The Application of Online Education Resources in Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Teaching Projects

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 14

1.1 Overview of the Study 14
1.2 Research Aims 18
1.3 Research Questions 20
1.4 Research Objectives 20
1.5 Methodology 21
1.6 Contributions to Knowledge 23
1.7 Structure of the Thesis 24

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING ONLINE EDUCATION RESOURCES IN TRANSNATIONAL ART AND DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION 28

2.1 Introduction 28
2.2 Research Philosophy 29
2.3 Research Approach 36
2.3.1 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning 36
2.3.2 Mixed Methods Research 38
2.4 Research Method 41
2.4.1 Data Collection Methods 41
2.4.1.1 Participant Observation 41
2.4.1.2 Semi-Structured Interview 44
2.4.1.3 Questionnaire 48
2.4.2 Data Analysis Methods 51
2.4.2.1 Thematic Analysis 51
2.4.2.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis 54
2.5 Ethical Aspects of the Research 57
2.6 Summary of the Chapter 60

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH BACKGROUND: ONLINE EDUCATION RESOURCES IN TRANSNATIONAL ART AND DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION 63

3.1 Introduction 63
3.2 Art and Design Higher Education in the Chinese and UK Contexts 65
3.2.1 The Development of Chinese Art and Design Higher Education 65
3.2.2 The Development of UK Art and Design Higher Education 70
3.2.3 Analysis and Comparison of the Art and Design Higher Education Systems in China and the UK 74
3.2.4 The Art and Design Industry and Graduate Employment in China and the UK 78
3.3 Sino-UK Partnership Teaching Projects and the Acculturation of International Students 81
3.3.1 Collaboration Background in Higher Education (with Focus on China and the UK) 81
3.3.2 Mainstream Transnational Partnership Formats in Art and Design Subjects (with

Focus on China and the UK) *86*
3.3.3 Acculturation of International Students *90*
3.3.4 Study and Living Experience of Chinese International Students in the UK *93*
3.4 Status and Development of Online Art Education 96
3.4.1 The Situation of Online Art Education Before, During, and After the Outbreak of COVID-19 ..... *96*
3.4.2 Typical Mainstream Methods and Technologies of Online Education *100*
3.4.3 Challenges of Online Art and Design Education *103*
3.4.4 Predictions for the Future Development of Online Art and Design Higher Education *107*
3.5 Summary of the Chapter 110

CHAPTER 4: CONSTRUCTING A CONCEPTUAL LENS TO UNDERSTAND TRANSNATIONAL ONLINE ART AND DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION 112

4.1 Introduction 112
4.2 Community of Inquiry Model 115
4.3 Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model 123
4.4 The Relational of the Two Frameworks with the Research Background of This Study 130
4.5 The Relational Aspects of the Two Frameworks and the Empirical Work of This Project 136
4.6 Summary of the Chapter 140

CHAPTER 5: ONLINE TRANSNATIONAL ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION — EVIDENCE FROM CHINA AND THE UK 144

5.1 Introduction 144
5.2 Participant Observation 146
5.2.1 Introduction to the Observed Case *146*
5.2.2 Participant Observation in the 'Keynote' Lecture *150*
5.2.3 Participant Observation in the Presentation Session *152*
5.2.4 Participant Observation in the Online Chat Context *157*
5.3 Semi-Structured Interview 159
5.3.1 The Purpose of the Semi-Structured Interview in This Research *159*
5.3.2 The Relational Nature of Semi-Structured Interview Questions *162*
5.3.3 Selection and Recruitment of Participants for Semi-Structured Interviews *166*
5.3.4 The Implementation of the Semi-Structured Interview *176*
5.4 Questionnaire 179
5.4.1 The Purpose of the Questionnaire in This Research *179*
5.4.2 The Development and Distribution of the Questionnaire *181*
5.4.3 The Pilot Study of the Questionnaire *188*
5.5 Summary of the Chapter 191

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS: UNDERSTANDING SINO-UK TRANSNATIONAL ART AND DESIGN ONLINE HIGHER EDUCATION 193

6.1 Introduction 193

6.2 Thematic Analysis of Participant Observation Evidence Gathered from an Eight-Week Online Digital Media Arts Module 195
6.2.1 Data Analysis Techniques *195*
6.2.2 Design of the Observation Notes *197*
6.2.3 Analyses from the Observation Notes *199*
6.2.4 Conclusion *207*
6.3 Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Evidence Gathered from Students and Faculty Members 208
6.3.1 Data Analysis Techniques *208*
6.3.2 The Coding Process *209*
6.3.3 Open Coding *211*
6.3.4 Axial Coding *216*
6.3.5 Selective Coding *218*
6.3.6 Conclusion *219*
6.4 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Evidence Gathered from Students and Faculty Members 222
6.4.1 Data Analysis Techniques *222*
6.4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis *223*
6.4.2.1 Reliability Analysis 223
6.4.2.2 Validity Analysis 225
6.4.3 Demographic Characteristics *228*
6.4.4 Descriptive Data Analysis Process *235*
6.4.5 Conclusion *237*
6.5 Summary of the Chapter 238

CHAPTER 7: EXPLORING A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY 241

7.1 Introduction 241
7.2 Findings from the Participant Observation Data 242
7.2.1 Findings Related to the 'Cognitive Presence' of the Participants *242*
7.2.2 Findings Related to the 'Social Presence' of the Participants *248*
7.2.3 Findings Related to the 'Teaching Presence' of the Participants *253*
7.2.4 Findings Related to 'The Personal Experiences and Perceptions' of the Participants *258*
7.3 Findings from the Semi-Structured Interview Data 262
7.3.1 Findings Related to the 'Cognitive Presence' of the Participants *262*
7.3.2 Findings Related to the 'Social Presence' of the Participants *270*
7.3.3 Findings Related to the 'Teaching Presence' of the Participants *276*
7.3.4 Findings Related to 'The Personal Experiences and Perceptions' of the Participants *285*
7.4 Findings from the Questionnaire Data 291
7.4.1 Findings Related to the 'Cognitive Presence' of the Participants *291*
7.4.2 Findings Related to the 'Social Presence' of the Participants *296*
7.4.3 Findings Related to the 'Teaching Presence' of the Participants *301*
7.4.4 Findings Related to 'The Personal Experiences and Perceptions' of the Participants

306
7.5 USING THE TOER MODEL TO UNDERSTAND THE FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH 310
7.5.1 Introduction to the TOER Model *310*
7.5.2 'Cognitive Presence' of the TOER Model *312*
7.5.2.1 Curriculum Design and Content Delivery 312
7.5.2.2 Adaptation to Online Educational Contexts 313
7.5.2.3 Creating Inclusive Learning through Cultural Understanding 314
7.5.2.4 Deep Learning through Critical Inquiry 315
7.5.3 'Social Presence' of the TOER Model *316*
7.5.3.1 Promotion of Student Participation 316
7.5.3.2 Utilisation of Communication Platforms 317
7.5.3.3 Facilitation of Group Activities and Collaboration 318
7.5.3.4 Fostering a Cohesive Community of Learners 319
7.5.4 'Teaching Presence' of the TOER Model *320*
7.5.4.1 Facilitated Engagement through Dynamic Activities 320
7.5.4.2 Structured Guidance and Feedback 321
7.5.4.3 Adaptation to Diverse Learning Needs 322
7.5.4.4 Developing Analytical Skills through Reflective Processes 322
7.5.5 'Iterative Presence' of the TOER Model *323*
7.5.5.1 Continuous Adjustment in Communication and Engagement 323
7.5.5.2 Technical Support as a Cycle of Improvement 324
7.5.5.3 Recurrent Adjustments to Administrative Support 325
7.5.5.4 Ongoing Engagement with Diverse Global Perspectives 326
7.5.6 The Intersections between Presences of the TOER Model *327*
7.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER 334

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 337

8.1 INTRODUCTION 337
8.2 REVISITING THE PROJECT'S RESEARCH QUESTIONS 339
8.3 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS 347
8.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH 354

REFERENCE 360

APPENDIX 413

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM 413
APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEETS 414
APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INVITATION EMAIL FOR EMPIRICAL WORKS 418
APPENDIX 4: ETHICAL APPROVAL 419
APPENDIX 5: OBSERVATION NOTES SAMPLE 421
APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 426
Students - Interview for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education *426*
Faculty Members - Interview for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education *430*

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS 434
Sample 1: Student 1 (Alberto) *434*
Sample 2: Faculty Member 1 (Karen) *448*
APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW CODING PROCESS 461
Open Coding Themes *461*
Axial Coding Themes *492*
APPENDIX 9: QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS 515
Students - Questionnaire for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education *515*
Faculty Members - Questionnaire for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education *529*

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Sino-UK Partnership Teaching Projects at Nine of China's Most Prestigious Fine Arts Institutes 89
Table 5.1: Details of Semi-Structured Interview Participants 172
Table 6.1: Themes found through Cognitive Presence Observations 202
Table 6.2: Themes found through Social Presence Observations 204
Table 6.3: Themes found through Teaching Presence Observations 205
Table 6.4: Themes found through Individualised Expression of Participants 206
Table 6.5: Open Coding Themes Sample 215
Table 6.6: Axial Coding Themes Sample 218
Table 6.7: Selective Coding Themes 219
Table 6.8: The Cronbach's Alpha of SQ and FQ 225
Table 6.9: KMO and Bartlett's Test of SQ and FQ 228
Table 6.10: Geographical Regions of the Chinese Institutes of SQ and FQ 230
Table 6.11: Demographic Characteristics of SQ 232
Table 6.12: Demographic Characteristics of FQ 235
Table 6.13: General Descriptive Statistics of SQ and FQ 237
Table 7.1: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Cognitive Presence’ 294
Table 7.2: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Social Presence’ 298
Table 7.3: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Teaching Presence’ 303
Table 7.4: Descriptive Statistics of ‘The Personal Experiences and Perceptions’ 308

List of Figures

Figure 4.1 Community of Inquiry Model (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)..... 117
Figure 4.2 Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model (Picciano, 2009) 125
Figure 6.1: Observation Notes Template 199
Figure 6.2: Visualisation of the Themes from the Three-Step Coding.... 221
Figure 6.3: Geographical Division of China 229
Figure 7.1: Transnational Online Education Resources (TOER) Model (With a Particular Focus on Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Teaching Projects) 311

Abstract

This research arises from the growth in educational partnerships between the UK and China, the rise in the number of students in art and design-related subjects, and the urgent need f§or art and design education resources which arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its specific concern is the online educational environment where there is a gap in knowledge about the significance of transnational online art and design education.

With a focus on Sino-UK collaborations, this project initially presents an in-depth evaluation of the existing research in the field of online education in both the Chinese and UK contexts, with a particular focus on the discipline of art and design. The centrepiece of this research is a series of empirical studies of selected higher education programs representing partnerships between China and the UK. The researcher critically evaluates the current value and explores the future potential of these transnational educational partnerships, particularly their online education components. A unique contribution of this study is the development of a theoretical framework for the establishment of transnational online higher education in art and design subjects between the UK and China.

In undertaking its research, the project employs a mixed methodology. Firstly, the approach involved eight weeks of participant observation in an online digital media arts module delivered in a partnership between a UK and a Chinese institution. Subsequently, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 37 participants, including students and faculty members, who had relevant experience of participation in transnational online art and design education as providers and learners. Apart from the qualitative study, the researcher also collected questionnaires from 192 students and 82 faculty members which enriched the quantitative data of this study.

The core finding of the research extends the development of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000) by incorporating the key components of the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model (Picciano, 2009). This integration serves as the foundation for the derivation of a Transnational Online Education Resources (TOER) Model, enabling a deeper understanding of online educationl within the context of the Sino-UK partnership in art and design teaching programs. This extended theoretical framework deepens the understanding of 'Cognitive, Social, and Teaching presence' in the CoI Model by considering the advantages of the BPP Model within blended learning environments. It further applies these insights to transnational art and design online higher education, while creatively introducing the original concept of 'Iterative presence'.

In addition to developing a theoretical framework, this study provides new empirical evidence, through thematic analysis and descriptive statistical analysis, of the strategies deployed and the experiences of educators and students involved in the production and consumption of Sino-UK transnational online education. Furthermore, it offers practical recommendations for the improvement and development of transnational online art and design education in Sino-UK collaborative contexts.

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List of Abbreviations

Approx. Chi-Square: Approximate Chi-Square

AR: Augmented Reality

BA (Hons): Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

BPP: Blending with Pedagogical Purpose

CA: Constructive Alignment

CAQDAS: Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CAS: Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies

CMS: Course Management System

CoI: Community of Inquiry

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

df: Degrees of Freedom

EdTech: Educational Technology

EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Gao Kao: National College Entrance Examination (China)

IBL: Inquiry-Based Learning

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

KMO: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

LMS: Learning Management System

N/A: Not Applicable

NVivo: Nudist Vivo

P.O.E.M.S: People, Objects, Environments, Messages, Services

PIM: Practical Inquiry Model

PPT: PowerPoint Presentation

Q&A: Questions and Answers

R&D: Research and Development

Sig.: Significance

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TNE: Transnational Education

TOER: Transnational Online Education Resources

TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

UK: United Kingdom

UX/UI: User Experience/User Interface

VR: Virtual Reality

Yi Kao: Specialized Art Entrance Examination (China)

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Overview of the Study

Since the year 2000, there has been a notable and consistent increase in the number of Chinese students choosing the United Kingdom as their destination for studying art and design. This trend is substantiated by data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which indicates that starting from the academic year 2012/13, the influx of Chinese students each year has surpassed the collective total from all European Union countries (Lou, 2021). This upward trajectory in Chinese student enrollment has become particularly prominent following the UK's departure from the EU (Brexit). Brexit has led the UK government to actively seek deeper international relationships beyond Europe. In this new geopolitical landscape, China has emerged as a key focus for future trade and cultural exchange. Consequently, there has been an intensified effort by the UK to strengthen Sino-UK relations. This effort is manifest in various sectors, notably in the realm of higher education. The UK government's initiative to encourage more collaboration with China in education and other areas reflects a strategic pivot, acknowledging the mutual benefits of such partnerships (Li, Wilson, & Doran, 2009; Bradshaw, 2018). This development not only highlights the growing significance of international educational exchange but also underscores the UK's recognition of China as a vital partner in shaping the future of global higher education, especially in creative and artistic disciplines.

In recent years, universities in the United Kingdom have experienced an influx of students from China, an important moment occurred in 2016 with the UK-China Workshop on Quality Assurance in Transnational Education. This workshop culminated in the development of a statement of principles designed to enhance student mobility and improve the quality of transnational education programs between the two countries (British Council, 2023). These principles

encompass regular data sharing, the exchange of best practices and information, and bolstered cooperation between educational institutions. The impact of these initiatives is reflected in data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which reveals that the majority of non-EU international students in the UK are from China. As of 2023, the number of Chinese students engaged in higher education in the UK stands at approximately 144,000 (Clayburn, 2023). This significant representation of Chinese students in UK universities underscores the effectiveness of these collaborative efforts and the growing importance of Sino-UK educational relations. This highlights the UK's role as a preferred destination for international students, particularly in the context of global geopolitical shifts and the evolving landscape of international higher education.

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, transnational higher education in China, particularly in the context of Sino-UK partnership teaching projects, had witnessed remarkable progress and success. These partnerships were a testament to the growing internationalization of education. However, the pandemic has significantly shifted the focus of art and design educators towards online education, thereby accelerating the growth of digital learning platforms that were already on an upward trajectory. The transition to online education, especially in the art and design sector, is still very much an evolving process. The pandemic, with its unprecedented challenges, has underscored the critical need for robust online (distance) education systems. This situation has raised important questions regarding the sufficiency and readiness of online education infrastructures within and across nations and their educational institutions. The capabilities and resources for online or distance education services in universities are varied, leading to potential disparities in the quality of online courses offered by different education providers and countries. As Hodges et al. (2020) discuss, these variations create significant challenges in maintaining consistent quality standards across different online education

platforms and service-providing countries. This scenario highlights the urgency for educational institutions to evaluate and enhance their digital learning environments to ensure effective and equitable access to quality education for students across the globe, especially in the wake of such global disruptions.

During the pandemic-induced shift to distance education, educators, including teachers and academicians, faced significant challenges in determining the most effective methods for online teaching. As Bao (2020, p. 113) highlighted, the limited opportunities for one-to-one interactions with students further complicate the educational process. This transition unearthed a crucial gap in academic research related to online education, particularly in determining best practices and effective methodologies for engaging students remotely. This knowledge gap is what this project aims to address. It seeks to contribute to the development of academic research in online education, particularly focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities presented in transnational partnership higher education in the art and design field. While the pandemic has subsided, there remain reservations and a pressing need for optimization of online teaching resources and approaches in this area.

This project, with its specific focus on the transnational context of online art and design education in Sino-UK collaborations, aims to explore and enhance the operability of online education in these creative disciplines. Despite the challenges in ensuring the certification of academic qualifications and maintaining the quality of online art and design education, there is a clear potential for significant benefits to both educators and students. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the potential of transnational online art and design education, thereby contributing to the advancement of knowledge and practice in this evolving educational landscape.

To guarantee that students, particularly those from China, have a positive and

enriching learning experience, it is imperative to have a comprehensive understanding of their specific needs and preferences. This understanding is crucial in the context of emerging online educational resources, which are increasingly becoming a vital component of overseas higher education. These resources must be adeptly designed to not only facilitate academic learning but also to expand the opportunities available to these students in their educational pursuits. A key aspect of this endeavour is to ensure that online learning environments are conducive to effective communication and interaction. This focus is essential, as it directly impacts the ability of students to engage with the course material, their peers, and their instructors. Providing platforms and tools that support interactive learning experiences is vital in maintaining student engagement and motivation. Hence, attention must always be directed towards enhancing the interactive aspects of online education, ensuring that it is not just a means of information delivery, but a dynamic and participatory learning experience. This approach will help in addressing the unique requirements of Chinese students, thereby fostering a more inclusive and effective online educational environment.

In this study, the researcher adopted a mixed research method to gain a comprehensive understanding of online education resources within the context of Sino-UK partnership art and design teaching projects. This methodological approach involved conducting a series of participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. These diverse methods were chosen to ensure a thorough and multifaceted exploration of the subject matter, allowing for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Participant observation allowed an in-depth investigation into the actual practices and dynamics within the online educational setting, offering valuable insights into the real-time experiences of both teachers and students. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a more personal and detailed exploration of individual perspectives, enabling participants to share their experiences, challenges, and

views on the effectiveness of online learning resources in the context of Sino-UK art and design education. Additionally, the use of questionnaires facilitated the gathering of a broader range of responses, providing a quantitative pattern dimension to the research that helped to complement the qualitative evidence.

From the data collected through these methods, the researcher presents a new theoretical framework: the 'Transnational Online Education Resource (TOER) Model'. This model is specifically designed to understand the findings of this study related to online education resources in the context of Sino-UK partnership art and design projects. It focuses on identifying and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities presented in this transnational educational context. The TOER Model represents a significant contribution to the field, offering a structured approach to evaluating and enhancing online educational resources in the realm of Sino-UK partnership art and design subjects. This research addresses the specific challenges and opportunities inherent in transnational education, providing a significant contribution to the field and paving the way for future research and development in this area. Overall, the study reflects the dynamic nature of international education and the crucial role of effective transnational partnerships in shaping its future, especially in creative disciplines. It underscores the importance of adapting to changing educational landscapes and the potential of online education in facilitating cross-cultural learning and cooperation.

1.2 Research Aims

The study presented herein is dedicated to providing comprehensive insights into educator provision and student experiences within the realm of transnational online art and design education. Its overarching aim is to augment the existing body of research on Sino-UK cooperative teaching projects. A core concern of this endeavour is to enhance the online education experience of

students engaged in art and design, particularly within the context of Sino-UK transnational higher education partnership projects. The significance of this research lies in its detailed exploration of the nuances of transnational online education, a rapidly evolving field that has become increasingly relevant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study addresses the critical need for an adaptive and responsive educational approach that aligns with the shifting paradigms of global education. It does so by investigating the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in the context of Sino-UK partnerships, which are often characterized by differing cultural, educational, and technological landscapes.

One of the key outcomes of this research is the development and presentation of a model for Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. This model is intended to serve as a blueprint for the effective delivery of online art and design courses, ensuring that they are pedagogically sound, culturally sensitive, and technologically advanced. It seeks to address best practices in online education, which integrate innovative teaching methods, interactive learning platforms, and comprehensive support services to enhance the educational experience for students. Furthermore, the study places a strong emphasis on proposing potential improvements and reforms to online art and design education within the framework of Sino-UK partnership teaching projects. This involves a critical examination of current online teaching platforms and learning support services, identifying areas for enhancement and upgrading. The research explores how these platforms can be optimized to better cater to the diverse needs of students, particularly those from Chinese backgrounds, and to align with the standards and expectations of UK educational institutions.

In essence, this study offers a holistic view of the current state and future potential of transnational online art and design education within the Sino-UK

context. It brings to light the complexities and nuances of delivering high-quality education across cultural and geographical boundaries, highlighting the importance of collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in the realm of international higher education. By providing valuable insights and practical recommendations, the research aims to contribute significantly to the field of online art and design education, paving the way for more effective, inclusive, and engaging learning experiences for students in the Sino-UK partnership projects.

1.3 Research Questions

The knowledge gap previously discussed, is addressed through the pursuit of the following research questions:

I. How do stakeholders in higher education perceive the quality and effectiveness of online art and design education compared to traditional in-person learning?
II. What are the primary barriers and challenges to effective implementation in online art and design education?
III. How can online education resources be optimized to better support the needs of stakeholders in Sino-UK transnational partnerships?

1.4 Research Objectives

The research questions of the project will be answered through the realization of the following objectives:

I. To evaluate the research background on online education with a particular focus on the field of art and design.
II. To set out the development of online art and design education in China and the UK, with a particular focus on the emergence of transnational developments between the two jurisdictions.

III. To undertake empirical work on selected Sino-UK transnational partnership higher education projects, to establish the current value and future potential of transnational Sino-UK art and design higher education partnerships, with a focus on online provision.
IV. To present an academic model of UK-China transnational online art and design higher education.
V. To provide a series of practical recommendations for the future development and delivery of Sino-UK online art and design higher education courses.

