the researcher also had the same outcome. Whilst it was effective, it sometimes took too long for the students to respond to the 'silence' of the researcher.

The strategy of clapping hands was more effective in Cycle Two, than both body and eye contact, the stop and wait strategy, as well as the counting backwards strategy using finger gestures. The students quite enjoyed the physical action of following the researcher's clapping patterns and after a few examples, the students responded quite well to be silent and return to the assigned group work.

#### **6.1.4 Preventative and reactive classroom management**

As discussed in Chapter Five, the researcher reported and discussed that these improved strategies to be implemented in Cycle Two could be divided into two categories – preventive classroom management strategies (section 5.1) and those that were reactive to specific incidences arising during lessons (sections 5.2–5.4).

##### ***6.1.4.1 Preventative strategies***

Based on the analysis and reflection of Cycle One data, the researcher proposed four preventive classroom management strategies for Cycle Two, discussed in Chapter Five. These were Rules, STEPS, Cooperate with classroom the classroom teacher and Preparation for the class. the researcher. The rules were simplified and clarified and were to be applied with simple and positive feedback. The researcher also introduced the special Chinese word “静(jing)” not as part of the vocabulary for the lessons, but for use as a classroom management strategy as it translates to “quiet”. The children responded very favourably to this strategy and often assisted the researcher to ask other students to be “静(jing)”.

Another preventative strategy was the novel approach – STEPS. This strategy was identified when reviewing the research conducted by Sri in 2018 and subsequently modified according to the researcher’s teaching context. The STEPS strategy implemented by the researcher consisted of four phases: 1) Separate Phase (maximum eight minutes) to: elect a group leader, provide information about the group work task, allow group leader to finish the task alone, and group members discuss the task; 2) TEam Phase (maximum ten minutes) includes: group leaders return to their group and help the group member complete the task together; 3) Provoke Phase (maximum two minutes) involves: selecting a group member to report the result; and 4) Solo Phase (maximum five minutes) comprises: the selected group member delivers the solution to the problem

to the class as a whole or directly to the researcher. STEPS also includes the idea that the student delivering the final presentation is allocated a mark or score for the entire group, so there is a sense of responsibility for each student to participate well to contribute to the final score. This STEPS strategy is aimed at reducing the gap between the participation of the more able and less able students.

The third strategy that had a preventative side was to increase cooperation with the classroom teacher (as explained in more detail in section 6.1.3 above). There was a need to implement this strategy after each lesson throughout the whole of Cycle Two. Communication with the classroom teacher was limited in this research due to the researchers teaching across various classes. For the researcher to draw successfully on this strategy the communication needed to include a briefing before the class, conversations during the group work activities and feedback obtained after class. The researcher needed to be flexible to fit in with the classroom teacher's time schedule and sometimes this meant meeting during recess or before school classes commenced

The fourth strategy that had an observable impact as a preventative strategy was to be fully prepared for class (see section 6.1.3 above). Based on the challenges identified in Cycle One, the researcher reinforced the preparation for the task content and material, and the simulation of the challenges has been added to the researcher's preparation.

#### ***6.1.4.2 Reactive strategies***

Reactive classroom management strategies that were implemented in Cycle Two included the five specific strategies (see Table 6.3) – ignore, body contact, eye contact, hand clap, stop and wait. Overall it was found that the body contact strategy (tapping the student on the shoulder to indicate they need to stop their behaviour and return to the task) proved to be less effective compared with the other strategies. There was a definite lack of students' responses being sustained after the researcher walked away. The eye contact

strategy was useful at times, but as discussed above, the success was counterbalanced by the length of time to catch the attention of some students and that it was effective for only one student at a time. Therefore, this strategy is not recommended.

Ignoring minor misbehaviours was a successful strategy unless the minor strategy did not cease in which case another approach needed to be implemented such as the hand clapping to gather the attention of the whole class. With this class the hand clap strategy was the most consistently useful reactive strategy.

## **6.2 Researcher's development**

Throughout this eighteen-month research project, the researcher underwent considerable academic and personal development.