1.5 Methodology

To comprehensively explore the complexities of online education within the Sino-UK partnership in art and design, this study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Each of these methods played a critical role in gathering rich, multifaceted data that illuminates the nuanced experiences of educators and students engaged in this transnational educational context.

The participant observation method played a pivotal role in this study. This involved the researcher immersing themselves in the actual practices and dynamics of the online educational setting, providing valuable insights into the real-time experiences of both teachers and students. The historical development and foundational principles of participant observation were meticulously examined, highlighting its utility in deciphering complex social settings and interactions (DeMunck & Sobo, 1998). This method's ability to provide a nuanced understanding of educational environments, particularly in an online context, was emphasized. The researcher undertook dual roles as a participant and an observer, enabling a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of community dynamics while maintaining the necessary analytical distance. This approach was crucial for authentically capturing the

essence of educational interactions and experiences within the chosen educational programme.

The semi-structured interviews allowed for a more personal and detailed exploration of individual perspectives (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The researcher engaged with a diverse group of stakeholders, enabling participants to share their experiences, challenges, and views on the effectiveness of online learning resources in the context of Sino-UK art and design education. The use of semi-structured interviews provided a structured yet flexible framework for in-depth exploration, making it particularly suited to the study's cross-national nature. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities inherent in transnational art and design education.

Questionnaires were used to gather a broader range of responses, providing a quantitative dimension to the research that helped to validate and supplement the qualitative findings. The questionnaires were distributed among students and faculty members from both Sino-UK partnership institutions, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences. This method offered a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing empirical data, essential in yielding reliable and valid results (Kurzhals, 2021). The questionnaire design was informed by both statistical considerations and the need to capture the nuanced experiences of the participants.

This study sheds light on the intricacies of online education in art and design, particularly within the context of Sino-UK transnational partnerships. It offers insights into how online delivery methods have not only transformed the tools and platforms used in education but also brought about significant changes in communication strategies, teaching methodologies, and learning experiences. The researcher’s use of a mixed-methods approach to examine these changes contributes significantly to our understanding of the nuances and challenges

posed by the integration of technology in education. This reflection is crucial for guiding future educational strategies and research methodologies.

1.6 Contributions to Knowledge

This research makes significant contributions to the field of transnational online education, particularly within the context of Sino-UK partnerships in art and design. The study's most notable contribution is the development of the Transnational Online Educational Resources (TOER) Model. This model provides a comprehensive and dynamic framework for understanding, evaluating, and enhancing the effectiveness of online education in cross-cultural settings. It is especially crucial for navigating the complexities of transnational educational environments, particularly in creative disciplines.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this research offers an in-depth analysis of the development and current state of online art and design education in both China and the UK. By focusing on Sino-UK collaborations, the study identifies the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in transnational online education, such as cultural differences, language barriers, and the integration of digital tools in creative education. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the specific needs and experiences of students and educators involved in transnational partnerships, providing valuable insights that can inform future educational strategies, policy developments, and the design of online educational resources.

This study also offers new insights that can be utilized to provide comprehensive cross-cultural support to international students at various stages—before, during, and after their online art and design education journey. The cross-cultural and comparative analysis presented in this study is instrumental in offering key recommendations for universities in China and the

UK, highlighting both facilitators and barriers. These insights can help these institutions learn from their respective partner universities and provide overseas language learners in both countries the opportunity to benefit from their peers' experiences.

Overall, this research contributes both theoretical advancements and practical solutions to the field of transnational online art and design education. It offers essential guidelines for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of online art and design education, ensuring it meets the diverse needs and backgrounds of students. The study not only deepens our understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by online education in Sino-UK partnerships but also provides a robust framework and actionable insights that can be applied to improve the quality and effectiveness of online art and design education in a globalized educational landscape.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into 8 chapters as follows:

Chapter one (the current chapter) introduces the background to the research, research aims, questions, objectives, methodology, research contributions, and structure of the whole thesis.

Chapter two presents the research methodology in detail. It sets out the philosophical stance of the researcher and then explains the appropriateness of the adopted research approach. Then, the chapter also addresses the empirical work conducted in detail, a series of participant observations, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The ethical considerations of the research are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter three undertakes a critical evaluation of the research background on online education within the fields of art and design, focusing particularly on the contexts of China and the United Kingdom. This chapter examines the development of art and design education in both countries, highlighting key differences in educational approaches, curriculum structures, and industry demands. It also explores the unique challenges and opportunities of Sino-UK transnational partnerships in online education, including the impact of cultural differences, language barriers, and the integration of digital tools. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the effects of the adoption of digital technologies and the challenges of maintaining educational quality in this new format.

Chapter four develops the conceptual approach of the thesis by focusing on the Community of Inquiry Model (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000) and the Blending with the Pedagogical Purpose Model (Picciano, 2009). These models are examined for their relevance and applicability to Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. The chapter highlights the strengths and limitations of each model, particularly in addressing the complexities of hybrid and online learning environments. The integration of these models provides an analysis of the unique dynamics of transnational online education, offering both theoretical and practical insights that serve as a framework for analysis of the empirical data gathered in the project.

Chapter five elaborates on the mixed-methods approach employed in this study, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather a comprehensive dataset. The chapter details the use of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires to explore the complexities of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. Each method is discussed for its role in capturing both the depth and breadth of the educational experiences within these collaborative programs. Additionally, the chapter addresses the ethical considerations pertinent to data collection, especially in online and

cross-cultural research contexts. This multi-faceted approach lays a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis, providing insights that will inform recommendations for future practices in online transnational education.

Chapter six presents a detailed account of the data analysis methods employed in this research, integrating both thematic and descriptive statistical analysis. The chapter explains how these approaches were used to thoroughly examine the qualitative and quantitative data collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Thematic analysis provided deep insights into the qualitative aspects of the research, such as participant experiences and cultural interactions, while descriptive statistics offered a quantitative perspective, identifying key patterns and trends. This combined approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of implementing online education resources in Sino-UK transnational art and design education, laying the groundwork for the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter seven describes the key findings of the study, which are grounded in the analysis of empirical data through the application of theoretical frameworks of the Community of Inquiry Model and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model. These frameworks helped interpret the core elements of cognitive, social, and teaching presences in the participants' experiences. The chapter also presents the development of an original framework—the Transnational Online Education Resources (TOER) Model—designed to deepen the understanding of the educational processes within the Sino-UK partnership in art and design teaching projects. This model integrates elements from the Community of Inquiry Model and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model, as well as iterative presence, which reflects the continuous adaptation and development of teaching methods based on feedback. Additionally, the chapter includes insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of participants,

highlighting their subjective engagement with the online learning environment. These findings offer practical insights and recommendations for enhancing the use of online resources in future transnational educational initiatives.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis by revisiting the research questions and findings to highlight the conceptual, empirical and practical contribution contributions of this study. It also presents a series of practical recommendations for the future development of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education initiatives. Additionally, the chapter considers the limitations of this study and offers suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Methodology for Understanding Online Education Resources in Transnational Art and Design Higher Education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to presenting the methodology employed in conducting research on the use of online education resources within the context of transnational art and design higher education, specifically focusing on the Sino-UK collaboration. The chapter begins with an in-depth discussion of the research philosophy and paradigm that guide the study, particularly emphasising the pragmatism paradigm. Pragmatism was chosen due to its flexibility in combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, which is vital for addressing the complexities inherent in cross-cultural, digitally mediated educational environments. The use of this paradigm is essential for understanding the unique educational challenges and opportunities in an online setting that bridges two distinct cultural contexts.

The research aims to explore how online resources are utilised in this collaborative educational environment and how they impact the teaching and learning processes within art and design education. The chapter proceeds to provide a detailed explanation of the research design, which includes the methodological approaches, selection of research tools, and the rationale for their application. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research seeks to gather both qualitative and quantitative data to capture a comprehensive view of the subject. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires are the primary methods of data collection, each offering unique insights into the dynamics of online education. Through this multifaceted approach, the research strives to uncover the interplay between cultural, educational, and technological factors in a global educational setting, providing

both depth and breadth to the findings.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the philosophical and theoretical foundations that underpin the chosen methodology. A critical examination of these discussions helps to validate the research design, ensuring that it is aligned with the objectives and context of the study. The chapter also addresses the role of the researcher within the study, highlighting the importance of reflexivity and the need to be mindful of biases that could influence the research process. Ultimately, this chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the methods used to investigate the application of online educational resources in the Sino-UK partnership, establishing a solid framework for the analysis and discussion that will follow in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Research Philosophy

The researcher's research philosophy refers to how they view knowledge evolution (Saunders et al., 2016). A research philosophy is also a collection of views about how data related to a topic should be collected, analysed, and used. The significance of comprehending the philosophical positions of research has been emphasized by a number of researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105-117; Saunders et al., 2016, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015). This is because the research philosophy that is selected can have an impact on how a project is conducted overall. Moreover, it is imperative to make suitable decisions concerning the research philosophy, since these positions influence the selection of a research methodology that aligns with the goals and characteristics of the project. Additionally, it is important to recognize, reduce, and communicate any personal tendencies that the researcher may have that could influence the way the study is conducted. In the realm of academic inquiry, a researcher's philosophy of research is fundamentally an elucidation of how they perceive the progression and evolution of knowledge, as posited by

Saunders et al. (2016). This philosophy is not merely a singular belief but a compendium of perspectives concerning the methodologies for the collection, analysis, and application of data pertinent to a specific topic. It acts as a guiding framework that steers the overall methodological approach of a research endeavour.

Scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105-117), Saunders et al. (2016), and Bryman and Bell (2015) have extensively discussed the influence of a researcher's philosophical orientation on their research conduct. The choice of a particular research philosophy bears considerable weight, as it profoundly impacts the direction, scope, and structure of the research. These philosophical underpinnings dictate the choice of methodologies and techniques, ensuring that they are in harmony with the intrinsic nature and defined objectives of the research. An appropriate selection of research philosophy is imperative for the researcher to align their approach with the intended outcomes and the theoretical framework of their study. It involves a deliberate and conscious decision-making process, where various philosophical options are weighed and evaluated in the context of the research question and aims. It is equally important for researchers to be cognizant of their inherent biases and tendencies. Personal predispositions, if not recognized and mitigated, can inadvertently colour the research process, affecting the validity and reliability of the findings. Acknowledging and addressing these personal inclinations is crucial for maintaining the objectivity and integrity of the research.

A paradigm, in the context of academic research, is a concept that encapsulates a researcher's core belief system or worldview, which fundamentally guides their approach to conducting research. This notion, as articulated by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105), is understood as the foundational belief structure that underpins and directs the research process. Guba (1990) further clarifies this by describing a paradigm as a ‘basic set of

beliefs which guides actions', highlighting its role in shaping the researcher's methodological choices. In a similar vein, Collis and Hussey (2009) define a paradigm as 'a philosophical framework which guides how empirical research should be conducted', thereby emphasizing its significance in influencing the theoretical and practical aspects of research. The impact of different research paradigms on the study of phenomena is substantial, as noted by Hatch and Cunliffe (2006). They emphasize that the choice of a particular research paradigm inevitably steers researchers towards specific ways of examining and understanding research subjects. This choice dictates not only the perspective from which a phenomenon is viewed but also the methodologies and techniques employed in the research process.

Morgan (1979) further elaborates on the multi-level application of paradigms. At the philosophical level, a paradigm reflects the researcher's fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world and reality. These beliefs form the bedrock of the research, influencing all subsequent decisions. At the social level, the focus shifts to the interaction between the researcher and the research process. Here, the paradigm guides the researcher in determining how research should or can be ethically and effectively conducted. Finally, at the technical level, the paradigm plays a critical role in influencing the choice of techniques and methods. This level is concerned with the practical aspects of executing the research, including the selection of methodologies, tools, and procedures that are congruent with the overarching philosophical and social stances of the paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The proper way to identify a paradigm appropriate for the study is to consider the ontological context for what is understood. To obtain that information, one needs an epistemological knowledge foundation and an analytical strategy for data collection. Understanding the ontological framework for what is known, the epistemological foundation, and the methodological reason for gathering data

is the best way to identify a research paradigm. In considering the ontological context, researchers must delve into the core attributes and characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. This involves not just a surface-level observation, but a profound comprehension of the intrinsic qualities that define the subject. By doing so, the researcher gains insights into the various dimensions and complexities of the topic, which are crucial for shaping the research approach.

Ontology, as explored in the realm of academic research, primarily delves into the understanding of the nature of reality. Bryman and Bell (2015) emphasize this by positioning ontology at the heart of discussions about what constitutes reality in a given context. Extending this perspective, Blaikie (1993, p. 6-7) defines ontology as 'the science or study of being', suggesting that it involves a deep inquiry into the essence of existence. Moreover, Blaikie points out that in a social science context, ontology can be further refined to consider claims about what exists, its characteristics, the components that constitute it, and how these components interact with each other. This highlights the adaptability of ontological considerations to specific disciplinary contexts, particularly in understanding the dynamics and structures within social sciences.

Saunders et al. (2016) contribute to this discussion by characterizing ontology as a philosophy of research that is concerned with the nature of reality. They argue that ontology is not just about the identification of reality but also involves questioning the assumptions held by researchers about how the world operates. This aspect of ontology is particularly crucial in shaping the approach researchers take in their studies, as it influences the theoretical and methodological choices they make. Ontology in the context of research is a fundamental philosophical concept that influences how researchers perceive and interpret the world around them. It is about understanding the very fabric of reality, the components that constitute it, and the principles that govern its

existence and interactions. This understanding forms the basis upon which research is conceptualized, designed, and executed.

Epistemology deals with the existence and sources of information (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1994). This branch of philosophy delves into understanding how knowledge is formulated, acquired, and disseminated. It prompts critical inquiries such as what constitutes learning and the essence of knowledge. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) highlight a fundamental aspect of epistemology in their inquiry into the nature of interactions between the knower (the researcher) and the known (the subject of research). This aspect of epistemology is pivotal in determining the approach a researcher adopts and the methodologies they utilize in their study. Epistemological considerations are akin to a linear series, where each element informs and provides a foundation for the next.

This perspective is supported by Saunders et al. (2016), who emphasize that epistemology is not only about understanding the nature of knowledge but also about exploring the processes through which knowledge can be obtained. This includes a deep exploration into the validity and reliability of different sources and types of information. Saunders et al. (2016) further expand this idea by discussing the criteria that define acceptable knowledge within a specific field of study. This aspect of epistemology is crucial as it establishes the benchmarks for what is considered valid knowledge in various academic disciplines. Moreover, Maynard (1994, p. 10) argues that epistemology is concerned with identifying the types of knowledge that are possible within a given research context and ensuring that such knowledge is both adequate and legitimate. This involves careful scrutiny of the methods and processes through which knowledge is acquired, ensuring that they adhere to the accepted standards of rigour and credibility.

Axiology, like its philosophical counterparts ontology and epistemology, plays a subtle yet integral role in shaping research paradigms. Often operating ‘below the surface’, as Collis and Hussey (2009) observe, axiology is not always at the forefront of a researcher's conscious engagement during a project. However, its influence is invariably present, underpinning the research process. Axiology pertains to the values, norms, and beliefs that researchers hold, significantly impacting their research approach. This philosophical stance is deeply concerned with notions of value, such as what is considered good or bad, moral or immoral. These value judgments extend into more profound existential questions about the meaning of life and the ethical ways in which we should live. Axiology thus encompasses a broad spectrum of values, from ethical considerations to aesthetic judgments, influencing how research is conceptualized and conducted.

Axiology plays a pivotal role in guiding researchers to reflect on the values that shape their research process. It prompts them to assess the ethical considerations, motivations, and value systems that influence their choices of topics, methodologies, and interpretations (Sienna & Slate, 2024). Axiology, a branch of philosophy, delves into the study of values and encourages researchers to critically examine how these values impact their scientific inquiries (Deane, 2021). By recognizing and acknowledging their axiological stance, researchers can navigate the ethical dimensions of their work more effectively, ensuring that their research not only advances knowledge but also aligns with broader ethical standards and societal values (Farrow et al., 2020). This awareness fosters personal development and supports ethical decision-making throughout the research process (Cowen et al., 2016, p. 316).

This research utilises pragmatism as a philosophical stance paradigm, which is a relatively new paradigm of philosophical stance. Pragmatism, as a philosophical paradigm, offers a middle ground between dogmatism and

scepticism and is characterized by its rejection of traditional dualisms. This stance is particularly relevant to the study of Art and Design education, as it acknowledges the importance of both the physical and the emergent social and psychological worlds, encompassing aspects like language, culture, human institutions, and subjective thoughts (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20; Morgan, 2007, p. 68).

In this research, pragmatism facilitates the use of mixed methods, blending both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this research, the qualitative aspect involves participatory observation and semi-structured interviews, methods that allow for an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of participants in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects. This approach aligns with the pragmatist view that research should focus on actions, events, and effects, rather than being confined to rigid methodological frameworks (Dewey, 1998; Denzin, 2012, p. 80).

On the quantitative side, the research employs survey questionnaires to gather data that can be statistically analysed. This methodological choice reflects pragmatism's emphasis on practical solutions and effective problem-solving strategies. Pragmatism replaces the traditional epistemic distinction between subject and object with a naturalistic and process-oriented view, focusing on organism-environment interactions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18).

The pragmatic philosophy underpinning this research supports the use of diverse data collection and interpretation methods. It encourages a holistic view, integrating practical and theoretical aspects to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). This mixed-methods approach, grounded in pragmatism, allows for a more nuanced and contextual analysis of the online education resources in the Art and Design teaching projects, considering not

just the educational content but also the socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of the learning environment.

The pragmatic stance adopted in this research supports a hybrid approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the complexities of online education in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects. This approach reflects the pragmatic emphasis on practical application and effectiveness, avoiding methodological dogmatism and focusing instead on what works best in the specific context of this study (Bryman, 2008; Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2009). The research thus benefits from the methodological flexibility and pluralism inherent in pragmatism, facilitating a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the subject.

2.3 Research Approach

2.3.1 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Trochim (2006) explores the two broad methods of reasoning: inductive and deductive. He articulates the inductive approach as a process of reasoning that evolves from specific observations to more general theories. This method involves gathering data from detailed observations and subsequently formulating broader generalizations or theories based on these observations. It is a bottom-up approach where patterns are discerned and theories are developed as a result of the examination of specific cases or instances. Inductive reasoning, as explicated by Trochim (2006), embarks from specific, detailed observations and systematically progresses towards broader generalizations. This empirical process reaches its zenith in the formulation of hypotheses, which are intrinsically derived from the observations made. What sets the inductive method apart is its inherent flexibility and adaptability. Unlike deductive reasoning, it does not depend on preconceived theories or hypotheses. Instead, it allows the researcher to fluidly modify the research

trajectory in accordance with the evolving data patterns (Trochim, 2006). This methodology is primarily rooted in qualitative data analysis, providing a profound, intricate comprehension of the subject matter under investigation.

However, the inductive approach is not without limitations, especially when contrasted with the more structured deductive method. Bryman and Bell (2015) note that inductive reasoning often results in conclusions or theories with limited generalizability. This constraint arises because the inductive process favours specific case studies or scenarios over a more generalized theoretical framework. Consequently, this can sometimes curtail the broader applicability of its conclusions to varied contexts. Conversely, Trochim (2006) delineates the deductive approach as a top-down method of reasoning. This approach starts with a general theory or hypothesis and moves towards specific observations to test the theory. It involves the application of established theories or principles to new situations or specific cases, thereby examining the validity of these general theories in particular contexts. Deductive research starts with pre-existing theories or well-established concepts and systematically tests these hypotheses against the gathered empirical data, as Bhattacherjee (2012) elucidates. This process adheres to the foundational principle that a single, objective reality exists, which can be reliably and validly quantified and assessed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 270; Trochim, 2006).

In this study, qualitative data should be gathered through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, following an inductive approach. This allows for in-depth exploration of the participants' perspectives. Meanwhile, quantitative data might be collected through questionnaires, utilizing a deductive approach to test specific hypotheses or theories. This combination can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research subject, drawing on the nuanced insights of qualitative data and the generalizability of quantitative findings.

2.3.2 Mixed Methods Research

Broadly speaking, research methods can be divided into two types: quantitative and qualitative. Researchers should choose between a number of options while developing their research techniques. One of the most crucial decisions is whether to utilise qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research. The decision to employ either a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approach should be considered, reflective of the research's specific requirements and objectives.

Interviews, observations, and focus groups are typically used by researchers to get qualitative data from a large group of well-chosen people (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Textual data and written or vocal material are collected and analysed. It could also emphasise physical characteristics or visual cues to help the researcher describe their findings in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This method of inquiry is more time-consuming and subjective than using quantitative data. When conducting exploratory research, qualitative methodologies are frequently used by researchers (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For instance, when they study how people perceive various items, events, and individuals. When the goals and objectives of the research are primarily exploratory in character, qualitative approaches are frequently used (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative research focuses principally on the meanings actors give to their own and others' behaviour and relies on the researcher becoming the main research tool to explore social phenomena through various methods of data-collection such as observation in natural settings, direct participation in events or activities, in-depth interviews, the use of documents, and proceeds by analysis of data by induction on which interpretation and theory are developed. Thus, an interpretive understanding of the research object's behaviour and meaning is achieved through interaction between the research object and the researcher (Gemignani, 2011).

In contrast to the qualitative approach, quantitative methods focus on assigning numerical meaning to the phenomena under study and seek to use statistics to answer the questions of ‘how often,’ ‘how many,’ or ‘how much’ (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). Quantitative methods are frequently employed when the research's primary goals and objectives are confirmatory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is primarily concerned with gathering, analysing, and measuring numerical data from a sizable number of people (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). They then employ statistical analysis and data comparison (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research is a method ‘aimed at testing theories, determining facts, determining relationships between variables, and predicting outcomes’ (Weinreich, 1996). It uses methods from the ‘natural sciences designed to ensure objectivity, generalizability, and reliability’ (Weinreich, 2009). Moreover, the techniques use random selection to select research participants and a standard questionnaire to test a predetermined hypothesis regarding the relationship of variables in a study. It is characterized by exploring a relationship trend among research variables and defining research problems and questions, testing hypotheses, gathering numerical data from a large sample, and analysing data collected using standard statistical analysis to produce a standard report (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research uses numerical methods to collect and analyse research data drawn from different sources, which can include surveys, the collection of statistics, the testing of hypotheses by numerical data, and the application of a range of statistical analytical techniques used to assess theories, test or develop concepts, and, for example, to judge the quality of education phenomena or to discover any underlying laws and test certain theoretical hypotheses (Bryman, 2016).

Moreover, a mixed-method approach emerges as a pragmatically balanced solution. Mixed methods research is increasingly gaining momentum among educators. Research in which the investigator collects and analyses data

integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or programme of inquiry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2006, p. 77). This hybrid approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of research questions, facilitating both the depth of qualitative analysis and the statistical rigour of quantitative methods. Mixed-method research combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide multiple findings, add new perspectives, and build a larger picture (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 3). It enables researchers to draw richer, more nuanced conclusions that are grounded in both detailed, contextual understanding and empirical evidence. While the qualitative method emphasizes the human element, the quantitative approach offers precise facts and data. This strategy can lead to intriguing outcomes because it offers precise data and is exploratory (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 3).

In this research, a comprehensive approach was adopted, utilizing a series of mixed-method research methodologies to gain a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The qualitative aspect of the study involved the researcher engaging in participant observation over an extended period of eight weeks. This observation took place within the context of an online digital media arts module, a collaborative venture between a university in the United Kingdom and one in China. Additionally, the researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of 37 participants, which included both students and faculty members. These interviews were aimed at capturing a wide range of perspectives and insights into the educational processes and experiences within this unique collaborative environment. Complementing the qualitative study, the quantitative aspect of the research involved the collection of 274 questionnaires. These were distributed across 22 different universities, encompassing seven major regions of China, thereby ensuring a broad and representative data sample. The quantitative data gathered provided a solid statistical foundation to the research, allowing for more generalizable

conclusions. The combination of these approaches - qualitative and quantitative - was instrumental in underlining the importance of individual perspectives, reflections, and narratives. This was particularly relevant in understanding the constructs of education, especially in the realm of collaborative practices and interactions between students and educators. The mixed-method approach thus enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the educational setting under study, offering valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of those involved.

2.4 Research Method

2.4.1 Data Collection Methods

2.4.1.1 Participant Observation

In this study, the researcher used participant observation to investigate the activities, environments, and events in Sino-UK online undergraduate art and design courses. Participant observation, a well-established method in anthropological and sociological research (Jorgensen, 1989), has seen increasing use in educational research for qualitative data collection. This method is defined as the systematic observation and description of events, behaviours, and artefacts within their natural social context (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

DeMunck and Sobo (1998) emphasize that participant observation is the primary technique for anthropologists during fieldwork. It requires not only active observation but also memory enhancement, informal interviews, extensive notetaking, and above all, patience (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). This method allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects by observing and engaging with them in their natural settings (Bernard, 1994). Bernard (1994) further explains that participant observation involves establishing rapport within a community and integrating into it to observe natural

behaviours, before withdrawing to analyse data and draw conclusions. Researchers must remain open-minded, curious, and aware of cultural differences, using careful observation and good listening skills to mitigate challenges like culture shock (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

According to DeMunck and Sobo (1998), participant observation offers unique advantages by providing insights into behaviours and events as they are perceived by the participants themselves. DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) point out that this method improves both data collection and interpretation and allows researchers to develop new research questions or hypotheses as the study progresses. Additionally, the quality of data is closely tied to how immersed the researcher becomes in the community being studied (Spradley, 1980). Gold (1958) describes the observer's role as one where the researcher participates in group activities as needed while maintaining the primary responsibility of collecting data. The group is aware of the researcher's observational activities, and this role positions the researcher as an external observer who aims to better understand the group's dynamics by occasionally joining in activities (Gold, 1958).

In this study, the researcher conducted observations in online settings, including various digital learning environments such as virtual classrooms and online workshops. The focus of these observations was multifaceted, covering the virtual space facilities, the nature of classroom interactions, and the dynamics of participation during activities like presentations and discussions. The researcher aimed to minimize disruption to the natural flow of these interactions by maintaining an unobtrusive presence.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the challenges associated with participant observation in educational research, particularly the 'observer effect'. As Angrosino (2007) notes, the presence of an observer can influence the

behaviour of those being observed, even if the observer minimizes engagement. This is especially pertinent in a classroom setting, where awareness of being observed might alter the spontaneity of student-teacher interactions. Although efforts were made to reduce this impact, it remains difficult to eliminate the observer's influence entirely, as ethical research requires disclosing the researcher's identity and purpose to the participants (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

In this study, the researcher assumed a participant-observer role as described by Merriam (1998), temporarily becoming part of the studied community. This dual role required the researcher to balance being both an insider and outsider: participating enough to gain insights while maintaining the necessary distance for objective analysis. This positioning allowed the researcher to understand the group's activities from within while still being able to critically observe and interpret their actions.

The level of information shared with the researcher largely depended on the participants, highlighting the participatory nature of qualitative research. In this case, students and teachers in the online learning environment had control over how much they disclosed, and their engagement critically influenced the depth and quality of the collected data. As Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2001) define, participant observation involves the researcher in a continuous process of observing, recording, and analysing the events of interest. The researcher adopted a rigorous note-taking practice, capturing observations in real-time whenever the conditions allowed. This method ensured a comprehensive and detailed account of the observed events.

The study specifically targeted students enrolled in art and design Bachelor degree courses as part of a Sino-UK partnership. This selection was made because of the unique dynamics these international programs offer, particularly in fostering cross-cultural academic collaboration. The prestigious status of the

institutions involved lent credibility to the research, ensuring that the findings were situated within a context of high academic standards. The Sino-UK partnership served as a microcosm of global educational collaboration, providing valuable insights into how such initiatives shape the academic and creative development of students in an increasingly globalized world. By focusing on this specific context, the study aimed to contribute to a broader understanding of the role and impact of international partnerships in higher education, particularly in fields that thrive on creativity and cultural exchange.

In the specific empirical work, participant observation was conducted within a digital media art module at a Sino-UK transnational collaboration project, where the researcher took on the dual roles of participant and observer. This immersive engagement allowed for an in-depth understanding of the community dynamics and educational interactions of the educational setting. The online nature of the setting posed unique challenges, notably in maintaining an objective stance amidst active participation. This necessitated meticulous and simultaneous notetaking to capture both observable phenomena and reflexive thoughts. The intricate balance between being a part of the learning environment and observing it from a research perspective was critical. It required the researcher to constantly negotiate their position, ensuring that their involvement did not skew the authenticity of the observed interactions. This methodological approach was vital in uncovering the subtleties of the online educational experience, including the nuanced ways in which students and instructors interacted and how the digital platform influenced these interactions. The data gathered through this process was rich in detail, providing a comprehensive picture of the virtual classroom dynamics and offering deeper insights into the complexities of online art and design education.

2.4.1.2 Semi-Structured Interview

Complementing the participant observation, semi-structured interviews further

formed a pivotal qualitative component of this research. In this qualitative study, semi-structured interviews emerge as a pivotal methodological tool, offering the researcher an opportunity to gather exploratory data that is directly relevant to the research questions. As outlined by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), semi-structured interviews amalgamate the strengths of both structured and unstructured interviews, creating a flexible yet focused approach to data collection. This hybrid format is especially beneficial in qualitative research, where the exploration of complex, nuanced topics often requires both a guided and open-ended approach to questioning.

According to Ritchie et al. (2013), a semi-structured interview is a qualitative research technique that has been broadly used to collect data involving participants sharing their opinions and views on a chosen subject. The researcher normally sets up a theme by preparing a set of open-ended questions, which will allow the respondents to give specific answers. Based on these answers, the researcher could then discuss them further or even raise new questions that the researcher may not have considered prior to the interview.

One of the primary advantages of semi-structured interviews is their ability to adapt to the flow of conversation while maintaining a core set of research questions. This flexibility allows the researcher to delve deeper into specific topics of interest, following up with questions that probe further into the subject matter. At the same time, a set of pre-planned questions ensures that the interview remains anchored to the central research themes, thereby preventing deviations into irrelevant areas (Gillham, 2001). This balance between structured guidance and conversational freedom is crucial for extracting rich, detailed information that might otherwise be overlooked in more rigid interview formats.

The methodological approach adopted for this study is rooted in the qualitative paradigm, a core part of which is the deployment of semi-structured interviews according to Gillham (2001), interviews are an effective means to extract the deeper ‘meaning’ embedded within the personal narratives and experiences. This technique is particularly suited to capture the nuanced perspectives that are often missed in quantitative analyses, in the case of this research those of individuals involved in cooperative teaching within the contexts of the UK and China.

The notion of 'meaning' in qualitative research, particularly in interview-based studies, is dynamic and context-dependent (Gillham, 2001). It evolves through social interactions occurring at specific times and places. Importantly, this meaning is not static or objective; rather, it is a construct that emerges from the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Gillham, 2001). It is vital to understanding the implications of art and design transnational education projects and for the broader development of higher education in these fields. The choice of interviews as a primary data collection method is, therefore, a strategic one, aimed at capturing the complex, subjective, and often fluid nature of educational experiences and philosophies in these two distinct cultural settings.

Through semi-structured interviews, the study explores the subjective interpretations and personal experiences of educators and students in the field of art and design, offering a rich, contextual understanding of their educational environments. In-depth, semi-structured interviews are a staple in qualitative research. These interviews facilitate a conversational framework where the researcher and participant engage in a dialogue augmented by a series of open-ended questions, prompts, and reflections (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This format allows the researcher to collect unstructured data, offering insights into the personal and sometimes sensitive aspects of the participants'

experiences. It provides a lens to understand their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on specific topics (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The primary aim of using semi-structured interviews in this research is to gather rich, detailed information from key informants. These informants possess first-hand knowledge of the subject matter and can provide insights into the prevailing attitudes, perceptions, and opinions within the realm of art and design education.

Recognizing the subjective nature of the interview process, it is imperative that the researcher actively shapes and controls the research trajectory. This involves careful selection of interviewees, meticulous design of interview questions, and skilful management of the dialogue during the interview process (Gillham, 2001). Such meticulous planning and execution are critical in ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collected.

Interview questions were generated to gather data relevant to answering the research questions. To ensure clarity and comprehension, these questions were presented in both English and Chinese, thus accommodating the linguistic preferences of all participants. Additionally, audio recordings were utilized, with participants' consent, to facilitate a more focused interaction during the interviews. Note-taking was used as a supplementary method, as it is particularly recommended in instances where audio recording consent is not granted (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2010; Yin, 2003).

In the specific empirical work, semi-structured interviews were conducted with carefully chosen of individuals, including students and faculty members, selected specifically for their diverse viewpoints within the educational setting. This purposive selection was crucial in ensuring a rich and varied range of perspectives, which was instrumental in comprehensively understanding the complexities of the educational environment. By engaging directly with participants involved in various roles, the researcher could assess the

effectiveness of the current methodologies, technologies, and pedagogical strategies. These conversations provided deep insights into participant experiences, satisfaction, and areas for improvement, contributing significantly to the broader evaluation of these collaborative educational initiatives. The interviews were instrumental in shaping a more nuanced understanding of the Sino-UK partnership in art and design education, highlighting both the strengths and areas for growth within this transnational collaboration.

2.4.1.3 Questionnaire

In this research, the quantitative strand was represented through a carefully structured series of questionnaire surveys. Quantitative research, as a methodological approach, is fundamentally focused on testing theories, ascertaining factual data, elucidating relationships between varying variables, and forecasting potential outcomes. This approach, as described by Creswell (2018), adopts methodologies derived from the natural sciences, which are specifically designed to ensure the objectivity, generalizability, and reliability of the research findings. The essence of quantitative data collection is diverse and includes a range of methods such as controlled experiments, structured observations, survey questionnaires, longitudinal studies, and opinion polls (Creswell, 2018). Each of these methods serves a distinct purpose in the overarching framework of quantitative research, catering to different aspects of data collection and analysis.

The process of data collection stands as a pivotal element in the realm of research, serving as the foundational phase where the researcher acquires the necessary data crucial for the development and progression of a study. Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007) emphasize this stage's significance, noting that the effectiveness of the research is contingent upon the quality and relevance of the data gathered. These instruments are meticulously designed to extract pertinent data, which is then subject to rigorous analysis using a variety of

statistical and measurement techniques. This analytical process encompasses a range of methods, including frequency analysis, which is pivotal for understanding the commonality of certain responses; means comparison, which assists in discerning average tendencies or patterns among variables; and cross-tabulation accompanied by tests of significance, which is instrumental in highlighting relationships and discrepancies between different data sets (Elliott & Woodward, 2007). Moreover, correlation analysis and regression analysis are employed to discern the degree of interdependence between variables and to predict the influence of one variable on another, respectively (Field, 2013; Agresti & Kateri, 2011).

Surveys, akin to interviews, are instrumental when the objective is to delve into the participants' overall sentiments, opinions, and experiences, as highlighted by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016). This method's effectiveness lies in its ability to elicit responses that reflect the subjective perspectives of the participants, thereby providing a rich tapestry of insights into their thoughts and experiences. The structured nature of closed-ended questionnaires provides a streamlined and efficient means of data collection, ensuring consistency and ease of analysis (Kurzhals, 2021). This approach is especially advantageous in situations where the researcher aims to quantify certain aspects of the research, such as the prevalence of specific opinions or the frequency of certain behaviours among participants (Michalos, 2014). The data collected through these questionnaires, characterized by its structured and quantifiable nature, serves as an essential complement to the more in-depth, qualitative data obtained through methods like participant observation and semi-structured interviews. These earlier stages of the empirical research conducted in the project were critical for gaining a nuanced understanding of the research context that the questionnaire data could subsequently test or explore further.

Moreover, face-to-face surveys often yield higher response rates but at the expense of increased time and effort for the researcher, as noted by Blaxter et al. (2010). On the other hand, as Fowler (2014) suggests, when used as a self-administered instrument, an electronic questionnaire allows respondents sufficient time for careful thinking and checking of answers. In addition, an electronic questionnaire survey lends itself easily to computerization and initial analysis (Fowler, 2014; Dörnyei, 2003). In terms of cost, it is perhaps the cheapest of the various instruments (Fowler, 2014). Recognizing these trade-offs, the researcher in this study opted for online questionnaires. Given the geographically dispersed nature of the participants in this field, online questionnaires provide a practical solution for reaching a diverse, broader audience but also reduce logistical challenges associated with time zones, travel, and scheduling. Furthermore, online questionnaires are well-suited to the digital nature of this study, resonating with the online platforms through which much of the art and design education takes place.

These surveys played an essential role in gathering both descriptive and factual data from a diverse group of participants, allowing the research to capture a wide range of perspectives. This aspect of the methodology was particularly important as it provided a broad, macro-level view of the research landscape, enabling the study to encompass a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The questionnaires were meticulously designed with careful attention to detail, ensuring that each question was clear, relevant, and engaging to the participants. This thoughtful design facilitated better understanding and participation from respondents, which in turn enhanced the reliability and quality of the data collected. The insights gained from this quantitative data served as a critical complement to the qualitative data obtained from other methods, such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Together, these methods offered a more holistic understanding of the themes and patterns emerging within the transnational educational setting, thereby enriching the

overall depth and breadth of the research findings.

The incorporation of questionnaires in this study not only strengthened the robustness of the research but also enhanced its comprehensiveness. The quantitative data derived from the surveys provided a measurable, data-driven perspective on online transnational art and design education, helping to identify broader trends and patterns. At the same time, the qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations added depth and context, revealing the underlying reasons and motivations behind those trends. This combination of methods allowed the researcher to cross-validate findings, reducing the limitations inherent in relying on a single data source. The quantitative approach, therefore, was not just a tool for data collection but a fundamental component in developing a well-rounded and nuanced understanding of the research topic. Additionally, the flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and time efficiency of using questionnaires made them an ideal tool for reaching a large sample. The use of self-completed questionnaires tailored for both faculty and students—Chinese and English versions are provided to meet the necessary requirements—further ensured that participants could respond accurately and fully, minimizing language barriers and improving the validity of the data. This approach contributed significantly to the reliability and depth of the study's conclusions, ensuring that the findings were both empirically supported and reflective of the participants' true opinions and experiences.

2.4.2 Data Analysis Methods

2.4.2.1 Thematic Analysis

Data analysis within this study amounted to an intricate, multilayered process, designed to suit the diverse nature of the data collected. Thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative data derived from participant observations and semi-structured interviews. This method was pivotal in the interpretation of the rich, descriptive data, enabling the researcher to delve deeply into the

participants' experiences and perceptions. This approach allowed the researcher to delve into the extensive and varied data, identifying patterns that emerged within the context of the research topic. By meticulously sifting through the data, the researcher was able to pinpoint recurring themes that reflected underlying notions and perspectives related to the utilization of online education resources in Art and Design teaching projects.

Thematic content analysis was utilized to identify significant patterns within the data. This method allows for the discovery, analysis, and reporting of patterns or themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is the researcher's perspective that themes are not inherently present in the data, but are actively identified, selected, and documented by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The complex and layered process of developing professionalism in this study was deemed to be particularly appropriate for thematic analysis, a flexible approach that not only mirrors reality but also helps in exploring the nuances of reality as socially constructed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis, a method for qualitative data analysis, involves thoroughly reviewing the entire data set to identify, scrutinize, and document recurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method is used for delineating facts, yet the process of selecting codes and formulating themes also entails a degree of interpretation. Unrestricted by any single theoretical framework, thematic analysis is versatile and can be integrated into various research approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In conducting thematic analysis, it is not mandatory to consider the frequency of occurrence of a particular concept or item linked to a theme within the data set. The significance or prominence of a theme does not necessarily align with its occurrence rate in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). While latent themes uncover the deeper, underlying meanings, beliefs, or ideologies,

semantic themes deal with the data's more overt or surface-level meanings (Boyatzis 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Despite the researcher's autonomy in selecting themes for exploration, the goal should be to identify those themes that provide substantial insight into the specific issues under study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Employing themes facilitates the distillation of structured meaning from the data, spotlighting a key element of the data that is pertinent to the research inquiries (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through the application of latent thematic analysis, the research extended beyond merely examining participants' language and explicit meanings to considering the foundational ideas, presumptions, and frameworks. The development of themes was an integral part of the interpretive act (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, themes act as a framework for theorizing about the sociocultural backdrop of professionalism within the study, suggesting that this backdrop not only informs but also influences the participants' responses.

The thematic analysis began with a comprehensive review of the collected data, during which the researcher actively engaged in identifying potential themes. This process was not just about recognizing frequent occurrences of certain ideas or concepts, but also about understanding their significance in relation to the research questions. The researcher's interpretive skills were crucial in this phase, as they had to discern between semantic themes, which are evident and directly related to the data, and latent themes, which uncover the deeper, more implicit meanings and ideologies (Alhojailan, 2012, p. 39).

Following data familiarization, the researcher engaged in initial code generation, where key ideas and patterns within the data were identified and coded (Coates et al., 2021). The thematic coding process was iterative and reflexive. The researcher constantly revisited the data, refining and redefining the themes to

ensure they accurately represented the insights gained from the participatory observations and interviews. This iterative process was fundamental in understanding the complex social, cultural, and educational dynamics at play in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects.

After coding, the focus shifted to theme identification, where these codes were organised into meaningful themes. This stage was particularly significant as it allowed for the emergence of coherent patterns that encapsulated the essence of the qualitative data (Terry et al., 2017, p. 17). These themes, being partially theoretical, offered insights into how the use of online resources in this specific educational setting both influenced and was influenced by the participants' experiences and perceptions. This thematic analysis, therefore, played a crucial role in shedding light on the intricacies of applying online education resources in a cross-cultural educational context.

The final stage of thematic analysis involved a thorough review and refinement of these themes, ensuring they accurately represented the data (Terry et al., 2017, p. 37). The themes that emerged from this rigorous process were both descriptive and interpretative, effectively capturing the complexities and nuances of the online educational environment and the intercultural interactions within it. This thematic analysis provided a profound understanding of the subjective experiences of the participants, thereby enriching the overall comprehension of the research topic.

2.4.2.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistical analysis was applied to the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire surveys, embodying a key component of the quantitative research methodology. This analytical approach involved the use of descriptive statistics, which were instrumental in organising and summarising the data to make it more accessible and interpretable. The primary objective of

this analysis was to transform the raw survey data into meaningful information that could be understood and interpreted in the context of the broader research questions.

This approach is invaluable for organising and summarising data, making it more accessible and interpretable for the reader. The nature of the sample, along with the need to assess data quality and highlight anomalies, makes descriptive statistics particularly suitable for this research Loeb et al., 2017). Descriptive statistics, including measures such as the proportion or count of respondents who ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ with survey questions, have been recognized as appropriate tools for this type of analysis (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007; Sandelowski, 2001, p. 230).

Often referred to as deductive or simple statistics, descriptive statistics encompass methods such as averaging, compiling, and connecting data to provide a concise and clear picture of the situation being studied (Hartanto & Yuliani, 2019). As noted by Gravetter and Wallnau (2013), descriptive statistics involve the systematic organisation and presentation of data, which can include frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and standard deviations. This type of analysis also allows for the examination of weak relationships between variables through correlation, facilitating comparisons by contrasting averages with population values (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013).

The process of descriptive statistical analysis began with organising the data, followed by a detailed examination using various statistical tools such as frequency distributions, measures of central tendency (like means and medians), and measures of variability (such as standard deviations). This ensured a systematic approach to analysing the survey responses, verifying the quality and consistency of the data, and highlighting patterns or anomalies within the dataset (McCarthy, McCarthy, & Ceccucci, 2022). Descriptive

statistics offered a clear and concise summary of the data, helping the researcher to accurately represent key metrics and make the information more interpretable (Smit, 2022).

In presenting descriptive data, researchers typically use diagrams, tables, modes, means, medians, standard deviations, and ranges to convey their findings clearly (McCarthy et al., 2022). These tools are essential for collecting, simplifying, and disseminating data, which aids in a deeper understanding of the information (George & Mallery, 2019).

Descriptive statistics play a critical role in the analysis of quantitative data, especially when handling large and complex datasets. Their primary function is to simplify and summarise the data, making it more manageable and easier to interpret. This is particularly crucial when the research aims to provide a clear overview of the data before moving on to more complex inferential analyses (Tomar, 2024). The use of descriptive statistics is necessary because they offer a snapshot of the data's central tendencies, dispersion, and overall distribution. This initial analysis is key to identifying patterns, trends, and potential outliers within the dataset, laying the foundation for more advanced statistical methods (Grad Coach, 2023). Additionally, descriptive statistics help verify the quality and consistency of the data, ensuring that subsequent analyses are based on reliable information (McCarthy et al., 2022).