### **6.2.1 Mastering the literature review**

One important aspect was to learn how to conduct a literature review. At the commencement of this study the researcher made a list of relevant literature and described the overall findings of the research in one or two sentences. This method resulted in a literature review that was unorganised and lacked a logical flow. In the process of completing the Confirmation of Candidature, the literature review was updated and yet issues of structure remained. After categorising the literature that the researcher read, the review could be organised around this framework. There still were problems, such as categories that overlapped and literature collected that was very out of date. Compiling a reference list was also a new skill to be learned and the researcher studied and mastered the use of referencing software. At the point when the Confirmation of Candidature was successful passed, the researcher naively thought the literature totally completed.

The researcher then realised this was not the case as with the process of data analysis and thesis writing, the literature review needed to be modified many times. Throughout this learning process the researcher had some initial thoughts on how to write a literature review. The literature searching phase was important, as relevant and current literature needed to be sourced. In working with the selected literature the essential task is to consider the viewpoints of different authors on a topic and gather those in agreement and those with alternative perspectives and how these match to the research being undertaken, in either a supportive way or as a critique. At the early stages of this research the ideas from the research on student behaviour management was very helpful to allow the researcher to consolidate her own perspectives.

### **6.2.2 Personal and academic development**

The researcher also experienced a very sharp learning curve to becoming a researcher, a Chinese language classroom teacher and a student in the ROSETE program. The academic journey involved studying and completing the research process such as identifying the research questions, completing an ethics application, and understanding the research methodology to be implemented (the data collection and analysis and reporting these as findings). Learning to be a Chinese language teacher was based on collaboration with supervisors, mentor classroom teachers and peer researchers. These experiences contributed to the researcher's personal growth and the acknowledgement of the growth in one's mindset to stretch one's ability to improve and develop. The researcher came to a self-realisation that throughout the eighteen-month project, many difficulties and challenges had been met with courage, shortcomings were openly faced and determination to solve problems and achieve goals was cultivated.

### **6.3 Contribution to the research field**

This research investigated the challenges experienced by a novice Chinese language teacher when implementing group work. The students' challenging behaviours, the reasons behind these behaviours and the strategies used to overcome these have provided evidence and findings that have the potential to add to the fields of second language teaching and learning, teaching in a second language and general classroom management.

There have been gaps in these fields identified in the research. For example, Korpershoek et al (2016) suggest that numerous studies provide overviews of classroom management frameworks, but lack in providing thorough descriptions of the actual strategies implemented in the schools. This research has provided in-depth details of the strategies the researcher used and modified.

In spite of the importance of classroom management, information regarding how teachers gain and use knowledge about behaviour management in their classrooms is somewhat lacking (Grube et al., 2018). In this project, the researcher disclosed how knowledge was gained and used through the two cycles of Action Research with the goal of improving classroom management in group work. These were the data collection methods of interviews with the classroom teacher, the Focus Group discussions with ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers and students, the researcher's reflection journal and relevant literature. The modified strategies were based on the Action Research cycle. These detailed descriptions provide a base and some suggestions for future researchers.

### **6.4 Implications for managing group work of Chinese class in Australian Stage 3 classes**

Since this research has focused on behaviour management during collaborative group work in a novice Chinese language teacher's class, and targeted participants is Stage 3 students whose age is eleven to twelve years old, future Chinese language teachers who

will teach in Australian primary schools or who are interested this topic may gain some important insights from reading this research.

In the following section the implications for subsequent research and future teaching practices have been discussed.

This research has identified the behavioural challenges that existed in the researcher's Chinese language classes when conducting collaborative group work with the students. Future practitioners will be able to glean information on what possible behavioural challenges they may face when teaching Chinese and which behaviours are quite challenging to manage for the teacher. The discussion in Chapter Four may assist in this regard for beginning teachers. Before seeking the solutions or strategies to counter these challenges, future Chinese language teachers should try to understand the reasons underlying these behavioural problems. Chapter Five may assist beginning teachers in this regard. A list of strategies to assist with classroom management was generated from the data analysis across Cycle One and Two (Chapters Four, Five and above in Chapter 6), and offers information to advance pedagogical knowledge for beginning language teachers. The following summary encapsulates what the researcher has learned from undertaking this study and which may have positive implications for future Chinese language teachers in terms of three identifiable phases for assisting in student behaviour management during group work.