In the context of this research, the application of descriptive statistics was not only necessary but also highly appropriate. Given the nature of the dataset, which was derived from questionnaire responses, a systematic approach was required to analyse various demographic characteristics, and the dimensions captured by the questionnaire. By using descriptive statistics, the researcher was able to organise and present the data systematically, enabling a deeper understanding of respondent profiles and their responses across different

variables. This method allowed for an accurate representation of key metrics such as means, medians, and standard deviations across the various dimensions of the questionnaire. These descriptive measures provided a strong foundation for interpreting the data and drawing meaningful conclusions, ultimately enhancing the validity and reliability of the research findings.

2.5 Ethical Aspects of the Research

Before initiating any research activities, the researcher rigorously ensured adherence to the ethical norms and standards as stipulated by the University of Salford. This involved a thorough engagement with the university's established ethical procedures, guaranteeing that all aspects of the research, including data collection, analysis, and dissemination, were conducted in accordance with the highest ethical principles set forth by the institution. This commitment to ethical compliance underscores the integrity and credibility of the research process.

In the process of engaging with participants for this research, the researcher primarily employed email invitations, with a keen focus on adhering to academic ethics and data protection standards. Email was the primary mode for initial contact, offering a formal and secure means of communication. It was particularly effective in ensuring that the study's objectives and requirements were clearly and professionally conveyed. Additionally, the use of email allowed for the maintenance of a documented trail of communication, which is essential for transparency and accountability in academic research.

After the initial contact WhatsApp and WeChat were employed mainly for informal communication. WeChat was utilized for ongoing interactions, owing to its popularity and ease of use among the participant group, especially in China. WeChat has been dubbed China's ‘app for everything’ and a ‘super app’

due to its extensive functionality (Shimota, 2022). The researcher was mindful of the ethical implications and data protection concerns. Measures were taken to ensure that all communications complied with the University of Salford's ethical guidelines and data protection policies. This included obtaining consent for the use of digital communication platforms, ensuring confidentiality of the information exchanged, and safeguarding participant data.

Throughout the empirical research, encompassing participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, comprehensive inductions were conducted to thoroughly elucidate the specifics of the study to the participants. These induction sessions were instrumental in ensuring that participants were fully informed about the nature, purpose, and methodology of the research, as well as their rights and the confidentiality measures in place. In line with ethical research practices, all respondents were assigned pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity. Additionally, during the interviews, careful consideration was given to the types of questions posed, deliberately avoiding any that might be deemed personal or intrusive, thereby ensuring participant comfort and maintaining ethical standards.

Prior to the commencement of the empirical work, it was imperative that participants were provided with, read, and signed various consent documents, a practice underscored by Myers, Cairns, and Singer (1987).In this research, these documents included Participant Consent Forms, which outlined the participant's agreement to partake in the study, and Participant Information Sheets, which offered detailed information about the study, including its aims, the nature of participation required, and assurances regarding data handling, privacy, and confidentiality. This rigorous process of obtaining informed consent was a cornerstone of the ethical framework of the study, ensuring that participants were fully aware of their involvement and the use of their data, thus upholding the integrity of the research process.

The researcher ensured that personal data collected was stored securely and used solely for the purposes of the study, in line with the principles of data protection. Any sensitive information shared by participants was handled with the utmost care, ensuring that their privacy and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. This approach demonstrated the researcher's commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and data protection, thus ensuring the integrity and credibility of the research. Furthermore, participants were promised that all information would be kept anonymous, and that the researcher would save the data in password-protected folders on the Google Drive and the university account, both of which require a password to access. The transcripts of the empirical works were produced in the native languages of the participants and will not be released in any manner. After the successful conclusion of the research for this PhD project, all electronic data will be erased.

In this research, stringent measures were adopted to ensure the secure storage and appropriate use of personal data collected, strictly adhering to data protection principles. The researcher took great care in handling any sensitive information shared by participants, prioritizing their privacy and confidentiality at all stages of the research process. This meticulous approach to data management underlined the researcher's unwavering commitment to ethical conduct and data protection, vital in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research.

To further reinforce this commitment, participants were assured that all information provided would remain anonymous. In practice, this meant that identifying details were removed or altered, and pseudonyms were used wherever necessary. The researcher meticulously saved all collected data in password-protected folders, utilizing secure cloud storage solutions such as

Google Drive and the university's secure storage system. Both platforms required robust password authentication, ensuring that access to the data was restricted to authorized personnel only.

The empirical data was processed and stored in the native languages of the participants to respect cultural nuances and ensure accuracy. It was explicitly stated to the participants that these transcripts would not be published or released in any public or identifiable form. This safeguard was put in place to further protect participant privacy and to honor the confidentiality agreements made at the outset of the research.

Following the completion of the PhD project, it was planned that all electronic data pertaining to the research would be securely erased. This final step in the data management process was crucial in upholding the principles of data protection and privacy, ensuring that participant information was not retained beyond the necessary timeframe. This comprehensive approach to data handling, from collection to eventual deletion, reflected a thorough and ethically sound research methodology, reinforcing the overall trustworthiness and respectability of the study.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined the research methodology employed to examine the use of online education resources in transnational art and design education, particularly within the Sino-UK collaborative framework. The methodology is grounded in a pragmatism paradigm, which supports the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve a balanced and comprehensive exploration of the research questions. This mixed-methods approach is well-suited for understanding the complex and dynamic interactions between cultural, educational, and technological elements in the online teaching and

learning environment.

The chapter began with a discussion of the research philosophy, focusing on pragmatism as a flexible and adaptive framework that acknowledges the subjectivity of participant experiences while striving to derive objective insights. This was followed by a detailed description of the research design, including the rationale behind the selection of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires as the primary data collection methods. Each method was carefully chosen to contribute uniquely to the overall understanding of the subject. Participant observation provided an immersive, first-hand view of the online classroom dynamics, while semi-structured interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of individual experiences and perspectives. The use of questionnaires complemented these qualitative methods by providing a broader, quantifiable view of the phenomena under investigation, enhancing the study's capacity for generalisability.

The chapter also emphasised the importance of ensuring the reliability and validity of the research through careful design and execution of the methods. The use of multiple data collection techniques enhanced the robustness of the findings. Additionally, the pragmatic approach facilitated the combination of inductive and deductive reasoning, allowing the researcher to develop broader theories from specific observations while also testing pre-existing hypotheses in the context of the online educational environment.

Ethical considerations were also a critical component of the methodology, with the chapter detailing the steps taken to ensure that participants' rights and privacy were protected throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their anonymity was preserved through the use of pseudonyms and secure data storage practices. The research adhered to the ethical guidelines, ensuring that all data collection and analysis

processes were conducted with integrity.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a thorough and detailed explanation of the methodological approach employed in the study. By utilising a mixed-methods framework grounded in pragmatism, the research can offer a nuanced and holistic understanding of the role of online education resources in Sino-UK transnational art and design education. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods not only enriches the depth of the findings but also ensures that the study is able to address its research questions from multiple perspectives, providing both theoretical insights and practical implications for the future of global art and design education.

Chapter 3: Research Background: Online Education Resources in Transnational Art and Design Higher Education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of art and design as academic subjects within the online educational contexts of China and the United Kingdom, alongside an examination of transnational partnership teaching projects. With the rising number of students in these subjects and the increasing demand for online educational resources, it is essential to understand how these transnational collaborations can play a role in the online dynamics, particularly within the online educational environment. Such understanding is crucial for informing future educational practices and policies that better support the evolving needs of students and institutions in a globalized educational landscape. The purpose of this research background is to provide a thorough and structured evaluation of the existing body of knowledge related to online transnational education in the contexts of both China and the UK, with a particular emphasis on the discipline of art and design. This review is organised around several key themes.

First, understanding the development of art and design education in both China and the UK is essential. By examining the evolution of these disciplines in each country, we can identify the differences and similarities in educational approaches, curriculum design, and industry demands. This understanding provides the necessary background to analyse how these factors might influence the success of transnational educational collaborations. Additionally, comparing the art and design higher education systems in China and the UK allows for deeper insight into the structural and pedagogical variations that could impact the effectiveness of online education, particularly in a cross-

cultural context.

Secondly, reviewing the research on previous Sino-UK partnership teaching projects and the acculturation of international students is vital. Understanding the historical and current collaboration frameworks between China and the UK in higher education, particularly in art and design, sheds light on existing models and their outcomes. This analysis helps to identify best practices and potential challenges in transnational education, which is crucial for designing effective online education programs. Furthermore, examining the experiences of Chinese international students in the UK, including their academic and social acculturation, is important for addressing the specific needs of students in online environments, ensuring that these programs are culturally sensitive and supportive.

Finally, exploring the status and development of online art education, especially before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, is necessary to understand the broader context of online education nowadays. Reviewing current methods and technologies used in online education, as well as the challenges faced in delivering art and design courses online, provides insights into the gaps and opportunities in this field. This review also allows for the identification of emerging trends and future directions in online art and design education, which are critical for developing strategies that can enhance the quality and accessibility of education in a post-pandemic world. By synthesizing the research across these areas, the research builds a comprehensive foundation for addressing the gaps in knowledge about transnational online art and design education.

Overall, this chapter aims to map the landscape of online educational resources within the framework of the Sino-UK partnership. It critiques the research on the development, implementation, and reception of these resources in the

context of art and design education. Additionally, the chapter illuminates the synergies and challenges inherent in international educational collaborations, offering a comprehensive understanding that is crucial for advancing the field. The chapter provides valuable insights into the dynamic and evolving nature of art and design education in an increasingly interconnected global context. This research not only serves as a critical lens through which the complexity and richness of the subject are brought into focus but also provides a robust platform for further investigation and discovery.

3.2 Art and Design Higher Education in the Chinese and UK Contexts

3.2.1 The Development of Chinese Art and Design Higher Education

Historically, in the early twentieth century, Chinese intellectuals praised Schiller, whose seminal work *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* explores the connections between politics, revolution, and human nature, establishing a link between beauty, art, and morality (Schaper, 1985, p. 153). Schiller's influence is significant in shaping early Chinese intellectual thought, as his integration of aesthetics with political and ethical ideals offered a framework for considering how art could contribute to national progress and individual development (Guyer, 2014). However, Chinese society traditionally viewed aesthetic education primarily as a tool for moral instruction, focusing on cultivating virtues aligned with social harmony rather than embracing its broader implications for human nature and the development of creativity (Li et al., 2023). The focus on moral education over creative freedom reflects the cultural and political priorities of China during this period, which were driven by the need to promote national unity and social order (Ho, 2010, p. 71). Today, art education in China faces four major challenges: the cultivation of practical art education skills, the moralization of art education, the mechanization of art education, and the marginalization of art education (Poplin, 2024, p. 7). These issues are rooted in

the historical tendency to view art education through a moral lens, which continues to impact the way artistic disciplines are taught and perceived in Chinese society (Ho, 2010, p. 71).

Chinese art education has made significant progress and achieved notable breakthroughs over a long period of development. It is regarded as a fundamental means of implementing aesthetic education, with its role in student development widely recognized (Zhao, Liu, Gao, Pan, & Song, 2020, p. 967). Throughout this process, Chinese art education has demonstrated its unique strengths and characteristics. However, despite these advancements, there are still many issues with its current state and future trajectory that require further breakthroughs and momentum (Guo, 2022). The influence and importance of art instruction on the development of students' personalities, comprehensive qualities, and overall progress have yet to be fully acknowledged in China. While human development is a broad concept, encompassing the psychological, emotional, and cognitive growth of individuals (Nussbaum, 2011), in the context of education, it relates to the holistic development of learners' capacities, such as creativity, critical thinking, and moral reasoning ((Ho, 2010, p. 71). The role of art in promoting these aspects of human development remains underexplored in China, where education is often viewed through a utilitarian lens prioritizing economic and technological skills ((You, Rud, & Hu, 2018, p. 273)). Pedagogically, the integration of art into education has the potential to foster not only individual creativity but also societal innovation by encouraging flexible thinking and problem-solving, essential in an ever-changing global landscape Eisner, 2002a). Thus, the current project emphasizes the need to reframe art education not only as a tool for aesthetic and moral development but also as a catalyst for broader human development, aligning with pedagogical science that advocates for education as a means of cultivating well-rounded individuals prepared for future societal contributions (Eisner, 2002b, p. 4; Smith & Deprez, 2012, p. 495).

This under-recognition is partly attributable to China's status as a developing country, where the government has historically placed a strong emphasis on economic and military growth as essential drivers of national progress. In the pursuit of rapid development and global competitiveness, economic expansion and the strengthening of military capabilities have often been prioritized, sometimes at the expense of cultural prosperity and innovation (Li & Li, 2019, p. 5). In the educational sector, this prioritization translates into a strong emphasis on disciplines that are perceived to have a direct and immediate impact on the country's development. Fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are heavily promoted, as they are seen as critical to advancing industrial growth, technological innovation, and economic stability (National Institute of Education Sciences, 2017). These disciplines are considered essential for equipping the workforce with the skills needed to support China's ambitious development goals (Li et al., 2020, p. 48). In contrast, arts education is often viewed as having a less immediate or direct contribution to these strategic objectives.

On June 1, 1956, the Standing Committee of the State Council of China reviewed and approved a joint proposal submitted by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Central Handicrafts Administration, and the Preparatory Committee of the All-China Federation of Handicrafts Cooperatives. The proposal called for the establishment of the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in Beijing, based on the Department of Arts and Crafts of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (Xiang et al., 2021, p. 28). As the first higher education institution in art and design in the newly founded People's Republic of China, the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts officially commenced classes in September 1956 (Xiang et al., 2021, p. 28). On November 20, 1999, a merger ceremony was held on Guanghua Road, marking the integration of the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts into Tsinghua University. This merger

significantly influenced the reform of China's higher education management system and symbolised the growing trend of integrating art and science in 21st-century higher education (Xiang et al., 2021, p. 186).

In China, there are typically two groups of students who pursue higher education in art and design. The first group consists of those who are genuinely passionate about the field, having been exposed to it from a young age and having studied painting extensively (Blatt-Gross, 2023, p. 166). The second group comprises students who, despite relatively poor scores on their college entrance exams, aspire to enrol in reputable colleges. To improve their chances of admission, these students strategically choose to study art, not out of a genuine interest in the field, but as a means to achieve their academic goals (Samaniego et al., 2024, p. 192). They often enrol in short-term art training programs specifically designed to help them pass entrance exams, focusing on the basic techniques and knowledge needed to meet the minimum requirements for art school admissions. These students typically have stronger scores in cultural examinations compared to those deeply engaged with art from an early age, giving them an advantage in the college entrance competition. However, once admitted, these students frequently struggle with or lack enthusiasm for the more theoretical and creative aspects of art and design education, posing challenges to their academic success and fulfilment in the field (Blatt-Gross, 2023, p. 166).

Furthermore, in Chinese universities, design education tends to place greater emphasis on practice over theory, reflecting a utilitarian educational attitude prevalent in many institutions (Xu & Chen, 2024, p. 39). This approach often leads to an undervaluation of theoretical education, with excessive focus on skills training Xu & Chen, 2024, p. 39). As a result, the potential for design theory to enhance the quality of instruction and learning is not fully realized. Despite these ongoing challenges, the 'curtain of reform' in higher art education

has begun to lift in contemporary China (Gu, 2014). The term 'core literacy' was first explicitly used to define academic quality requirements and curriculum standards in the Chinese Ministry of Education's 2014 document, *Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Curriculum Implementation and Implementing the Fundamental Tasks of Lide Shuren* (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2014).

Public art education in colleges and universities is now a full-time public education course, generally divided into four major categories: language arts (such as literature), performing arts (such as music and dance), visual arts (such as calligraphy and engraving), and comprehensive arts (such as drama, film, and television appreciation) (Yan, 2018). In terms of teaching methods, public art courses should incorporate a variety of interactive approaches, including experiential teaching (Huang, 2018). Students should be treated as the primary focus of the teaching process, providing them with more opportunities to truly experience and engage with art. Enriching the teaching content and diversifying teaching methods can attract more students to public art education, helping them to enjoy art courses and ultimately improving the overall quality of art education (Yan, 2018).

In this evolving educational landscape, art and design education in China has emerged as a thriving sector and a symbol of the country's modernization. Art and design education encompasses a wide range of disciplines. Alongside traditional visual arts like painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography, it includes more contemporary fields such as media arts, animation, and graphic design (Yan, 2018; Zhao et al., 2020). Additionally, art education covers the management and theoretical aspects of the arts, including art history, design history, fashion management, and arts administration (Yan, 2018; Zhao et al., 2020). The nine most prestigious fine arts institutes offer a wide range of art and design courses. Renowned institutions like the China Central Academy of

Fine Arts, Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, and the China Academy of Art lead the field, alongside others such as Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Hubei Academy of Fine Arts, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, and Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts (TopUniversities, 2024). Additionally, some universities offer specialized programs: the Jingdezhen Ceramic University in Jiangxi Province focuses on pottery design; Tongji University in Shanghai is known for its programs; while the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology and College of Fashion and Design of Donghua University in Shanghai are leading institutions for fashion education (TopUniversities, 2024).

3.2.2 The Development of UK Art and Design Higher Education

Overall, art and design education in the UK is highly regarded, particularly in the modern era, due to its structured articulation between higher and basic levels of education, which has evolved in response to the growing need for creative and interdisciplinary approaches (Bain, 2005; Thomas, 2019). Many public optional art courses offered in the UK are on par with professional standards, effectively breaking down traditional boundaries between colleges and disciplines (Banks & Oakley, 2016, p. 47). This approach broadens students' knowledge by fostering interdisciplinary learning. This well-rounded approach enhances students' skills and prepares them for various professional industries (Gillis et al., 2017, p. 203).

Art and design education in the UK is characterized by its broad scope, covering both traditional and contemporary disciplines. Visual arts, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and printmaking, remain central to foundational art education, while more recent fields like graphic design, photography, and animation have become integral to contemporary curricula (Study UK, 2023; GOV.UK, 2021). On the design front, disciplines such as fashion design, interior design, industrial design, and product design emphasize both functionality and

aesthetics, aligning with the growing demand for creative solutions in various industries (Study UK, 2023). Moreover, fields such as game design, architecture, and crafts offer specialized pathways for students to explore creative industries that intersect with technology and craftsmanship (GOV.UK, 2021). Complementing the practical focus, academic disciplines like art history, art management, and fashion management provide a theoretical framework, enabling students to critically engage with the historical, cultural, and economic contexts that shape the art and design sectors (Study UK, 2023; GOV.UK, 2021).

The positive attitude of both the UK government and the general public towards the arts has fostered the development of a mature and well-organised art education system in the UK (Sherlock, 2019). The interdisciplinary integration within art education has allowed it to be socialized in a planned, structured, and systematic way (Gibb, 2014). Since the National Curriculum Act was first introduced in 1988, art has been included as a foundational subject, and over the past 30 years, despite various changes to the National Curriculum, art has maintained its status as an important subject (Gibb, 2014).

UK art and design education prioritizes original ideas, placing greater emphasis on the thoughts and personal expressions of art scholars, while giving less importance to skills training (Ofsted, 2023). This approach has contributed to the expansion of the discipline and the development of a comprehensive teaching system for art and design education. As a result, higher art and design education in the UK has evolved into a relatively independent, complete, and humanistic educational system (Aye, 2024). Schools across the UK are committed to providing excellent learning infrastructure and resources for students, helping them draw inspiration from diverse cultures (Williams et al., 2022). The UK has long been a global leader in generating new ideas and processes in the arts, particularly excelling in creative design and innovative

technologies (Williams et al., 2022).

The curriculum changes in UK art schools have significantly influenced art production in the country, with art and design education making notable contributions to the nation's cultural and artistic life (Llewellyn, 2015). The curricula of major art schools from the 1960s to the present have played a decisive role in driving reforms (Williamson & Westley, 2012). A key objective has been to utilize art museums as intermediaries between educational institutions, artist communities, and the public (Llewellyn, 2015). Competition among art schools is intense, with the reputations of institutions and individuals continuously rising (Williamson & Westley, 2012).

However, there are certain limitations to art education in the United Kingdom. One of the most pressing issues is the reduction in national and local financing. Between 2010 and 2015, Arts Council England's funding was reduced by 32%, while local government funding was cut by 40% (O'Brien, 2015; Artlyst, 2016). Compared to the value generated by the arts sector, the amount of money allocated to it—just 0.3% of overall public spending—is considered 'infinitesimal' (O'Brien, 2015). Additionally, between 2012 and 2017, the amount of time spent teaching art and design in public schools declined by 16.5% (National Society for Education in Art and Design, 2019). According to the Cultural Learning Alliance, by August 2024, the overall number of students studying arts subjects across all areas—art and design, dance, performing arts, music, and media—had decreased, largely due to a reduction in the number of art teachers (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2024).

In recent years, the roles of artists in higher education have shifted significantly, with those whose teaching abilities were once unquestioned now facing new challenges in justifying their practices as legitimate research methods (O'Brien, 2015). This reflects a broader trend where academic staff across disciplines

increasingly encounter pressure to secure external funding, a requirement that often dictates the sustainability of their roles and career progression (O'Brien, 2015). For faculty members who struggle to secure such funding, the resultant feelings of marginalization and professional insecurity are palpable, as they perceive their positions to be at risk (O'Brien, 2015). Compounding these pressures, governmental policy decisions, such as the one proposed by former education secretary Gavin Williamson in 2021, further threaten the arts. Williamson's proposal to reduce funding for arts-related disciplines by 50%, focusing instead on 'high-value' sectors such as medicine and technology, has raised concerns about the sustainability of arts education, especially for students from lower-income backgrounds who rely heavily on public support to access these programs (Holmes, 2021; Pycroft, 2021). The long-term impacts of such cuts could potentially diminish the diversity and inclusiveness of the arts industry as a whole.

The UK's creative industries are a major driver of economic growth, cultural identity, and soft power. These sectors have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored their role in fostering personal fulfilment and societal cohesion (Bazalgette, 2021; Oxford Economics, 2021). According to a 2019 government report, the creative industries directly employed 2.1 million people, representing a 34.5% increase since 2011—more than triple the overall job growth rate in the UK (Oxford Economics, 2021). Access to arts education is fundamental to sustaining this economic and social value (Bazalgette, 2021). However, the Augar Review (2019), commissioned by the government, controversially argued that many arts courses provide limited value, a stance that overlooks the significant contributions arts graduates make to both the economy and society (Mitchell, 2019).