#### **6.4.1 Preparation phase**

1. Prepare the content and strategies to be implemented. On the surface these do not appear to be directly related to student behaviour management. However, choosing relevant and meaningful subject knowledge can help the novice teachers design the lesson and organise the class structure to positively increase students' engagement.
2. Simulate the challenges that may occur in class. Before teaching the class, the

beginning teacher consider and plan a course of action to address the possible challenges they might confront. The simulation of the situation even in the teacher's imagination can decrease the pressure if such misbehaviours eventuate.

3. Communicate with the classroom teacher. Since novice teachers are new to the school and unfamiliar with the students the classroom teacher has a wealth of background knowledge to share on these aspects. Before the class, the novice teachers can confirm with the classroom teacher, the strategies already used when managing group work and any information about particular student's needs – academic performance, personality and special needs. Knowing and understanding the students in the class will definitely assist with classroom management.

#### **6.4.2 In-class phase**

1. Use the STEPS strategy to manage the group work. In this research, the STEPS process for conducting group work was implemented successfully. The use of STEPS can reduce the frequency of behavioural challenges caused by personality clashes between the students. Allowing the most able students to be the group leader and initially removing them from the group, can satisfy their need to finish the task quickly and independently. At the same time, the other group members also can have time to discuss and complete the task. The STEPS process then requires the group leaders to assist the whole group to finish the task. They will not have spare time to be distracted by objects or talk with their friends. Another important point is that the group will be considered as a whole. Every group member receives the same score or mark at the end of the presentations, which provides students with a sense of responsibility to the group.
2. Use appropriate strategies according to the situation. The researcher implemented six strategies during Cycle Two of this research. Two are not recommended as being dependably successful (body contact to tap the shoulder, or glaring eye contact).



Future Chinese language teachers could use the strategies promoted in the findings from this research and it is also suggested that literature and advice from practicing teachers and colleagues can further assist in developing additional strategies. Choosing the most appropriate strategy for the situation can be difficult, especially if the teacher is not familiar with the class. For example, reprimanding a particular student directly saying “Stop” to him/her could unduly upset the student and create unnecessary consequences. This situation occurred in this research. The beginning teacher needs to rely on the expertise of other teachers. For example, experienced teachers have the experience to judge that when a student is ‘yelling’ in order to attract attention, ignoring the child often causes the student to stop quite quickly. However, when the whole class is noisy, clapping hands or saying a special word like “静(jing)” can gain the students’ attention as they join in with the strategy. Novice teacher can explore their own specific word to use in class or allow the class to choose an appropriate one.

#### **6.4.3 After-class Phase**

1. Reflect on daily performance to improve and modify management strategies. The time after the class is critical for teacher development. The end of the class or school day does not mean a teacher has finished all the work. The novice teacher could also maintain a reflection journal and record notable positive or negative incidents of the students’ behaviours and the classroom teacher’s feedback. All this information can be used to modify and improve behaviour management strategies. In this Action Research project, the modification of the strategies from Cycle One to Cycle Two resulted in improved student management efficiency and teaching quality. The reflection journal is a very useful method enabling the novice teacher to improve teaching experience and ability.

2. Professional development. Professional development is important for enhancing teacher capabilities which impacts on student achievement and engagement (Romi et al., 2016). In this research the workshops at Western Sydney University provided a form of professional development where the ROSETE 11 volunteer Chinese language teachers learned about teaching and learning theory and practice. Continuing professional development at all phases of a teaching career is important. Specific professional development courses are also available. The researcher will continue to follow up additional learning on other techniques for classroom management. Depending on if a teacher or beginning teacher has a particular interest in one area such as student-teacher relationships, professional development can assist to enrich the teacher's skill set and can lead to advanced qualifications and promotion. Novice teachers could find such professional development seminars or courses offered by a university or take part in a program that may be offered at their school or education system.