In reviewing the UK's Research and Development (R&D) policy landscape,

evidence suggests that while the arts and humanities have traditionally been marginalized, opportunities for advancement within these fields remain substantial (Daley & Smith, 2022). Key initiatives, such as the Research Council's 'discovery' programs, continue to support interdisciplinary, researcher-driven projects, reflecting a commitment to fostering innovation across disciplines. Recent analyses suggest that the anticipated increase in R&D funding will likely safeguard these programs from significant financial cuts (Daley & Smith, 2022). Furthermore, the arts and humanities are recognized for their essential role in addressing contemporary societal challenges, contributing to knowledge creation and innovative problem-solving approaches (Daley & Smith, 2022). The argument for maintaining the arts and humanities as a core part of collaborative research efforts is further strengthened by claims that these disciplines are integral to a holistic understanding of societal issues, requiring their inclusion in broader innovation agendas (Smith, 2023).

3.2.3 Analysis and Comparison of the Art and Design Higher Education Systems in China and the UK

The evolution of the art and design education system in China has been profoundly influenced by government-led reforms, particularly those initiated after 2000. These reforms were part of a broader national strategy aimed at modernizing the education sector and aligning it with the country's economic development objectives (Cheng & Chen, 2023). In response to the growing need to enhance global competitiveness, the Chinese government emphasized the integration of specialized and technical training within higher education institutions (Lao, 2020). As a result, many universities expanded their curricula or merged with other institutions, aiming to create a more comprehensive educational framework that included specialized art programs (Lao, 2020). The development of these programs was further reinforced by the Ministry of Education's 1996 Opinions on Promoting Art Education in Higher Education Institutions, which played a crucial role in establishing dedicated departments

and research offices for art education (Lao, 2020). This policy ensured that art education became an integral part of the academic structure, receiving support from top administrative levels within universities (Cheng & Chen, 2023).

Despite these efforts to enhance the status of art education, the system in China remains heavily centralized, with a strong emphasis on standardized testing as the primary gateway to higher education (Zhou, 2021). Exams like the *Gao Kao* and *Yi Kao* play a critical role in determining students' access to art and design programs. The *Gao Kao* (National College Entrance Examination) is a comprehensive exam taken by all Chinese students aiming to enter higher education institutions (Ministry of Education, 2021). It assesses a wide range of subjects, including Chinese, mathematics, and foreign languages, and its scores largely determine university admissions (Feng, 2019). In contrast, the *Yi Kao* is a specialized exam for students aspiring to pursue art-related fields. It includes a combination of practical and theoretical assessments in specific art disciplines, such as drawing, design, or performance (Chumley, 2011). These exams heavily influence the trajectory of students entering art and design programs, with the *Yi Kao* focusing on artistic aptitude and the *Gao Kao* providing a measure of academic competency (Chumley, 2011).

However, Yi Kao, which is specifically tailored for art students, has been criticized for disproportionately emphasizing technical skills at the expense of creativity. This exam-driven approach tends to standardize artistic expression, as students are often trained in private art studios that focus primarily on producing work that meets the rigid criteria of Yi Kao (Bian, 2024). These studios prioritize short-term success in the exam over a deeper engagement with diverse artistic traditions and movements such as Impressionism, Dadaism, or Neoclassicism (Yue, 2022). As a result, this method has led to a homogenization of artistic output, where the individuality and creative potential of students are often underdeveloped. Moreover, the narrow focus of the Yi Kao,

which predominantly tests representational skills, limits students' ability to specialize in other areas such as sculpture, design, or photography, thereby hindering the development of a more diverse and innovative artistic workforce (Chumley, 2011).

In contrast, the UK's art and design education system is globally recognized for its emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary study. This is particularly evident in how UK universities nurture students' innovative and independent thought processes. Art students in the UK are encouraged to experiment and collaborate across different disciplines, allowing them to develop critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills that are highly valued in today's workforce (Phillips, 2019). The interdisciplinary nature of UK art education, which integrates subjects like robotics, digital technology, and materials science, enables students to explore beyond the traditional boundaries of art and design (Lukaka, 2023). This focus on creativity has positioned the UK as a leader in producing graduates who excel in diverse fields of the creative industries, from freelance art practice to innovative roles in technology and design.

UK universities have a long-standing tradition of promoting innovative practices in art and design, with a strong focus on encouraging students to develop their artistic voices. The educational pathway in the UK typically includes a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, which serves as a broad introduction to various disciplines before students choose to specialize in a particular field (Study UK, 2023). This foundation year is crucial as it allows students to explore different mediums and techniques, fostering a holistic understanding of art and design that is less about technical proficiency and more about creative exploration.

In the UK, students applying to art and design programs must typically choose

a specific discipline, such as graphic design, industrial design, or fine art. This process is centred around the submission of a portfolio, which is designed to reflect the applicant's most distinguished work and creative capabilities (Blaikie, Schönau, & Steers, 2004). Additionally, personal statements and interviews are commonly part of the application requirements, serving as critical tools for evaluating the students' creative potential and intellectual engagement with their chosen area of study (Steers, 2003). This selection process, emphasizing originality and personal expression, is a key factor in maintaining the global prestige of UK art schools. These institutions have a reputation for producing graduates equipped to contribute significantly to the creative industries (Long, 2021).

The differences between the Chinese and UK systems of art and design education have significant implications for both students and the broader creative industries in these countries. In China, the emphasis on standardized testing and the development of technical skills often produces graduates who are technically proficient but may lack the creative and critical thinking skills necessary for innovation (Zhao, Liu, Gao, Pan, & Song, 2020). This focus is closely tied to broader cultural and political priorities, which emphasize conformity and technical expertise within a highly controlled framework (Chen et al., 2022). In contrast, the UK system emphasizes individuality and creativity, fostering a more dynamic and flexible approach to art and design education (Chen, 2023). This approach encourages students to push the boundaries of their creative potential, contributing to the UK’s continued leadership in the global creative industries (Chen, 2023).

These systemic differences highlight the challenges and opportunities within each educational context. In China, there is a growing recognition of the need to balance technical training with creative freedom, which may lead to further reforms that encourage more diverse forms of artistic expression (Chen et al.,

2022). Meanwhile, the UK faces its challenges, such as maintaining the balance between creativity and technical skill in the face of financial pressures and policy changes (Royal Academy of Arts, 2019; House of Lords Library, 2022). Despite these challenges, the UK's commitment to fostering creative innovation ensures that its art and design education system remains a model for other countries looking to develop their own creative sectors (Royal Academy of Arts, 2019).

3.2.4 The Art and Design Industry and Graduate Employment in China and the UK

By the 1990s, China had firmly established itself as a ‘global factory’, a role that catalysed its industrial and economic growth (Keane, 2013). However, as the 21st century approached, China began to pivot towards developing its creative industries, seeking to transition from ‘Made in China’ to ‘Created/Designed in China’ as part of a broader cultural innovation strategy (Keane, 2013). The concept of 'creative industries' was formally introduced in China in 2004, marking a shift in cultural policy that emphasized the development of these sectors as key drivers of economic growth. This idea became a central theme in the 2006 *Outline of the National Cultural Development Plan* for the 11th Five-Year Plan Period, which sought to strengthen cultural industries and integrate them with high-level technology to enhance China’s cultural and economic influence (Zhang et al., 2010; Yang, 2019).

China's strategic investment in the creative services sector is part of a broader effort to redefine its global role. This sector, which includes advertising, architecture, industrial design, fashion, film, software, and video games, has been identified as a key area for fostering economic growth and cultural influence (Keane, 2013). Government policies have increasingly focused on shifting from traditional manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy, emphasizing higher value-added industries and innovation (Keane, 2013).

However, despite these proactive efforts, China’s creative industries face several challenges, particularly in balancing innovation with intellectual property (IP) protections. The country's strict regulatory environment and complex IP laws often inhibit the very innovation these policies aim to cultivate (Keane, 2013).

The employment landscape for art and design graduates in China is similarly complex, reflecting the broader issues within the creative sectors. The rapid expansion of higher education has led to an oversupply of graduates, making it increasingly difficult for university students, especially those from non-prestigious institutions, to secure employment (Yi, 2015, p. 109). This has resulted in a phenomenon known as ‘structural unemployment’, where there is a significant mismatch between the specialized skills of graduates and the actual demands of the labour market (Xiang, Wang & Wang, 2023). For art and design graduates, the focus on specialization at the expense of broader education, combined with a heavy emphasis on technical skills over creativity and innovation, exacerbates these employment challenges (He, 2022). Living and working in a state-regulated cultural environment further complicates the situation for artists, who often struggle with the authenticity of their work and face limited opportunities to express their creativity freely (Donald, Baruch, & Ashleigh, 2019, p. 599).

In the context of creative industries, the UK's long-standing tradition of promoting and nurturing this sector is widely recognized. Scholars argue that the modern conceptualization of 'creative industries' gained momentum in the late 1990s, particularly during the 'Cool Britannia' cultural movement, which placed a renewed emphasis on cultural exports (Flew, 2012). This period marked a significant shift in how creative industries were perceived, especially under the Blair administration. The Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) redefined the parameters of creative sectors to include areas such as

publishing, software development, and designer fashion, aligning these industries more closely with economic development strategies (DCMS, 1998). This policy shift was instrumental in shaping the broader global discourse on the 'creative economy,' a concept further reinforced by Howkins' seminal work, *The Creative Economy*, which argued for the economic potential of creative and intellectual capital (Howkins, 2001). Collectively, these efforts have been pivotal in positioning the UK as a leader in creative industry policy and global cultural production.

By 2020, the UK's design economy had grown significantly, employing approximately 1.97 million people across various fields, from product design and graphics to architecture. Digital design, in particular, has experienced remarkable growth, with jobs in areas such as user experience, website development, app design, and video game development increasing by 138% between 2010 and 2019, far outpacing the overall growth of the UK's digital sector (Design Council, 2022; RSA, 2022). The UK also maintains a strong position in the global art market, accounting for over 20% of global art and antiquities sales and 16% of public auction sales worldwide (Art Basel & UBS, 2022). Design graduates in the UK generally enjoy high employment rates, with 52.2% securing full-time jobs, particularly in graphic and multimedia design (Art Basel & UBS, 2022). The country also excels in design exports, exporting 50% more design than it imports, ranking fourth globally in design exports (Design Council, 2021).

However, the future of the UK's creative industries is not without challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the sector, with an estimated £12 billion in lost gross value added (Oxford Economics, 2021). Freelancers, who often have ‘portfolio careers’ comprising various gigs, were particularly hard hit, losing significant income as support roles like teaching were eliminated during the lockdown (Comunian & England, 2020, p. 112). The

diversity of the design workforce remains another critical issue. A lack of diversity can lead to the marginalization of certain groups, as their needs and aspirations may be overlooked in the design of products, environments, and services (Design Council, 2021). The industry's ability to address design challenges today and in the future will depend heavily on fostering a more diverse and inclusive workforce, which will require sector-specific and design-wide interventions (Design Council, 2021).

In both China and the UK, the art and design industries are integral to the broader cultural and economic landscape. While China is still grappling with regulatory challenges and the need for greater innovation, the UK faces its competitive edge amidst economic uncertainties and ensuring a diverse workforce (Yi, 2015, p. 109; Comunian & England, 2020, p. 112). Both countries illustrate the complexities and opportunities inherent in the creative industries, highlighting the importance of continued investment and policy support to foster innovation and growth.

3.3 Sino-UK Partnership Teaching Projects and the Acculturation of International Students

3.3.1 Collaboration Background in Higher Education (with Focus on China and the UK)

Transnational Education (TNE) between the United Kingdom and China has become a substantial and growing sector. This growth has led to deeper collaboration between Chinese host universities and their overseas partners, fostering two-way student mobility and enriching the educational landscape (British Council, 2023). Globalization is driving higher education in the 21st century to become more globally engaged, transforming it into a ‘global enterprise’ focused on marketing knowledge products, attracting foreign students, and establishing international affiliations (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p.

290). In a world where access to higher education is increasingly demanded, along with the need for diverse and flexible programme offerings, international collaboration has become a vital component of the global market (de Wit & Altbach, 2020, p. 28).

Transnational higher education has become a key agent of globalization, as universities from different nations form alliances to compete in the global and mass higher education market (Dunn & Wallace, 2008). In recent years, TNEs have expanded their focus, actively participating in international student and faculty recruitment to establish competitive regional education centres (Knight, 2011, p. 14). China's rapid economic development since its reform and opening up in 1978, and particularly after it access to the World Trade Organisation in 2001, has necessitated the training of competent professionals at all levels, transforming its demographic capital into a robust human resource pool (Khor et al., 2019). Chinese universities have thus emerged as key drivers of the country’s economic and social development (Willis, 2011).

Collaboration with developed nations in higher education has been strongly encouraged to gather expertise comparable to the world's top universities and to enhance China's capacity for research and innovation (Hou, 2011, p. 67). Chinese universities are required to incorporate world-class curricula and textbooks through collaborative TNE initiatives and to adopt the strengths and successful management experiences of international educational institutions in ways that align with China's realities (Khor et al., 2019). This partnership not only increases the visibility and competitiveness of Chinese universities but also fosters academic exchanges, integrating them into the broader international academic community (Willis, 2011). By 2023, over 500,000 students had participated in TNE joint programs in China, with a total of 1.5 million TNE graduates (British Council, 2023).

China, with its vast potential market, has become a critical source of international students (Fang, 2012, p. 5). TNE cooperation in China typically occurs in two forms: the establishment of specific projects or the creation of bespoke organisations (Fang, 2012, p. 5). The Chinese government views TNE as serving the public interest and considers it an intrinsic aspect of China's educational mission (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2003). The main objective of TNE is to enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese educational institutions by importing high-quality educational resources from other nations (Lin & Liu, 2016 p. 231). Although the Chinese government strongly supports public interest-driven education, there are concerns that some foreign partners might prioritize financial success over maintaining high standards for admission and education, which does not align with the expectations of their Chinese counterparts (Lin & Liu, 2016 p. 231). Moreover, China's burgeoning middle class, projected to reach 500 million by 2025, has diverse needs and aspirations regarding access to higher education (Altbach, 2009; Fang, 2012, p. 5).

Education has long been a cornerstone of Chinese culture, where families place great emphasis on academic achievement, often making significant financial and personal sacrifices to secure quality educational opportunities for their children (Welch, 2007, p. 665). The introduction of the One-Child Policy further heightened these pressures, as parents became even more invested in the academic success of their only child, viewing education as a key pathway to future prosperity (Khor et al., 2019). In this context, transnational education (TNE) has emerged as a viable option for families seeking to balance the benefits of both domestic and international education. TNE programs, particularly those offering articulation pathways, allow students to begin their studies at a Chinese university before transitioning to an overseas institution, thus providing a smoother adaptation process and reducing initial costs (Khor et al., 2019). Moreover, since Chinese students typically enter university at

around 18 years of age, these preparatory programs are seen by parents as crucial stepping stones towards international study and eventual employment in major global companies (Hou, Montgomery, & McDowell, 2011, p. 104).

In recent years, the United Kingdom has strengthened its role as a leading partner in transnational education (TNE) with China, particularly in the higher education sector. As of 2023, the UK is involved in over 260 approved joint degree programs at the undergraduate level and beyond, contributing significantly to the internationalization of China's higher education landscape (British Council, 2023). Furthermore, there are 47 joint institutes, 45 of which are without independent legal entity status, while two function as own independent legal entity status, reflecting the diversity of these educational collaborations (British Council, 2023).

Given the significant scale of Sino-UK transnational partnership programs and institutions, this area merits further attention from researchers. However, the education systems and traditions of China and the UK differ substantially, leading to distinct regulations and procedures for quality assurance in transnational partnerships (Knight, 2006). In China, the government is the highest authority for quality assurance in Sino-foreign higher education partnerships (Mok & Yu, 2011, p. 229). Consequently, Sino-foreign cooperative institutions in China must ensure that their academic standards meet or exceed those of foreign institutions capable of awarding degrees (Ministry of Education, 2006).

In contrast, the UK’s higher education system operates independently, with institutions having the authority to award degrees without government interference, unlike their Chinese counterparts (Harvey & Newton, 2004, p. 149). The public’s demand for high standards of quality, fueled by marketization, has led UK institutions to develop robust internal quality assurance processes and

publish applicable institutional quality assurance policies (Harvey, 2005, p. 263). In response to this demand for transparency, the Chinese government has created an online information portal to track Sino-foreign collaborative education and promote information exchange on the latest developments in TNE (Mok & Han, 2016).

International operations have become a key expansion strategy for higher education institutions in English-speaking countries (Marginson & van der Wende, 2009, p. 109). TNE has grown in popularity as a means of facilitating international student mobility, especially with the advent of online learning that allows TNE to be practised without necessitating physical relocation (Brown & Holloway, 2008, p. 232). UK universities have been urged to establish branch campuses, chartered degree programs, and collaborations with local organisations in low- and middle-income countries to expand their market share (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290).

Financial considerations have become the primary motivation for most universities to engage in international collaborations (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). This focus is evident in the internationalization and transnational policy declarations of UK universities (Knight, 2012, p. 27). While international collaboration in higher education offers benefits such as curriculum internationalization, preparing students for the global community, joint research, and developing a multicultural campus, financial gain remains a key driver (Teichler, 2017, p. 177). TNE initiatives, such as articulation programs, are seen as more sustainable and better at preparing students for study abroad than programs that recruit international students individually (Knight, 2012, p. 27). As a result, many UK institutions are focusing on these international programs to enhance their financial sustainability (Teichler, 2017, p. 177).

3.3.2 Mainstream Transnational Partnership Formats in Art and Design Subjects (with Focus on China and the UK)

The term ‘transnational education’ (TNE) captures a broader set of global trends that transcend traditional international academic partnerships, signalling the rise of a new global educational paradigm (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). This shift is largely fueled by powerful global forces, including the rapid advancements in information technology, which have increasingly blurred national boundaries, particularly in sectors such as finance and economics (Bannier, 2016, 2007, p. 80). These technological and economic developments have made it easier for educational institutions to expand their reach across borders, creating new opportunities and challenges for higher education.

Since 1997, there has been a significant surge in demand for TNE in China, a trend driven by the strong reputation of the UK's higher education institutions, which are widely recognized for their academic excellence (QAA, 2012). This growing demand has not only allowed UK institutions to maintain a strong market presence in China but has also provided them with a substantial revenue stream (Garrett, 2004, p. 6; Knight, 2008). The attractiveness of UK degrees and the increasing aspirations of Chinese students and their families to pursue high-quality education abroad have further fueled this demand (Garrett, 2004, p. 6).

In recent years, China's transnational education (TNE) landscape has grown substantially. By 2020, the Ministry of Education had officially recognized 2,332 collaborative educational programs and joint institutions, with 1,230 of these offering undergraduate degrees or higher (Clayburn, 2022). Notably, the collaboration between China and the UK has played a pivotal role, with over one-fifth of all China-foreign joint programs involving UK institutions, highlighting the UK's significant influence in shaping China’s TNE environment (Clayburn, 2022). As of 2022, 237 active British TNE partnerships are operating

in China, featuring diverse educational models, from degree-granting programs to institutes embedded within Chinese universities (Clayburn, 2022). This data demonstrates the enduring strength and diversity of UK-China educational collaborations.

The rapid expansion of these joint programs and institutions has fostered deeper cooperation between Chinese host universities and their international partners. This collaboration has not only enriched the educational offerings but has also strengthened various aspects of university operations, including teaching activities, student management, faculty development, and quality assurance processes (Hou et al., 2014, p. 300; Yang, 2010, p. 165). TNE programs in China can generally be divided into those that lead to official certification, such as degrees or diplomas, and those that do not (Ning, 2007). The former is recognized for their academic credentials, while the latter may focus more on skill development or continuing education without offering formal qualifications (Gao et al., 2012, p. 293; Knight & Liu, 2019).

In recent years, the twinning model has become one of the most prominent forms of transnational education (TNE) in China. This model is particularly attractive to students and their families seeking international education opportunities without the need for students to fully relocate abroad for the entirety of their studies (Hou et al., 2014). Twinning programs are structured to allow students to complete part of their studies in China and the remaining period at a partner institution in another country, often the UK (Tang, 2021). The flexibility of these programs is further enhanced by the variety of available formats, such as 4+0, 3+1, 2+2, and 1+2+1 models.

In the 4+0 format, students complete all four years of their studies in China, with the degree conferred by the foreign partner institution. The 3+1 model allows students to study for three years in China and the final year at the partner

university abroad. The 2+2 model splits the study period equally, with two years in China followed by two years overseas, while the 1+2+1 format involves one year in China, two years abroad, and the final year back in China (British Council, 2023). These formats offer flexibility to universities to meet diverse educational goals and address logistical considerations, making TNE programs adaptable to various student needs (Hou et al., 2014; British Council, 2023).

China’s growing emphasis on improving the quality and depth of transnational education (TNE) partnerships has created new avenues for UK institutions to develop long-term, sustainable collaborations. These partnerships offer strategic opportunities for enhancing educational exchange over the next two decades (HEPI, 2020; British Council, 2023). However, UK institutions must address the regulatory challenges that accompany such initiatives, particularly compliance with China's ‘four one-thirds’ rule. This regulation requires that foreign partners contribute at least one-third of the total curriculum, core modules, and teaching hours, thus ensuring that Chinese TNE programs maintain a strong international component (HEPI, 2020; British Council, 2023). To meet these stringent requirements while maintaining educational standards, careful planning and resource allocation are critical.

The nine most prestigious Chinese fine arts institutions—China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, China Academy of Art, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Hubei Academy of Fine Arts, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Xi’an Academy of Fine Arts, Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, and Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts—have all established stable and ongoing TNE programs in partnership with UK universities (British Council, 2023; Tang, 2021). These partnerships have led to the development of robust transnational co-teaching programs that integrate the strengths of both Chinese and British educational approaches (British Council, 2023). After a detailed review of the official websites of these institutions, the researcher has

summarised the key Sino-British transnational co-teaching programs in the table below.

China Institution	UK Institution	Subject	Partnership model
China Central Academy of Fine Arts	University of Sunderland	Art & Design	PG Top-up
Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University	Royal College of Art	Global Innovation Design	PG Exchange programs
China Academy of Art	Kingston University/Nottingham Trent University	Art & Design	UG Exchange programs
Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts	Birmingham Metropolitan University	Contemporary art	1+1+1 PG Dual Degree
Hubei Academy of Fine Arts	University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Art & Design	UG Exchange programs
Sichuan Fine Arts Institute	University of Dundee	Art & Design	1+1+1 PG Dual Degree
Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts,	Bath Spa University	Art & Design	2+2 UG Dual Degree
Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts	University of Salford	Digital Media Arts	3+1 UG Dual Degree
Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts	University of Hertfordshire	Digital Media Arts	3+1 UG Dual

Table 3.1: Sino-UK Partnership Teaching Projects at Nine of China's Most Prestigious Fine Arts Institutes

3.3.3 Acculturation of International Students

Acculturation refers to the process by which individuals or groups from one culture come into contact with and adapt to a new culture. Traditionally, acculturation has been viewed as a unidirectional process, where individuals gradually lose their original cultural identity and adopt the norms and practices of the host culture (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). However, modern theories, such as Berry's (1997) two-dimensional model, offer a more nuanced view. Berry's model suggests that acculturation involves maintaining one’s original cultural identity while simultaneously integrating aspects of the host culture. This means that individuals can adapt to a new culture without completely abandoning their original cultural practices. The process of acculturation can vary depending on several factors, including the level of support from both the host and home cultures, the degree of cultural openness, and individual psychological factors (Berry, 2003, p. 17).

Acculturation research has traditionally focused on individuals who have relocated permanently or temporarily to a new environment, such as migrants, refugees, and hosts, exploring how they adapt to and integrate within a different culture (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149; Berry, 1997, p. 5). This process is particularly relevant for international students, who, when exposed to different cultural contexts, must often 'learn, unlearn, or relearn' ideas and practices to support their learning and adaptation, enabling them to 'survive and thrive' in their new environment (Bugay, Buyukgoze-Kavas, & Demir, 2007, p. 33).

Norris and Dwyer (2005) categorize international student enrollment into three primary types: Island, Hybrid, and Direct enrollment/full immersion. In the Island model, all instruction is managed and overseen by the home university, ensuring that the curriculum and academic standards remain consistent with those of the student's original institution. The Hybrid model provides a blend of

support from both the home and host institutions, where students continue to receive assistance and services from their home university while simultaneously enrolling in courses and completing assignments at the host university (Norris & Dwyer, 2005, p. 122). This allows students to benefit from the resources of both institutions. In contrast, the Direct enrollment/full immersion model requires students to fully integrate into the host university's environment, including full matriculation, which demands that students adapt entirely to the new academic and cultural setting, often leading to a more profound intercultural experience (Norris & Dwyer, 2005, p. 122).

Acculturation among foreign students can be approached from either a unidimensional or multidimensional perspective (Gordon, 1964; Berry, 1997, p. 5). The unidimensional perspective posits that as individuals shift from their original cultural identity to a new one, they lose their original socio-cultural characteristics, eventually adopting and integrating all aspects of the new culture (Gordon, 1964). In contrast, the two-dimensional model of acculturation offers a more nuanced approach, acknowledging that a person's original cultural identity and new socio-cultural identity are independent of one another. This model suggests that acculturation can occur at varying levels, depending on how these identities interact (Berry, 1997, p. 5; Ward & Kennedy, 1999, p. 659).

In collectivist societies, where interpersonal relationships are highly valued, individuals often define themselves in relation to their connections with others (Triandis, 1995). Collaboration is highly regarded, and relationships, along with the expectations, rules, and tasks that accompany them, guide behaviour. For international students, inadequate social support can increase vulnerability to stress and anxiety (Poyrazli et al., 2004, p. 73). The acculturation process, particularly for students lacking strong support networks, can be linked to a range of mental health outcomes. Social support can directly mitigate the stress

experienced by international students (Liu, 2009, p. 33).

Language barriers are a significant source of stress for international students, particularly those learning in a language that is not their native tongue (Mori, 2000, p. 137; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004, p. 73). Lower levels of English proficiency are associated with higher levels of acculturation stress, exacerbated by cultural misunderstandings, racial discrimination, and cultural isolation (Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy, 2011, p. 47). These added pressures can further elevate stress and adjustment difficulties, potentially leading to mental health issues (Jung et al., 2007, p. 605), which in turn can disrupt academic performance and overall functioning.

The adjustment process for international students involves significant changes in behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and cultural identity as they interact with individuals from different cultures (Buchtel, 2014, p. 41; Zhang & Goodson, 20114, p. 139). Successful adjustment often depends on the host culture's openness and inclusivity towards diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds (Goodman, 2016, p. 233). However, international students may still encounter bias, racism, and discrimination, which can lead to a range of adjustment difficulties, including physical symptoms without clear causes, cognitive exhaustion, and psychological issues like loneliness, depression, homesickness, resentment, and frustration. These challenges can intensify into feelings of pessimism and helplessness, sometimes linked to depression (Mori, 2000, p. 137).

East Asian students, in particular, face more psychological difficulties compared to their peers from other regions, often due to challenges related to acculturation (Hamamura & Laird, 2014, p. 205). Language barriers, difficulty adjusting, a lack of social support, and unfamiliarity with local processes and institutions contribute significantly to these issues (Hamamura & Laird, 2014, p.

205). Moreover, high internalized expectations and pressure from family and peers exacerbate stress, especially for East Asian students, for whom educational success is a deeply ingrained value (Poyrazli et al., 2004, p. 73).

In addition to coping with cultural transition, many international students face considerable academic pressure. This stress is compounded when navigating a foreign academic system in a non-native language (Poyrazli et al., 2004, p. 73). The pressure to excel academically is particularly intense for some international students, and the lack of social support can lead to greater isolation (Poyrazli et al., 2004, p. 73; Gu, 2009, p. 37). For students connected to their home culture, particularly in institutions with a significant population from their region, maintaining ties to familiar cultural values and beliefs can provide crucial support during the early stages of adjustment Gu, 2009, p. 37). However, balancing connections with both the host culture and one's cultural background is often the most effective approach for easing the transition (Kim et al., 2008, p. 518).

3.3.4 Study and Living Experience of Chinese International Students in the UK

In the context of East-West educational collaboration, several challenges persist. Political and cultural differences, combined with structural limitations within the educational system and preconceived notions of the ‘other’, make it difficult to achieve significant long-term value transformation and cultural adaptation during the limited time Chinese students spend abroad (Hong, 2014, p. 155). Unlike their Western counterparts who may choose to study in China out of a specific interest in the country and its culture, many Chinese students opt to study in Europe driven by the desire for advanced education and the belief that academic standards in Europe and the US are superior to those in China (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2017, p. 365; Hong, 2014, p. 155). This perception, coupled with the aspiration to experience life abroad, plays a

significant role in shaping their choice of study destination and influences their overall study and living experience in the UK (Wang, 2016, p. 611).

The study and living experience of Chinese international students in the UK is a complex and multifaceted journey that involves navigating both academic and cultural challenges. These students face the dual challenge of adapting to different teaching methodologies and adjusting to the cultural and lifestyle differences inherent in living abroad (Gu & Maley, 2008, p. 224). For many, this adaptation includes the need to improve their language skills, build self-confidence, actively engage in classroom discussions, and develop greater independence in their learning processes (Gu & Maley, 2008, p. 224). While ‘Chinese learners’ may share certain characteristics shaped by their cultural background, their learning behaviours can vary significantly depending on individual needs, the academic environment, and the specific cultural context in which they find themselves (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2011, p. 611). The Confucian tradition, deeply ingrained in Chinese culture, instils in students a strong motivation to succeed and a profound respect for teachers—traits that are widely recognized and appreciated in academic settings worldwide (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2011, p. 611).

However, the adaptation process for Chinese students is not a uniform experience; it is deeply personal and varies depending on a range of factors, including individual resilience, the level of support from the host institution, and the students' ability to navigate the complex social and cultural landscapes of their new environment. When Chinese students enter a new educational environment, they often experience ‘learning shock’, a phenomenon characterized by feelings of discomfort and challenge as they adapt to new academic and social norms (Tian et al., 2021, p. 607). This adjustment period can be particularly stressful due to the significant cultural, social, and historical differences between their home country and the UK. These differences may

initially hinder students' ability to fully engage in classroom activities, especially during the early stages of their studies (Vita, 2001, p. 165).

However, over time, most Chinese students manage to adapt well, with their academic performance gradually improving as they become more comfortable in their new surroundings (Tian et al., 2021, p. 607). The journey of adaptation often involves a gradual adjustment where initial challenges give way to greater comfort and success as students become more familiar with the expectations and norms of the UK academic system. Over time, many Chinese students develop a sense of belonging and confidence that allows them to thrive both academically and socially (Zhou & Todman, 2009, p. 467). Despite this progress, the ongoing process of reconciling different lifestyles, educational expectations, and cultural norms can be emotionally and mentally taxing, requiring considerable resilience, support, and an ability to bridge diverse cultural perspectives (Zhou & Todman, 2009, p. 467).

The connection between psychological pressure and academic performance is particularly evident among Chinese students. The challenges they encounter in their daily lives are closely linked to the nature of their social interactions, which can significantly impact their academic mindset and overall well-being (Guo et al., 2021). Effective interaction with local students is crucial for a successful academic and social experience. Universities, therefore, have a responsibility to allocate resources to support international students in adapting to the social and cultural changes they face (Guo et al., 2021). This support can take various forms, including academic counselling, social integration programs, mentorship initiatives, and language support services, all of which are critical in helping Chinese students overcome the barriers they face and ensuring their successful adaptation to the new educational environment (Liu et al., 2024). By taking proactive steps to address these needs, universities can ensure that Chinese students not only succeed academically but also feel integrated and valued

within the broader university community. This holistic approach to supporting international students not only enhances their academic success but also contributes to a more culturally diverse and globally connected academic community (Zhou, 2015).

Chinese students now represent a growing and vital segment of the global higher education landscape. UK universities have strong economic incentives to attract these students, recognizing not only the financial benefits they bring but also the importance of integrating them effectively into the broader student population (Consoli, 2024). However, the actual experiences of Chinese students abroad are shaped by their perceptions of the local culture and the challenges they face in adjusting to it (Consoli, 2024). They are often perceived as passive and less inclined to integrate with students from other countries, a stereotype that can affect their interactions and overall experience (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2017, p. 365). Cultural misunderstandings and a lack of familiarity with local norms can create communication barriers between Chinese students and Western educators, further complicating their adjustment process (Yu et al., 2023).

3.4 Status and Development of Online Art Education

3.4.1 The Situation of Online Art Education Before, During, and After the Outbreak of COVID-19

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the landscape of online art education was largely constrained by the limitations of available technology. The tools that content creators had at their disposal often hampered the effectiveness of early online education delivery, particularly in the arts, where the nuances of visual and interactive learning are critical (Burgstaller, 2020). Communication speeds were frequently slow, and delivering content across multiple browsers and versions posed significant technical challenges for the earliest cloud-based

systems (Pepper, 2021). These technological shortcomings—such as long loading times and cumbersome user interfaces—led to frustration among users, both educators and students, making it difficult to create an engaging and efficient online learning environment (Delgado, 2023). However, the advancements that followed in building and delivering online training programs significantly enhanced accessibility for learners, providing a more practical and scalable solution for educators and trainers alike (Delgado, 2023).

The shift to online education during the pandemic not only marked a significant period of transition but also provided an opportunity to reconsider and innovate the ways in which education is delivered (Lockee, 2021, p. 6). Prior to the pandemic, online education was already considered a viable option, particularly for adult learners seeking flexibility in higher education (Lockee, 2021, p. 6). However, the crisis forced a rapid expansion of virtual courses across all educational levels, with instructors and students alike having to adapt quickly to this new mode of learning (Marek et al., 2021, p. 40).

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 brought about a seismic shift in education worldwide. With educational institutions closing their physical campuses to curb the spread of the virus, approximately 1.6 billion students across 194 countries were impacted (Azevedo et al., 2021, p. 3; Engzell et al., 2021). This unprecedented disruption necessitated a rapid transition to distance learning, compelling educators to adopt various forms of online instruction. As schools and universities scrambled to continue providing education, there was a marked increase in the use of language programs, virtual tutoring, video conferencing technologies, and online learning software (Azevedo et al., 2021).

As online learning began to gain traction, especially in the context of art education, it became evident that the focus needed to remain on educational objectives rather than the limitations of the delivery mechanisms. The

generation known as ‘digital natives’ (those born after 1985) grew up with online technology integrated into their daily lives, and for them, the lines between ‘live’ and online learning are naturally blurred (Hahn, 2020). Prior to the pandemic, courses in areas such as gaming technology, craft, make-up, styling, and music relied heavily on innovative methods to engage remote audiences. These courses often involved interactive elements that kept learners connected and involved, a practice that laid the groundwork for the broader adoption of online learning when the pandemic struck (Clausen et al., 2020, p. 443).

In this period of emergency adaptation, it became clear that for distance learning to be truly effective, it needed to facilitate meaningful two-way communication between students and teachers. This was especially crucial in art education, where the interactive nature of teaching often requires real-time feedback and engagement (Lockee, 2021, p. 6). The constraints of the pandemic presented educators with a unique opportunity to develop new teaching strategies, even though these efforts were often hurried and reactive (Lockee, 2021, p. 6). Nevertheless, this experience offered a chance to rethink and refine the methods and processes that best support online learning, particularly in creative disciplines where the tactile and visual elements are so integral (NAEA, 2021).

Blended learning, directed learning, and hybrid models have all emerged as critical educational strategies, especially in the post-COVID-19 context. Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with online components, allowing for more flexible and personalized learning experiences. This method has gained popularity because it integrates the benefits of both in-person and digital learning environments. For instance, asynchronous online work gives students the flexibility to learn at their own pace, while face-to-face interactions foster collaboration and critical thinking (Hrastinski, 2019, p. 564; Bashir et al., 2021).

Directed learning, on the other hand, emphasizes a more structured approach where students follow guided instructional paths, often facilitated by digital tools that monitor their progress. This form of learning became particularly prominent during the pandemic as educators sought ways to ensure continuity in student engagement despite physical isolation (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Hybrid learning models, such as HyFlex, allow students to choose between attending classes in person or participating online, providing more control over how they engage with their education. This approach is particularly useful in accommodating diverse student needs and maintaining inclusivity in higher education (Beatty, 2019; Bashir et al., 2021). The integration of these approaches post-pandemic signals a permanent shift in education delivery, highlighting the importance of flexibility, inclusivity, and technological adaptation in modern teaching (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

As the distinction between traditional and online education continued to blur, the pandemic accelerated the convergence of these two modes of learning. Despite advancements in technology and pedagogy, significant challenges remain in delivering effective online education. Educators must continue to develop practices that encourage student feedback, facilitate interactive learning, and broaden students' perspectives on course material (Nguyen et al., 2021). Institutions must address the pedagogical challenges unique to online learning by emphasizing collaborative, case-based, and project-based learning approaches (Heo et al., 2022).

In the post-pandemic period, the approach to teaching art and design online has evolved significantly. Educators have increasingly shifted their focus from merely the final product to the creative process itself. This process-oriented approach encourages students to engage deeply in creative thinking, idea exploration, planning, and problem-solving as they work towards creating

original works (Taylor, 2020). In contrast, a product-oriented approach typically involves meeting predefined expectations set by instructors, often limiting the scope for creative exploration (Taylor, 2020). While both approaches have their place in the art and design curriculum, process-oriented projects are particularly effective in fostering higher-order cognitive abilities such as creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making (Sheridan et al., 2022, p. 14). The experience of online art education during and after the pandemic has underscored the importance of flexibility and innovation in teaching practices. Educators and institutions that embrace these qualities are better positioned to meet the diverse needs of learners in a rapidly changing educational landscape (Faerm, 2022).

3.4.2 Typical Mainstream Methods and Technologies of Online Education

Given the necessity to analyse typical methods and technologies of online education, it is essential to reference research from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, as this period brought unprecedented changes to how education was delivered. Under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, online education underwent a profound transformation, leading to a global re-evaluation of educational delivery methods (Di Pietro et al., 2020). The sudden and widespread need for remote learning accelerated the adoption of digital tools and platforms, positioning e-learning as a central component of the educational landscape. As traditional in-person instruction became impractical due to health concerns, educators and institutions worldwide rapidly turned to online alternatives. This shift led to a dramatic increase in the use of language programs, virtual tutoring, video conferencing technologies, and online learning software. The transition wasn't just a temporary fix but signalled a fundamental change in educational approaches, with the global market for online education projected to reach $350 billion by 2025 (Scully et al., 2021, p. 159).

The rise of e-learning has had a seismic impact on the educational environment,

fundamentally altering how students and educators interact. The proliferation of digital platforms has democratized education, making it accessible to a more diverse student population spread across various geographic locations. This accessibility allows students to engage in collaborative learning activities that were previously out of reach for many. Online learning enables students to join virtual groups and engage in discussions, not only enhancing their interpersonal skills but also fostering a sense of community, even within a remote setting (Harasim, 2012; Magen-Nagar & Shonfeld, 2018, p. 5). This collaborative learning approach is a key component of e-learning, promoting active engagement and communication among students and instructors. As a result, the traditional dynamics of the classroom are being redefined, with virtual interactions becoming a norm rather than an exception (Pozzi et al., 2023).

After the COVID-19 outbreak, global venture capital investment by educational technology companies increased by 22% in the first quarter of 2020 (Di Bella et al., 2020, p. 45). Major tech giants like Google, Amazon, and Microsoft played pivotal roles in providing essential infrastructure and tools for remote education (BBC, 2020). Specifically, platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams became indispensable during the pandemic. Zoom quickly became synonymous with online education due to its user-friendly interface and ability to host large-scale video conferences, which were crucial for maintaining educational continuity (Pajo & Wallace, 2021, p. 74). Meanwhile, Microsoft Teams, integrated with the Microsoft Office suite, offered not only video conferencing but also collaborative tools that allowed students and educators to share documents, chat in real-time, and work on projects together (Pal & Vanijja, 2020, p. 25). These platforms were instrumental in ensuring that learning could continue effectively despite the global disruptions caused by the pandemic. In addition to the contributions from tech giants, early UK technology companies also played a crucial role by providing innovative solutions that helped shape the future of online education. The surge in investment

underscored the growing recognition of the importance of digital tools in education, further supported by substantial funding from both venture capitalists and government initiatives aimed at equipping schools with the necessary technology and internet access (Pal & Vanijja, 2020, p. 25).

In addition to collaborative learning, the integration of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) has revolutionized the online education experience. These technologies have transformed the delivery and absorption of educational content, making learning more interactive and immersive. AI-driven programs provide personalized feedback to learners, helping them refine their skills and deepen their understanding of the material. For instance, AI can analyse a student's learning pattern, identify strengths and weaknesses, and tailor educational content to meet their specific needs, thereby enhancing the learning experience (Davé, 2023). VR and AR technologies introduce a new dimension to online education, offering experiences that closely mimic real-world scenarios. These immersive technologies are particularly beneficial in fields that require hands-on practice, such as art, design, and engineering (Liu, 2020; Hicks, 2016).

A prominent example of AI integration in online education is VIP Kid, a Beijing-based company that serves over 700,000 students (Cathy, 2020), as of the first half of 2020. VIP Kid has launched AI-embedded courses that feature animated characters assisting human teachers (Li, 2020). In an experiment involving 10,000 students, the company discovered that the course completion rate increased from 80% to 90%, and the correct answer rate rose from 50% to 80% when AI was integrated into the learning experience (Nguyen, Tran, & Nguyen, 2023). Similarly, Tencent Classroom has become a crucial platform in China’s education system, particularly after the government mandated online schooling for millions of students during the pandemic, leading to one of the largest shifts to online education in history (Xi, 2020).

The pandemic's impact on the global education sector also spurred significant investment in educational technology. In the first quarter of 2020 alone, global venture capital investment in ‘edtech’ companies increased by 22%, reflecting the urgent need for effective digital learning solutions (Roberts, 2020). The UK has emerged as a leader in this field, attracting 41% of all European edtech investments in 2020 (Chambers, 2021). This surge in investment underscores the growing recognition of the critical role digital tools play in education. The UK Ministry of Education, for instance, invested over £100 million to equip schools with the necessary technology and internet access, ensuring that all educational institutions could transition smoothly to online platforms like Google for Education and Microsoft Office 365 Education (Newman, 2020).

Moreover, social media has become an integral part of online education, serving both as a communication tool and an educational resource. Platforms like Facebook and WeChat, which boast billions of active users worldwide, are increasingly being incorporated into teaching and learning environments (Chaffey & Smith, 2017; Wang, 2016, p. 67). In China, WeChat has proven to be particularly effective as a blended learning tool, combining traditional teaching methods with digital interaction to create a more dynamic and engaging educational experience. The platform's feedback mechanisms enhance interaction and improve the effectiveness of education, making it a valuable asset in both online and offline settings (Wang, 2016, p. 67).

3.4.3 Challenges of Online Art and Design Education

While online learning offers convenience and flexibility, it can present challenges for some learners, particularly in feeling comfortable participating in online discussions (Hrastinski, 2008). This issue is especially relevant for arts students, who often rely on personal contact with their educators or trainers to achieve successful learning outcomes. While constructive feedback can be

highly effective, its impact can be diminished if not delivered in a timely or appropriate manner (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005, p. 133). In a traditional classroom setting, teachers can provide direct, face-to-face feedback, allowing students to address problems immediately during lectures or designated office hours (Gillett-Swan, 2017, p. 20). Personalized feedback is essential as it deepens the learning process, makes it more meaningful, and enhances student motivation (Bolliger & Martin, 2018, p. 568). However, the best methods for delivering feedback in an online context are still being studied and refined, and it may take time before fully effective techniques are established (Gillett-Swan, 2017, 2017, p. 20).

Moreover, online assessments pose unique challenges, particularly in ensuring academic integrity. Without a video stream, monitoring students during exams becomes difficult, making it harder to detect cheating compared to traditional testing methods (Gamage et al., 2020). Without robust identity verification systems, there is a risk that students might allow third parties to take exams on their behalf, leading to fraudulent results. To maintain the integrity of online education, providers must implement strict anti-cheating protocols (Gamage et al., 2020). Technologies like Examity, which uses automated identity verification and machine learning to detect fraudulent test-takers, represent some of the most common anti-cheating solutions in e-learning today (Ma et al., 2023).