#### 6.4.4 Practical teaching implication for TCFL teachers in Australia

In this study, the researcher used and modified many strategies and listed these in the sections above. In order to assist beginning ROSETE volunteers and other TCFL teachers in Australia, the following teaching implications could be implemented in their classes. First of all, choose group leaders and leave some time for group members to think and discuss, using STEPS which has the potential to reduce the conflict between students. In addition, it is recommended to set up a quiet zone or cool zone for students who are not on task which could save time and improve teaching efficiency. Ignoring some minor noise or single student's problematic behaviour, can prevent escalation of the situation. However, when most of the groups are talking or making noise, rather than raising one's voice to attract the students' attention, the teacher could stop and wait until all students quieten. Another practical

strategy to assist with positive group work discipline, is for teachers to make eye contact with individual students and to draw on body contact when appropriate. A final recommendation is to choose a Chinese word as a sign to draw the students' attention keep class order is a practical way. This approach is more successful if the key word, like “静(jing)” is selected by the students themselves.

## **6.5 Limitation of this research**

This study has potential to be of value to the field of education however its limitations need to be noted. This research is not exempt from limitations that arise from its research design and methods.

The first limitation relates to the timeframe within which this research was conducted. The researcher had one school year to adapt to the new environment, know the school, begin teaching and modify the teaching process according to the Action Research methodology applied in this research. Further, the teaching aspect of the ROSETE 11 program (Chinese language classes) was only one element. There were university workshops and the accompanying study and thesis writing in addition to the actual classroom preparation and teaching. Another cycle of Action Research would have allowed further refinement of the modified strategies and the researcher's teaching experience to have more in-depth data to report. This would have taken another three to six months, and this additional time was not available.

The second limitation relates specifically to the researcher's schedule of daily classes allocated at Huayuan Public School. This had a serious impact on data collection. The researcher taught ten Chinese language classes each day and hence these were back-to-back. There was no spare time between classes, for the researcher to gauge feedback from the classroom teacher. Informal conversations with any the classroom teacher and specifically with the teacher of the class under investigation for this research, needed to

be done during out of class time and this did not occur systematically. The researcher was then reliant on the interview at the conclusion of Cycle One and Cycle Two for data collection. There was potential data to be collected that was lost due to the time constraints of the teaching schedule. There was also no time lag between the end of Cycle One and the start of Cycle Two, which was the following week. This has been noted as a limitation as with more time to reflect on the Cycle One data analysis in full, the modifications for Cycle Two may have been more measured and effective.

A final limitation relates to the findings of this Action Research project. The findings presented in this research are limited to its specific context. The classroom participants, who were involved in the Chinese language classes under investigation, were the Stage 3 students in a western Sydney school where the researcher undertook her teaching assignment. Therefore, the generalisability of these findings is limited.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This research studied the classroom management during group work in a Sydney School and found out the six types of students' problematic behaviours, nineteen reasons caused these challenges, which fifteen related to teacher and four related to students and multiple strategies that used in this research. Based on the data analysis, this research provide some pragmatic suggestion for managing group work in Stage three Chinese class, including preparation phase, in-class phase and after-class phase. Limited by the timeframe, the researcher's schedule of daily classes, these finding could not be generalized widely and need further study.

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## **Appendix 1 Interviews – Classroom Teacher**

### **1.1 Participant Information Sheet – Teacher**

**Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Chenyan Shi, School of Education, Western Sydney University, under the Supervision of Dr Erin Mackenzie, School of Education.

**Project Summary:** This project aims to improve the understanding of classroom management skills of teachers from other cultural backgrounds when teaching English-dominant students, and contribute to the improvement of classroom management and teaching quality in primary school Chinese lessons.

**How is the study being paid for?**

The study is funded by School of Education, Western Sydney University.

**What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in an interview and observe the researcher’s Chinese classes.

**How much of my time will I need to give?**

You need to give 20-30 minutes for the interview. In addition, you will be asked to observe the researcher’s Chinese classes every week for about 20 minutes.