The integration of technology in art education has been a subject of both research and practice, with many educators beginning to incorporate it into their curricula (Wilks et al., 2012, p. 54). It is argued that students can benefit significantly from using technology, as it enhances their capacity for original thought, expression, and analytical problem-solving (Flood & Bamford, 2007, p. 91). Despite these advantages, many arts educators remain hesitant to integrate technology into their teaching, finding it challenging to translate information and communication technology (ICT) into meaningful and fulfilling

educational experiences (Wilks et al., 2012, p. 54). Additionally, there is a notable lack of resources available to guide art educators in effectively integrating digital technology into their curricula (Wilks et al., 2012, p. 54). Patton and Buffington (2016) suggest that colleges should require art teachers to develop courses that incorporate technological lessons. While most instructors are trained in teaching methods, few receive adequate training on how to use new technology as artistic mediums or instructional tools (Koh, 2021).

There are limited courses available to help teachers become more comfortable using technology in their classrooms (Francom, 2020, p. 4). Many tech-savvy art instructors are self-taught, which may contribute to the reluctance of some educators to incorporate technology into their lessons, particularly as it is not always included in current art education standards (Hess, 2014, p. 35). The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has updated its guidelines to emphasize the importance of technology in art education, stating that art education teachers should not only understand and use computer technology as a research tool but also integrate a wide range of technologies as art media (NAEA, 2020).

Art teacher preparation programs should reconsider their required technology courses and expand them to include media arts as part of the visual arts curriculum (Bequette & Brennan, 2008, p. 328). Utilizing new technology for art creation is one way for art educators to stay current and ensure that art education policies, standards, practices, in-service teacher preparation, and classrooms remain relevant to students and contemporary artists (Patton & Buffington, 2016). Despite the reluctance of some teachers, it is crucial that they incorporate technology into their curricula, as students are regularly using technology, such as laptops, game consoles, and mobile phones, in their daily lives (Neimann, Felix, Shliakhovchuk, & Hindman, 2021).

By learning to use technology in ways that enhance art education, teachers can create innovative, student-centred classrooms where co-learning and collaborative learning between teachers and students are continuous (Gašević, Dawson, & Siemens, 2015, p. 64; Hoppe & Gassner, 2002, p. 716; Gregory, 2009, p. 18). Some educators may need to adopt new pedagogical strategies to successfully integrate technology into their classrooms, such as focusing on collaborative learning, real-world problem-solving, and creative critical thinking (Gregory, 2009, p. 18). Teachers who fail to embrace new technologies risk inadequately preparing their students for the world of contemporary art, where technology plays a significant role (Johnson, 2001, p. 3).

The use of digital technology in 21st-century classrooms can inspire students to experiment, invent, and use their creativity and imagination in new ways (Black & Browning, 2011). The way art teachers employ and incorporate technology in the classroom is essential for fostering students' learning, creativity, and imagination (Black & Browning, 2011, p. 19). To make arts education relevant in the 21st century, visual arts instructors must expand their knowledge by incorporating digital media arts technology into their teaching, as well as maintaining traditional skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and other media (Choi & Piro, 2009, p. 21). Buffington and Patton (2016) encourage visual arts educators to engage with 21st-century skills by exploring media production and staying current with technological advancements.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators have faced unprecedented challenges in delivering education, as access to campuses and public resources has been significantly limited or entirely shut off (Bond, 2021, p. 191; Bozkurt, Karakaya, Turk, Karakaya, & Castellanos-Reyes, 2022, p. 883). This situation has led to the rapid development and evolution of new curricular models and their implementation, as educators strive to ensure that students

continue to learn and thrive despite these abrupt changes to their daily environment (Kraehe, 2020, p. 25). However, the legitimacy and quality of online education remain concerns, as many unaccredited online learning platforms lack proper oversight, which can tarnish the reputation of e-learning (Cretu & Ho, 2023).

3.4.4 Predictions for the Future Development of Online Art and Design Higher Education

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted global educational systems, forcing an unprecedented shift to online learning. The educational experiences of approximately 1.4 billion students were interrupted due to the pandemic, prompting schools and universities worldwide to transition rapidly to remote instruction (Azevedo et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). This sudden move to online education was a critical measure to ensure continuity in teaching and learning while protecting the health of students and educators.

As a result, online learning has become a staple of education, with institutions implementing various digital solutions such as virtual classrooms, online graduation ceremonies, and virtual school tours (Greenhow, Graham, & Koehler, 2022, p. 131). However, the transition was not without challenges. Logistical issues such as inadequate hardware, software, and internet access, coupled with the need for curriculum adjustments and new assessment methods, posed significant obstacles (Hodges et al., 2020). Moreover, the digital divide became more pronounced, highlighting disparities in access to technology and reliable internet connectivity (Farahmand et al., 2020, p. 345).

Despite initial resistance, even sceptics were compelled to adopt emergency remote teaching methods. These approaches often sought to mimic traditional classroom instruction online, allowing students to continue their studies or graduate (Hodges et al., 2020). However, this form of instruction was more of

a temporary fix than a fully developed educational strategy. There is a risk that the innovations in digital teaching catalysed by the pandemic could be lost if institutions do not integrate and refine these practices for the future (Anderson, 2020, p. 30; Dhawan, 2020, p. 5).

The pandemic, however, has also led to positive developments. Academics gained new technological skills, and institutions demonstrated the scalability of online learning by offering numerous emergency remote courses (Rapanta et al., 2020, p. 923; Watermeyer et al., 2020, p. 623). Moving forward, it is crucial for educational leaders to provide the necessary resources for documenting and implementing innovative strategies that emerged during this period (Hodges et al., 2020).

As institutions reassess their courses, they should consider adapting the emergency remote instruction to meet high pedagogical standards, potentially using these courses as a foundation for new online programs (Hodges et al., 2020). However, this process will require substantial resources and strategic planning to ensure that the improvements made during the pandemic are not lost (Rapanta et al., 2020, p. 923; Watermeyer et al., 2020, p. 623).

The future of online education is becoming clearer, with new pathways for increased access and opportunities being established. Pre-pandemic, the main goal of online education was to provide access to those unable to attend traditional programs. However, the pandemic has shifted this focus to maintaining educational continuity, which will likely influence the future development of online education (Aristovnik et al., 2020). The distinction between classroom-based and online learning is expected to blur further, leading to a more integrated approach to education delivery (Keržič et al., 2021, p. 3). This evolution will require a thoughtful, innovative approach to organising and enhancing online learning (Salama & Hinton, 2023, p. 913).

Learning management systems (LMS), such as Blackboard, have become central to online education, providing robust platforms for content delivery and collaboration. These systems are now integrating advanced features like learning analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual reality (VR), which enhance the learning experience by making it more interactive and personalized (Orlando, 2024; Grand View Research, 2023). Online learning platforms like Adobe Captivate also play a crucial role, offering tools for developing and delivering educational content in a more structured and accessible manner (Orlando, 2024).

During the pandemic, videoconferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams became essential, expanding their roles beyond corporate meetings to serve educational and social functions. Zoom, in particular, saw a significant increase in usage, becoming a primary tool for virtual learning due to its capacity to host large meetings and ease of use (Wu, 2021). In China, Tencent Meeting also became a popular choice, with its global expansion through VooV Meeting competing with established platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams (Gkritsi, 2020; Chen, 2020).

The rise of educational technology (edtech) has brought significant changes to classrooms, replacing traditional methods with digital innovations like tablets, virtual reality, and gamified learning activities. These tools have made learning more engaging and accessible, supporting personalized education that caters to individual student needs (Spector, 2024; Marougkas et al., 2023, p. 7). The potential for scalable, personalized learning has been a driving force behind the rapid growth of the edtech sector, offering new possibilities for inclusive and effective education (Oyelere et al., 2020; Spector, 2024).

In art and design education, the shift to online platforms has posed unique

challenges, particularly in delivering hands-on, practical instruction. Educators have had to adopt new methods and tools, such as video conferencing and digital resources, to maintain the quality of arts education (Boyland, 2021; Barclay, 2020). This adaptation is essential for ensuring that all students continue to receive a meaningful and relevant education in the visual arts (Barclay, 2020). Ongoing research will be necessary to understand the long-term impacts of the pandemic on education and to inform policy adjustments that reflect the new post-pandemic educational landscape.

3.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented an extensive review of research background related to the development and implementation of online education in art and design, with a specific focus on the contexts of China and the United Kingdom. The analysis has revealed the complexities and challenges inherent in transnational educational collaborations, particularly in the rapidly evolving landscape of online learning.

The chapter began by examining the historical evolution of art and design education in both China and the UK, highlighting the significant differences in educational approaches, curriculum structures, and industry demands. These differences are critical to understanding how transnational partnerships can be effectively designed and implemented. The review found that while China has a more centralized and standardized approach to education, the UK system is characterized by greater flexibility and emphasis on creativity and independent learning. These structural and pedagogical variations have profound implications for the design and delivery of transnational online education programs, particularly in art and design, where creative freedom and technical precision must find a balance.

In exploring the research on Sino-UK partnership teaching projects, the chapter provided insights into the existing frameworks that govern these collaborations. The research emphasized the importance of understanding the cultural and academic integration of Chinese students within the UK education system. The acculturation process was found to be a significant factor in the success of these students, with challenges such as language barriers, different pedagogical approaches, and cultural expectations being highlighted. The review underscored the need for culturally sensitive support systems that can help international students navigate these challenges and succeed in an online learning environment.

The chapter also delved into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online art and design education. The pandemic acted as a catalyst for the rapid adoption of digital technologies and online learning platforms. The research background demonstrated that while this shift brought about significant advancements in educational delivery, it also exposed existing gaps in technology access, digital literacy, and the ability to maintain educational quality in an online format. The integration of advanced technologies such as AI, VR, and AR into online education was identified as a key trend that has the potential to enhance the learning experience, particularly in disciplines that require a high level of interactivity and creativity.

Moreover, the chapter discussed the challenges of providing effective feedback and maintaining academic integrity in an online environment. These issues are particularly pertinent in art and design education, where the assessment of creative work often requires subjective judgment and personalized feedback. The research suggests that while online platforms offer new opportunities for innovative assessment methods, they also require robust frameworks to ensure fairness and authenticity.

In conclusion, this chapter has laid the groundwork for understanding the current state and future directions of online art and design education within a transnational context. The insights gained from the research background are crucial for developing strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of online education, particularly in fostering successful international collaborations. As the field of online education continues to evolve, the lessons learned from the pandemic and the ongoing innovations in educational technology will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of art and design education on a global scale.

Chapter 4: Constructing a Conceptual Lens to Understand Transnational Online Art and Design Higher Education Provision

4.1 Introduction

Having established core perspectives in the research background on the emergence and growth of online transnational art and design education, this

chapter embarks on a comprehensive review of selected educational theories to construct a robust framework for analysis that will be deployed in the thesis to critically analyse and ultimately understand better the Sino-UK transnational online art and design education initiatives.

The chapter begins with a critical examination of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model, developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer in 2000. This model has gained prominence as a leading theoretical framework in the study of online education, largely due to its emphasis on fostering critical thinking, collaborative learning, and the development of a supportive learning community. The CoI Model focuses on three core elements—cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence—which together create a meaningful and engaging learning experience. These elements are essential in online learning environments, where the absence of physical interaction necessitates a greater emphasis on creating a cohesive and interactive virtual community. In this chapter, the CoI Model will be evaluated not only for its applicability to online learning but also for its potential limitations when applied to the context of transnational online education, particularly in specialized fields such as art and design.

In complement, the chapter also explores the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model, introduced by Picciano in 2009. This model is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary educational practices that increasingly blend online and face-to-face learning. As educational institutions worldwide adapt to new realities, the need for a flexible, multimodal approach to teaching and learning has become more critical than ever. The BPP Model addresses this need by providing a framework that integrates various instructional methods, driven by pedagogical objectives rather than technological imperatives. This model is especially suited to analysing hybrid educational settings, where the integration of digital tools with traditional

teaching methods can enhance the learning experience and better meet the diverse needs of students. This chapter argues that the BPP Model offers a complementary perspective to the CoI Model, particularly in its ability to address the complexities of hybrid learning environments that have become common in transnational education initiatives.

The selection of these two models for critical review in this chapter is a deliberate choice, grounded in the specific challenges and opportunities presented by Sino-UK transnational online art education. The art and design disciplines, characterized by their emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and practical application, present unique challenges when translated into an online or hybrid format. Traditional educational models, which often focus on individual learning processes or purely cognitive objectives, may not fully capture the interactive and reflective nature of art and design education. Moreover, the transnational context introduces additional layers of complexity, including cultural differences, linguistic barriers, and the need for effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

By critically analysing the CoI and BPP models, this chapter seeks to build a conceptual lens through which the unique dynamics of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education can be better understood and addressed. The CoI Model, with its focus on cognitive, social, and teaching presences, provides a strong foundation for understanding the interactions between students, instructors, and content in an online environment. However, the BPP Model extends this analysis by incorporating face-to-face interactions and emphasizing the role of pedagogical goals in shaping the overall learning experience.

4.2 Community of Inquiry Model

In the research process, the researcher broadly compared several theoretical frameworks applicable to education, such as Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). This is a student-centred approach where learners actively engage in solving problems and constructing knowledge through self-directed inquiry within meaningful contexts (MacKenzie, 2023; Tysick et al., 2014, p. 377). Constructive Alignment (CA) emphasizes aligning learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessments to create a coherent and goal-oriented learning experience (Biggs, 1996, p. 347; Biggs, 2014, p. 5). The TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model, on the other hand, integrates technology with pedagogy and content, ensuring that educators effectively use digital tools in teaching (Koehler & Mishra, 2006, p. 1017; Kurt, 2023). Another model, Bloom's Taxonomy, classifies educational goals into cognitive levels, which helps in designing a curriculum that targets various levels of learning, from basic knowledge recall to higher-order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956; Anderson et al., 2001).

While these models each offer valuable insights, they are not fully aligned with the needs of this research. IBL, despite promoting student autonomy and deep engagement, primarily focuses on individual learning processes, which may not address the collaborative and instructional aspects essential in transnational online education. CA is effective in understanding structured learning environments but may lack the flexibility needed to accommodate the interactive dynamics between learners and instructors in a virtual setting. The TPACK model, though crucial for integrating technology in education, may not fully address the unique challenges of transnational online education, particularly in the context of evolving global educational collaborations and the shifting demands in specialized fields such as art and design. Similarly, while Bloom's Taxonomy is instrumental in designing curriculum objectives, it may not

sufficiently support the interactive and reflective components required in transnational online art and design education. Given these limitations, the researcher identified the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model as a more suitable framework for this study.

The CoI Model, developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer in 2000 and depicted in Figure 4.1, provides a comprehensive framework specifically tailored for online learning environments. It places strong emphasis on three core elements—cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence—that together create a coherent and meaningful learning experience. Each of these elements contributes to the overall educational process by supporting engagement, knowledge construction, and a sense of community within virtual learning settings.

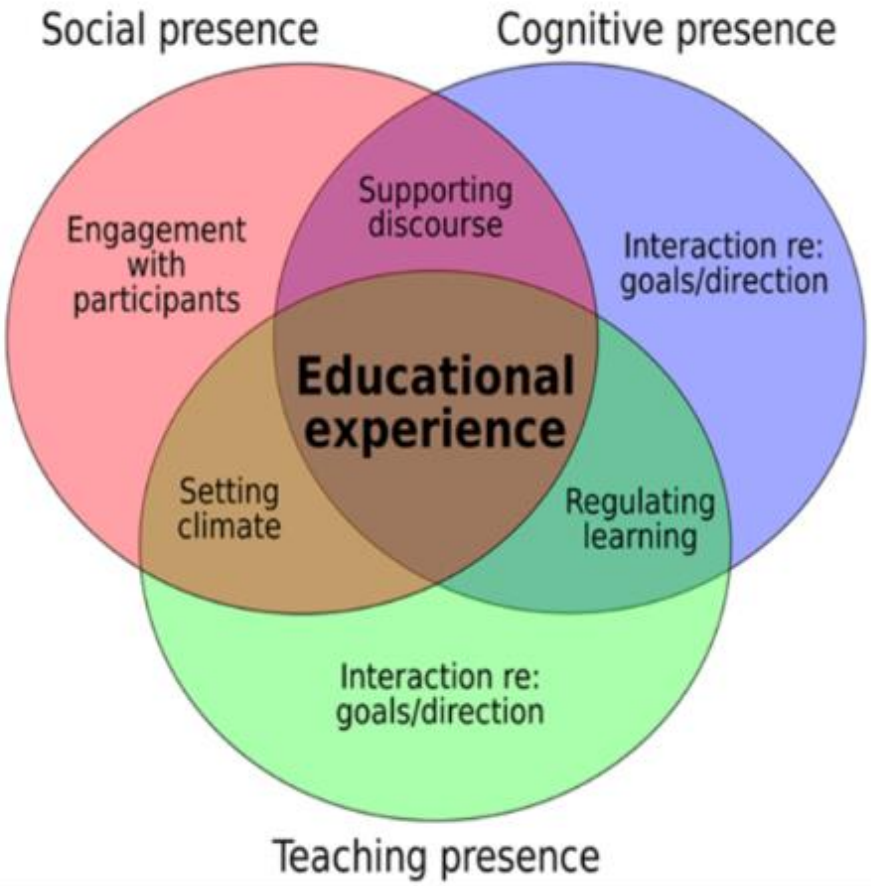

Figure 4.1 Community of Inquiry Model (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)

The CoI Model has risen to prominence as an effective theoretical model for studying online education, largely because of its emphasis on fostering critical thinking and collaborative learning, which are key components of a successful online learning environment. The framework offers a structured approach to understanding how learners engage in deep, meaningful educational experiences, even when they are geographically dispersed. By focusing on the interplay of these three presences, the CoI Model helps educators design and facilitate online courses that promote sustained inquiry, reflective learning, and active participation.

Grounded in the CoI Model, this study seeks to investigate how the core elements of presence—cognitive, social, and teaching—contribute to the learning experiences of students within the context of Sino-UK transnational online education partnerships in art and design. By applying the CoI Model, the research aims to provide valuable insights into how these presences shape learning experiences and influence educational outcomes in virtual environments, particularly in the context of art and design education. The findings of this research are intended to assist educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of online education in cross-cultural collaborations. Specifically, it aims to offer practical recommendations for enhancing educational practices and learning outcomes in these unique settings, where cultural diversity and the challenges of remote learning intersect.

The concept of ‘community’ within the CoI Model is deeply grounded in John Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of practical inquiry, which emphasizes the social nature of learning. Dewey argued that education is fundamentally a social process, with individual development being inseparable from participation in a

community. This idea underscores the importance of social interaction in learning, as individuals construct meaning through their engagement with others. Garrison et al. (2000) incorporated this principle into the design of the CoI Model, emphasizing the need for fostering connections among learners who, while physically separated, share a common virtual learning space. In this context, ‘community’ refers to the cognitive and emotional bonds that are formed among learners as they work together toward shared educational goals. These connections are crucial for creating a supportive and interactive learning environment, particularly in online education, where the lack of physical presence can lead to feelings of isolation and detachment.

A community is "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be addressed via their commitment to be together,” according to McMillan and Chavis (1986) (p. 9). Building on this notion, Wang, Laffey, and Poole (2001) emphasize that shared knowledge and collaborative learning experiences are essential for fostering a sense of community among online learners. In transnational education, particularly within the context of Sino-UK collaborations in art and design, this sense of community becomes even more critical. The challenges posed by cultural, linguistic, and geographical differences can be mitigated by cultivating a strong sense of community, which enhances the overall learning experience by promoting inclusivity, cooperation, and mutual support. Rovai (2000) highlights that a strong sense of community in online education environments not only enhances communication and cooperation but also increases learner satisfaction, which is a key determinant of success in virtual education (p. 285). Therefore, in the context of Sino-UK partnerships in art and design education, the concept of community is particularly crucial for ensuring that learners from diverse cultural backgrounds can successfully collaborate and engage in meaningful learning experiences.

The CoI Model identifies three key presences—cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence—that work in synergy to create a cohesive and supportive learning environment. Each of these presences plays a unique role in facilitating the educational process.

Cognitive presence is the foundational element of the CoI Model and is defined as the extent to which learners can able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 171). It plays a crucial role in fostering higher-order thinking and critical inquiry, which are core objectives of higher education (Garrison, 2011). Cognitive presence allows learners to engage deeply with the content of the course, reflect on their learning, and build new knowledge through active engagement (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 57). The Practical Inquiry Model (PIM), introduced by Garrison et al. (2000), closely relates to cognitive presence and outlines the phases learners undergo: triggering an event (identifying a problem or question), exploring the issue (gathering and evaluating relevant information), integrating ideas (synthesizing findings into meaningful concepts), and resolving the issue (applying new knowledge to practical situations) (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 87). In online education, cognitive presence is particularly significant because learners often work independently, requiring them to actively engage in reflection and apply new concepts without the immediate feedback typical of face-to-face environments (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 110). Redmond (2014) highlights that reflection is a key aspect of cognitive presence, enabling learners to integrate new knowledge with existing understanding and apply it in meaningful ways (Redmond, 2014, p. 46). In the context of this research, cognitive presence is especially relevant in online art and design education, where students are frequently required to engage in deep reflective practice. This reflection not only refines their creative output but also ensures that theoretical knowledge is effectively connected with practical application,

making cognitive presence vital for facilitating this reflective and iterative learning process.

Social presence refers to the ability of learners to project themselves as real, authentic individuals in the virtual learning environment (Lowenthal & Parscal, 2010). It is essential for creating a sense of interpersonal connection and community, both of which are crucial for fostering engagement and reducing feelings of isolation in online courses (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 53). In the absence of physical interaction, social presence helps learners form meaningful connections with their peers and instructors (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 110). Garrison et al. (2000) identified three key components of social presence: emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion (p. 90). Emotional expression allows learners to share their personal experiences, thoughts, and values, fostering deeper connections with their peers (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 269). Open communication develops mutual awareness and recognition among learners, creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable expressing their ideas and contributing to discussions (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 55). Group cohesion refers to the sense of shared purpose and commitment to group goals, which promotes collaboration and collective effort in the online learning space (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 56). In the context of transnational online education, social presence takes on an added significance, especially when learners come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In these settings, social presence helps bridge cultural divides and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging among learners from different parts of the world. In this study, social presence will be examined in the context of Sino-UK online education partnerships, particularly in art and design programs, where collaboration, interaction, and the sharing of creative ideas are integral to the learning process. By enhancing social presence, educators can help foster a more collaborative and inclusive learning environment, essential for student success in these transnational contexts.