**What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?**

This research will contribute to the improvement of classroom management and teaching quality for novice Chinese teachers in Australia, especially for following ROSETE classroom volunteers.

**Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?**

There is negligible risk or discomfort for you as a result of participating in this research.

**How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?**

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified.

**Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?**

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

**Can I withdraw from the study?**

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Withdrawing from the study will not affect your relationships with the school or university. To withdraw, please notify Chenyan Shi. If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be deleted from the researcher's data and be securely disposed of.

**What if I require further information?**

Please contact Chenyan Shi should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

Chenyan Shi, Chief Student Investigator, School of Education, 0478542117

Erin Mackenzie, Supervisor, School of Education, (02) 4736 0448

Jinghe Han, co-supervisor, School of Education, (02) 47360 216

**What if I have a complaint?**

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H13320.

## **1.2 Consent Form – Teacher (Extended)**

### **Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

- Participating in an interview
- Having the interview audio recorded
- Observing the Chinese class for the researcher

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H13320

### **What if I have a complaint?**

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.



### 1.3 Interview Dialogue Sheet

Before we get started, I want to check that you are happy to take part in this interview. I also want to let you know that I am making a recording of this interview, just to allow me to focus on what you're saying rather than on writing notes. Is that ok?

I'm interested in classroom management strategies during conducting group work and my performance during group work. Let's get started with the questions.

The sample questions are:

- 1、 Can you tell me your age, education background and how long have you been teaching?
- 2、 Have you been confronted with classroom management issues in your class during conducting group work?
- 3、 How do you solve these challenges?
- 4、 What do you think is the most important factor that influences classroom management during collaborative group work?
- 5、 Do you set up a set of rules that the students need to follow during group work?
- 6、 In your opinion, what are the possible reasons for students' problematic behaviour?
- 7、 Do you have any feedback about my classroom management strategies during conducting group work? What do you think is the shortcoming of my classroom management?
- 8、 Can you give me a suggestion on classroom management during group work that you think most effective?

## **Appendix 2 Focus Groups - Students**

### **2.1 Participant Information Sheet – Parents/Guardians**

#### **Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

Project Summary: The research aims to improve the understanding of classroom management skills during conducting group work of teachers from Chinese backgrounds when teaching English dominant students. It is an action research and the participants will be two Stage 3 classes, two classroom teachers and six ROSETE Chinese volunteers. You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Chenyan Shi, School of Education, Western Sydney University, under the Supervision of Dr Erin Mackenzie, School of Education. The research is focusing on classroom management strategies during conducting group work in Chinese classes.

#### **How is the study being paid for?**

The study is funded by School of Education, Western Sydney University.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in a focus group. The focus group is about your learning experience during group work in Chinese classes.

#### **How much of my time will I need to give?**

You need to give 20-30 minutes for the focus group. And you will take the Chinese classes as usual.

#### **What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?**

This research will contribute to the improvement of classroom management and teaching quality for novice Chinese teachers in Australia, especially for following ROSETE classroom volunteers. Therefore, you might get along with your new Chinese teachers better and have a better Chinese learning experience.

#### **Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?**

This study do not involve any risk or discomfort for you, because it only need you to discuss about your Chinese learning experience during conducting group work in Chinese classes. In addition, your personal information will be de-identified.

**How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?**

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission.

**Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?**

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

**Can I withdraw from the study?**

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason.

If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be deleted from the researcher's data and be securely disposed of.

**Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the Chief Student Investigator's contact details. They can contact the Chief Student Investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain a copy of the information sheet.

**What if I require further information?**

Please contact *Chenyan Shi* should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate

Chenyan Shi, Chief Student Investigator, School of Education, 0478542117

Erin Mackenzie, Supervisor, School of Education, (02) 4736 0448

Jinghe Han, co-supervisor, School of Education, (02) 47360 216

**What if I have a complaint?**

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s. This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H13320.

## 2.2 Consent Form – Parents (Extended)

### **Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

I, [Parent/Carer to print name], hereby consent for my child [Parent/Carer to print name of child], to participate in the above named research project.

I have discussed participation in the project with my child and my child agrees to their participation in the project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my child’s involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent for my child to:

- Participate in a focus group
- Having their information audio recorded
- Having their Chinese classes be observed

I consent for my child’s data and information provided to be used for this project.

I understand that my child’s involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about them will be used in any way that reveals their identity.

I understand that I can withdraw my child, or my child can withdraw, from the study at any time without affecting their relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H13320.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

## 2.3 Focus Group Dialogue Sheet – Students

Before we get started, I want to check that you are happy to take part in this interview. I also want to let you know that I am making a recording of this interview, just to allow me to focus on what you're saying rather than on writing notes. Is that ok?

I'm interested in how you feel about Chinese classes and how you think you and other children behave in class. Let's get started with the questions.

Sample questions are:

1. What do you like about Chinese class?
2. Do you usually understand the work we do in class? If not, which things have been hard to understand?
3. Do you think your class behaves well in Chinese class?
4. Do you like the way the classroom teacher or I treat you during group work? Why or why not?
5. When you make a little behavioural mistake in the class during group work, how do you want your teacher to treat you?
6. When you're working in a group, what can the teacher do to help?

## **Appendix 3 Focus Groups – ROSETE 11**

### **3.1 Participant Information Sheet – ROSETE 11**

#### **Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Chenyan Shi, School of Education, Western Sydney University, under the Supervision of Dr Erin Mackenzie, School of Education.

**Project Summary:** This project aims to improve the understanding of classroom management skills of teachers from other cultural backgrounds when teaching English-dominant students, and contribute to the improvement of classroom management and teaching quality in primary school Chinese lessons.

#### **How is the study being paid for?**

The study is funded by School of Education, Western Sydney University.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in one focus group. The focus group is about your teaching challenges during conducting group work in Chinese classes. You will be asked to discuss the strategies you use to conduct group work and potential reasons why challenges exist during group work.

#### **How much of my time will I need to give?**

The focus group will take 20-30 minutes to complete.

#### **What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?**

This research will contribute to the improvement of classroom management and teaching quality for novice Chinese teachers in Australia, especially for following ROSETE classroom volunteers.

#### **Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?**

There is negligible risk or discomfort for you as a result of participating in this research.

#### **How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?**

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be

provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified.

**Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?**

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

**Can I withdraw from the study?**

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Withdrawing from the study will not affect your relationships with the school or university. To withdraw, please notify Chenyan Shi. If you do withdraw, any information that has been supplied before it is de-identified may be deleted. Information that has been de-identified cannot be deleted. The permanent de-identification will occur 7 days after the focus group is completed.

**What if I require further information?**

Please contact Chenyan Shi should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate:

Chenyan Shi, Chief Student Investigator, School of Education, 0478542117

Erin Mackenzie, Supervisor, School of Education, (02) 4736 0448

Jinghe Han, co-supervisor, School of Education, (02) 47360 216

**What if I have a complaint?**

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H13320.



### **3.2 Consent Form – ROSETE 11**

**Project Title: A Beginning Chinese Teacher’s Development of Classroom Management Skills in A Sydney School: An Action Research Project**

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

- Participating in a focus group
- Having the focus group audio recorded

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H13320

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

### **3.3 Focus Group Dialogue Sheet – ROSETE 11**

Before we get started, I want to check that you are happy to take part in this interview. I also want to let you know that I am making a recording of this interview, just to allow me to focus on what you're saying rather than on writing notes. Is that ok?

I'm interested in what kind of classroom management challenges during group work you have been confronted and what strategies you used. Let's get started with the questions.

The sample questions are:

- 1、 Can you tell me your age, education background and do you have teaching experience before?
- 2、 What are the most difficult challenges you have faced in classroom management during conducting group work in Australia?
- 3、 How do you solve these challenges?
- 4、 What do you think is the most important factor that influences students' behaviour during group work?
- 5、 Do you set up a set of rules that students need to follow during group work?
- 6、 In your opinion, what are the possible reasons for students' problematic behaviour?
- 7、 Which classroom management strategies are most effective during group work and why?

## Appendix 4 Observational Behaviour Checklists

### 4.1 Student Problematic Behaviour Checklist

Type	No.	Behaviour	# of times	Total
Implicit Problematic behaviour	1	Distracted		
	2	Doze		
	3	Scrawl		
	4	Not follow the task		
	5	Look irrelevant book		
	6	Eat		
Explicit Problematic behaviour	7	Refuse to move		
	8	Physical aggression to another pupil		
	9	Damage to material/equipment		
	10	Leave the classroom at will		
	11	Change seat at will		
	12	Talk without permission		
	13	Make noise		
	14	Pass things		
	15	Rough-and-tumble		
	16	Unreasonable demands		
	17	Walk around		
	18	Imitate teacher deliberately		

## 4.2 Teacher Response Checklist

Type	No.	Behaviour	# of times	Total
Non-verbal behaviour	1	Ignore		
	2	Proximity(going over to pupils)		
	3	Body contact (eg. Touch shoulders)		
	4	Gesture		
	5	Knock on board		
	6	Take away the distracting thing		
	7	Eye contact		
	8	other		
Verbal behaviour	9	Question student who misbehave		
	10	humour		
	11	Praise other students		
	12	Raise requests		
	13	Roll call		
	14	Ask student stopping		
	15	Stop and wait		
	16	Change the seat		
	17	Talk to student after class		
	18	Other		

### 4.3 Student's response to teacher's behaviour

No.	Response	#of times	Total
1	Return to task		
2	Ignore the teacher		

## Appendix 5 HREA Approval



### HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

20 June 2019  
Doctor Erin Mackenzie  
School of Education

Dear Erin,

**Project Title: "A Beginning Chinese Teachers Development of Classroom Management Skills in an Australian School: An Action Research Project"**

**HREC Approval Number: H13320**

**Risk Rating: HREC - Moderate**

I am pleased to advise the above research project meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018).

Ethical approval for this project has been granted by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018).

Approval of this project is valid from 20 June 2019 until 20 June 2021.

This protocol covers the following researchers:

**Erin Mackenzie, Chenyan Shi, Jinghe Han**

#### Summary of Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report will be due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
2. A final report will be due at the expiration of the approval period.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee prior to being implemented. Amendments must be requested using the HREC Amendment Request Form.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events on participants must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Committee via the Human Ethics Officer as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the Committee as a matter of priority.
6. Consent forms are to be retained within the archives of the School or Research Institute and made available to the Committee upon request.

#### 7. Project specific conditions:

There are no specific conditions applicable.

Please quote the registration number and title as indicated above in the subject line on all future correspondence related to this project. All correspondence should be sent to [humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au) as this email address is closely monitored.

Yours sincerely

  
Professor Elizabeth Deane  
Presiding Member,  
Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee

Western Sydney University  
ABN 53 014 069 881 CRICOS Provider No. 00917K  
Locked Bag 1797 Penrith NSW 2751 Australia  
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## Appendix 6 SERAP Ethics Approval

Miss Chenyan Shi  
206/81B Lord Sheffield Circuit PENRITH NSW 2750

DOC19/659350  
SERAP 2019319

Dear Miss Shi

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *A Beginning Chinese Teacher's Development of Classroom Management Skills in an Australian School: An Action Research Project*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to principals.

This approval will remain valid until 19 August 2020.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Researcher name	WWCC	WWCC expires
Chenyan Shi	WWC1744224V	23-Aug-2023

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.

The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.

The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.

Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research

approvals officer before publication proceeds.

All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: [serap@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:serap@det.nsw.edu.au). You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.



I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely



**Sandi Simpkins**

Director, School Policy and Information Management

19 August 2019

SCHOOL POLICY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

NSW Department of Education

Level 11, 105 Phillip Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 | GPO Box 33, Sydney NSW 2001

Telephone: 02 9244 5060 – Email: [serap@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:serap@det.nsw.edu.au)