Teaching presence involves the design, facilitation, and direction of the learning experience. It is the backbone of any successful online course, as it ensures that learners have the structure, support, and guidance needed to succeed (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 89). Teaching presence encompasses a range of tasks, including setting curriculum goals, organising course materials, facilitating discussions, and guiding both cognitive and social processes throughout the learning journey (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 90). A strong teaching presence helps create a structured and well-organised learning environment that promotes student engagement and encourages active participation (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 58). In transnational settings, teaching presence is especially important due to the diverse educational backgrounds, expectations, and experiences that students bring to the virtual classroom. Educators should be mindful of these differences and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly, ensuring that all students feel included, supported, and engaged. Effective teaching presence also plays a critical role in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, helping to create a shared learning experience that is both inclusive and collaborative (Akyol & Garrison, 2012, p. 92). In this research, teaching presence will be explored in the context of Sino-UK partnerships in art and design education, with a particular focus on how educators design and facilitate online courses to address the unique challenges posed by transnational education. By ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds are provided with the necessary guidance and support, teaching presence helps to foster a positive and productive online learning environment.

The CoI Model has been widely applied in numerous research studies, demonstrating its versatility and effectiveness across a range of educational contexts. For example, Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, and Fung (2010) conducted a study examining the relationships between teaching, cognitive, and social presence in higher education. Their findings indicated that all three presences

are essential for creating a successful learning environment in online courses, with teaching presence playing a particularly important role in guiding student engagement and promoting critical thinking. This study underscores the relevance of the CoI Model for this research, as it highlights the importance of balancing cognitive, social, and teaching presence in online education to ensure a holistic and effective learning experience. Similarly, Gutiérrez-Santiuste, Rodríguez-Sabiote, and Gallego-Arrufat (2015) explored the relationship between cognitive and social presence in online courses and found that social interactions enhanced cognitive engagement and contributed to deeper learning. This finding is particularly relevant to the current research, as it emphasizes the importance of fostering social presence in transnational online education to support cognitive development. Social presence not only facilitates communication and collaboration but also plays a crucial role in creating an environment where students feel comfortable engaging in reflective inquiry.

Harrell and Wendt (2019) investigated the impact of blended learning on students' perceptions of learning and found that the integration of teaching, social, and cognitive presence significantly enhanced students' satisfaction with their educational experience. This research supports the current study's focus on applying the CoI Model to various educational contexts, including those involving younger learners. Additionally, Shea et al. (2010) re-examined the CoI Model through social network analysis and content analysis in online higher education, concluding that strong teaching and social presence positively impact student engagement and knowledge construction. Their findings further validate the applicability of the CoI Model across diverse online learning environments. Finally, Lee (2013) examined the correlation between cognitive presence density and higher-order thinking skills, finding that while cognitive presence density alone did not ensure higher-order thinking, social presence was positively related to cognitive presence quality.

These studies collectively demonstrate the flexibility of the CoI Model and its ability to address the complexities of various online learning environments. This adaptability is particularly relevant to the current research, which focuses on understanding the unique challenges of transnational online education in art and design. By applying the CoI Model, this research aims to explore how the core elements of presence can be effectively utilized to enhance learning experiences in cross-cultural online education settings. The CoI Model provides a robust theoretical foundation for investigating the dynamics of online education, particularly in transnational contexts, and offers valuable insights into how learners engage in meaningful educational experiences within virtual environments. Through its application, this study seeks to inform and improve the practices of online education, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective, inclusive, and supportive educational environments in transnational collaborations.

4.3 Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model

In the early stages of this research, the researcher initially applied the CoI Model to analyse the observational data collected from participants in Sino-UK transnational art and design education collaborations (see 6.2.2). The CoI Model, with its three presences—cognitive, social, and teaching—offers a comprehensive framework for understanding online learning environments. However, as the study progressed over an extended period, the global context evolved alongside the COVID-19 pandemic. The research shifted into the mid- and post-pandemic phases, during which many educational projects that had initially been conducted entirely online began transitioning into hybrid formats, blending online and face-to-face learning. This shift was particularly evident in the art and design education projects under study. Through ongoing communication with participants, the researcher discovered that as time

passed and the pandemic subsided, online education in Sino-UK collaborations no longer appeared as a standalone method. Instead, it functioned as a complement to face-to-face learning, forming a blended mode of education. The researcher revealed that while the CoI Model effectively facilitated an understanding of purely online environments, it was less equipped to analyse hybrid learning formats where both in-person and digital components played integral roles. Consequently, the researcher recognized the need for an additional theoretical framework that could better address the hybrid nature of contemporary transnational education. This realization led to the integration of another model alongside the CoI Model, enabling a more comprehensive analysis of the complexities of hybrid educational settings.

The Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model as shown in Figure 4.2, developed by Picciano (2009), was unearthed as an apposite complement to the CoI Model due to its flexible, multimodal framework specifically designed for blended learning environments. This model is grounded in the idea that pedagogical objectives, rather than technology itself, should drive instructional design (Picciano, 2017, p. 178). While the CoI Model effectively addresses the dynamics of online education, Picciano's model extends these principles to include face-to-face interactions, making it more suitable for analysing blended learning environments. Moreover, the BPP Model was influenced by the CoI Model's incorporation of social constructivism, which underscores the importance of community and collaboration in the learning process (Picciano, 2017, p. 181). Picciano's model builds upon this foundation by providing a structured approach for integrating multiple instructional methods, including online, face-to-face, and hybrid modalities. This adaptability makes it especially relevant for this study, which seeks to explore the evolving dynamics of Sino-UK transnational education in art and design.

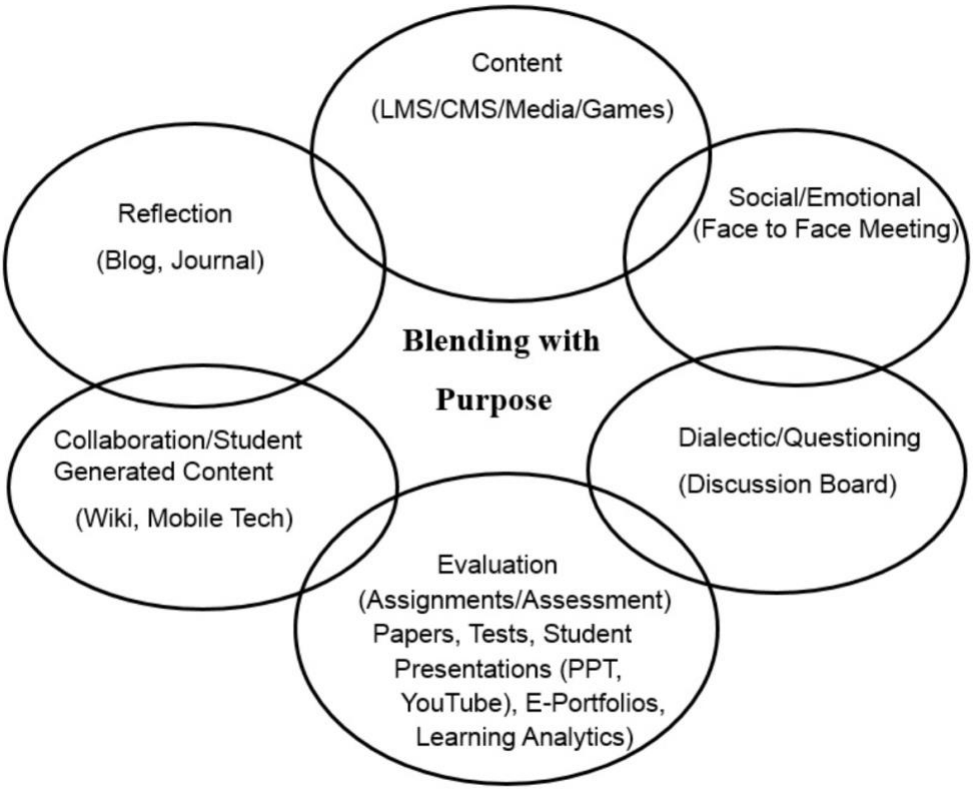

Figure 4.2 Blending with Pedagogical Purpose Model (Picciano, 2009)

The BPP Model comprises six core components: content, social and emotional support, dialectics or questioning, reflection, collaboration, and evaluation. These components work together to create a comprehensive framework for designing and delivering blended learning experiences (Picciano, 2017, pp. 179-181). Each component plays a significant role in the learning process, contributing to a holistic approach that is crucial for addressing the needs of hybrid and transnational educational settings.

Content is one of the primary drivers of instruction, and in blended environments, it can be delivered through various formats to meet the diverse needs of students. Traditional methods such as lectures, readings, and discussions remain important but are greatly enhanced by integrating digital resources such as videos, interactive media, and educational games (Picciano, 2009, p. 10; Picciano, 2017, p. 179). These digital tools not only complement

face-to-face instruction but also engage students more deeply in the learning process, offering multiple pathways to understanding complex material (Picciano, 2009, p. 14). For instance, high-resolution digital images, 3D modelling software, and virtual galleries allow students to interact with artwork in more immersive ways, replicating studio environments even in online or hybrid contexts. Course Management Systems (CMS) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) play a crucial role in delivering such content in blended learning environments, seamlessly integrating text, audio, video, and interactive tools into the curriculum (Picciano, 2017, p. 179). Furthermore, games and simulations, which have gained prominence in educational materials, offer dynamic ways to present content that engage students in creative disciplines, encouraging experiential learning and problem-solving (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). By utilizing diverse media and technologies, content delivery can be tailored to different learning styles and preferences, which is particularly valuable in transnational contexts where students from diverse cultural backgrounds may approach learning in varied ways.

Social/emotional support is also a critical component of the BPP Model, as it helps create a sense of community among learners (Picciano, 2009, p. 10). This is particularly significant in transnational education settings, where students may face cultural and geographical barriers that hinder their sense of belonging and engagement with the course. A supportive environment in which students feel connected to their peers and instructors can help alleviate these challenges (Picciano, 2017, p. 180). Whether provided in person or online, the teacher's presence offers reassurance, fostering a familiar and emotionally supportive learning atmosphere ((Picciano, 2017, p. 180). Additionally, occasional face-to-face interactions can help strengthen relationships that are crucial for supporting learning outcomes (Picciano, 2009, p. 11). Faculty members play a pivotal role in providing this social and emotional support, assisting students with academic challenges, and offering guidance on

personal and professional matters (Picciano, 2017, p. 180). In blended courses, the combination of online and face-to-face interactions often allows for more robust social and emotional support, which strengthens the community dynamics within the learning environment (Picciano, 2017, p. 180).

Dialectics/questioning is another powerful pedagogical strategy in the BPP Model, promoting deeper learning by encouraging students to actively engage with course material (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). This strategy allows instructors to probe students' understanding, clarify misconceptions, and stimulate critical thinking (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). In blended learning environments, dialectics can occur through both synchronous and asynchronous discussions (Picciano, 2017, p. 180). A well-structured discussion board activity, for example, might introduce a topic or problem, prompting students to respond and engage in dialogue with their peers (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). These exchanges refine the focus on specific points or concepts, fostering a deeper exploration of the subject (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). The visual representation of discussion threads allows students to see how ideas evolve, encouraging reflective processes that help them revisit and refine their thinking (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). In face-to-face settings, questioning can be even more dynamic, allowing for real-time interactions that foster critical engagement (Picciano, 2009, p. 15). Encouraging students to question assumptions and critically evaluate perspectives contributes to a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Picciano, 2017, p. 180).

Reflection is another essential component of the BPP Model, encouraging students to critically assess their learning experiences, integrate new knowledge with existing understanding, and apply this knowledge meaningfully (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). Reflection is particularly relevant in art and design education, where the creative process often involves iterative cycles of thinking, making, and evaluating. Students may be asked to reflect on their work through

blogs or journal entries, articulating their thoughts and insights about their creative practices (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). Sharing these reflections with peers and instructors enriches the learning process by facilitating feedback and discussion (Picciano, 2017, p. 180). Reflective activities help students become more self-aware learners, capable of making connections between theory and practice and developing critical skills necessary for their academic and professional growth (Picciano, 2017, p. 180).

Collaboration is another vital aspect of blended learning environments, and tools such as wikis, discussion boards, and shared digital workspaces facilitate group work regardless of students' physical locations (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). In transnational education, where students may come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, collaboration fosters a sense of shared purpose and helps break down barriers. Through collaborative projects, students learn to work together, leveraging each other's strengths to achieve common goals (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). Wikis, for instance, enable students to co-create content that can be accessed and edited by others in their group, promoting collective knowledge building and peer evaluation (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). These tools allow students to collaborate across time zones and locations, ensuring continuity in group work even when face-to-face interaction is limited (Picciano, 2017, p. 181). In art and design education, where collaboration is often crucial for creative problem-solving, these digital tools help replicate studio-based teamwork in a hybrid learning environment.

Evaluation is the final component of the BPP Model, offering a variety of methods to assess students' progress and understanding (Picciano, 2009, p. 16). Traditional evaluation methods, such as papers, quizzes, and presentations, are now complemented by digital portfolios, multimedia presentations, and online assessments (Picciano, 2009, p. 17). These tools provide a richer representation of student work, particularly in disciplines like

art and design, where visual and creative outputs are central. Digital portfolios, for example, allow students to compile their work in a flexible format that can include images, video, and audio, offering a comprehensive view of their development over time. Online tools such as blogs and discussion boards also support continuous assessment, allowing instructors to track student contributions and progress throughout the course (Picciano, 2017, p. 181). This creates a dynamic feedback loop in which students receive regular input on their work, enabling them to refine their skills and understanding over time (Picciano, 2017, p. 181). The BPP Model ensures that evaluation is not just a summative process but an ongoing dialogue that enhances learning and supports students in reaching their full potential.

In the context of this study, each of these components play a crucial role in addressing the unique needs of transnational art and design education. Content delivery involves using multiple media to engage students in meaningful ways; social and emotional support fosters a sense of community; and dialectics or questioning stimulates critical thinking. Reflection allows students to integrate new knowledge with their existing understanding; collaboration enables them to work together across different modalities; and evaluation ensures that their progress is assessed through both online and face-to-face activities.

The CoI Model has some limitations in the context of blended learning environments, particularly as it focuses primarily on online learning. While the CoI Model provides valuable insights into the dynamics of online education, it does not fully account for the complexities of integrating face-to-face and online components into a cohesive learning experience. The BPP Model addresses this limitation by offering a more flexible framework applicable across different instructional modalities. By emphasizing pedagogical objectives and recognizing the importance of both online and face-to-face interactions, the BPP Model provides a more comprehensive approach to blended learning.

Although both models emphasize engagement, collaboration, and reflection, Picciano's model extends these principles to include face-to-face learning, making it more suitable for analysing hybrid education settings.

In conclusion, the CoI and BPP models are complementary frameworks that, when used together, offer a more complete understanding of the dynamics of transnational art and design education. While the CoI Model provides valuable insights into online learning, Picciano's model fills gaps by addressing the unique challenges of hybrid education. Together, these models provide a robust framework for analysing the learning experiences of students in Sino-UK transnational partnerships, offering practical recommendations for improving educational practices in these settings. By integrating both models, this research offers a more comprehensive analysis of hybrid learning environments, contributing to the development of more effective and inclusive educational practices in transnational education.

4.4 The Relational of the Two Frameworks with the Research Background of This Study

The CoI and BPP models are particularly relevant to this study's research background conducted in Chapter 3, especially in understanding their implications within the art and design education contexts of China and the UK. In the context of transnational online art and design education, particularly within Sino-UK collaborations, the chosen theoretical frameworks serve as essential tools for understanding and addressing the complex dynamics identified in the research. The research background conducted in this study highlighted key challenges and opportunities that these frameworks effectively address, making them particularly suitable for this research.

The CoI Model emphasizes the integration of three essential components—

Cognitive Presence, Social Presence, and Teaching Presence—to create an effective educational experience, especially in online environments. This model is closely aligned with the themes explored in the research, highlighting the importance of fostering a sense of community, engagement, and reflective practice in online education. The research on the development of art and design education in China and the UK underscores the need for a learning environment that not only facilitates the acquisition of technical skills but also promotes critical thinking, collaborative learning, and reflective inquiry. These elements are at the core of the CoI Model, which seeks to integrate cognitive, social, and teaching presences to establish a meaningful and supportive online learning community.

Specifically, Cognitive Presence, as defined by the CoI Model, refers to the ability of students to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse, which is crucial for developing higher-order thinking skills like critical thinking and practical inquiry. The challenges within the Chinese art education system, where the emphasis on technical skill development for standardized exams often suppresses creativity and critical inquiry, are explored. This results in a learning environment that favours rote learning over critical reflection and discourse, both of which are key to fostering cognitive presence. In contrast, the UK's approach to art and design education emphasizes nurturing original ideas, critical thinking, and personal expression. The curriculum reforms in the UK, along with the interdisciplinary nature of its programs, are designed to engage students in reflective and dialogical processes that integrate new knowledge with existing understandings. This comparison underscores the differences in how cognitive presence is cultivated in these two contexts. The online platforms required the use of digital tools and media to actively engage students, with a focus on process-oriented approaches that emphasize creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making in online settings.

Social Presence in the CoI Model involves creating an environment where students feel connected, can express their personalities, build interpersonal relationships, and engage in meaningful communication. This importance is particularly highlighted in transnational education settings. For example, the acculturation challenges faced by Chinese students studying in the UK reveal the need for robust social support systems to help these students feel included and connected. The sense of isolation that many Chinese students experience due to cultural differences and language barriers can hinder their ability to fully engage in the learning process. This reflects the need for instructors and institutions to actively foster social presence by creating a welcoming and supportive environment where students can share experiences, build relationships, and fully participate in the academic community. Furthermore, the role of interactive teaching methods in public art education in China is discussed, showing how interactive and experiential teaching can create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment. This is particularly crucial in online and blended learning contexts, where the absence of physical presence can intensify feelings of isolation. The emphasis on maintaining social presence through interactive technologies and platforms further illustrates the critical role of social presence in ensuring student engagement and success.

Teaching Presence, which encompasses the design, facilitation, and guidance of the educational experience, is a crucial element of the CoI Model. The significance of teaching presence is particularly evident in discussions surrounding the design and implementation of transnational education programs between China and the UK. These programs necessitate careful planning and close collaboration to ensure that the academic standards of both countries are fully met. The focus on quality assurance mechanisms and the maintenance of rigorous academic standards underscores the critical role teaching presence plays in effectively guiding and supporting students

throughout their educational journey. Moreover, the challenges associated with designing and delivering effective online education further highlight the critical importance of teaching presence. Online education demands a heightened level of clear communication, carefully structured content delivery, and persistent student support to overcome the limitations of a virtual learning environment. The absence of physical classroom dynamics means that teaching presence must be even more pronounced, with instructors actively guiding students, fostering a sense of community, and providing timely, constructive feedback.

The BPP Model complements the CoI Model by addressing the related education projects in a widening range of contexts, a theme increasingly prevalent in the study. This model emphasizes the careful selection and integration of various media and instructional strategies to achieve specific educational goals. This model comprises six core components: content, social and emotional support, dialectics or questioning, reflection, collaboration, and evaluation. These components work together to create a comprehensive framework for designing and delivering blended learning experiences, which are particularly significant in art and design education.

In particular, the Content component of this model is particularly relevant, as it drives instruction and can be delivered through various forms of media. The use of digital media and visualizations in art education highlights the effectiveness of rich digital images and multimedia content in enhancing learning, particularly in the humanities. Discussion of this component also touches on the challenges of integrating technology into art education curricula, reflecting the model's emphasis on using diverse media to engage students and support their learning. Additionally, the growing role of video games and other interactive media in education aligns with the model's recommendation to use a variety of media and technologies to deliver content engagingly and

accessibly.

The Social and Emotional aspect of the model is highlighted through the focus on providing social and emotional support to students, particularly in online and blended learning environments. The challenges faced by Chinese students in adapting to the UK's educational system and culture, as well as the broader challenges of online education, underscore the need for educators to be sensitive to the social and emotional needs of their students. The role of faculty in offering social and emotional support, particularly in online courses where the lack of physical presence can make it difficult for students to feel connected and supported, aligns with the model's focus on creating a learning environment that supports students both academically and emotionally.

Dialectics or Questioning is another key element of the BPP Model, emphasizing the use of questioning as a tool for probing students' understanding and refining their knowledge. This is reflected in discussions on the need for critical inquiry and dialogue in art education, particularly within the UK context. The emphasis on fostering critical thinking and debate through structured discussions and interactive platforms, such as discussion boards, aligns with the model's focus on using questioning to deepen students' understanding and engage them in meaningful learning activities.

Reflection is also emphasized as an essential component of the learning process, particularly in the context of online education. The use of blogs and other reflective tools in online learning supports the model's emphasis on encouraging students to reflect on their learning experiences and share their reflections with others. This reflective practice extends and enriches students' learning, allowing them to connect new information with their prior knowledge.

Collaborative learning is another significant aspect of the BPP Model, with

several examples provided on how collaboration is facilitated in online and blended learning environments. The use of wikis and other collaborative tools in art education demonstrates the importance of providing opportunities for students to work together, share ideas, and create knowledge collectively. This collaborative approach not only enhances the learning experience but also helps build a sense of community among students, which is particularly important in online and blended learning environments where physical interactions are limited.

Finally, Evaluation is discussed as a critical component of the educational process. The shift towards digital forms of evaluation, such as e-portfolios, podcasts, and video presentations, reflects the model's emphasis on using a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students' learning. The use of online tools to track and assess students' progress, as well as the challenges of ensuring the authenticity and integrity of online assessments, underscores the importance of carefully designing and implementing evaluation strategies that align with the learning objectives.

In conclusion, the models provide a robust framework for addressing the complexities of transnational online art and design education, particularly within the Sino-UK context. By emphasizing the critical elements of cognitive, social, and teaching presences, the CoI Model aligns with the research background 's call for creating engaging, reflective, and supportive learning environments. Meanwhile, the BPP Model complements this by offering practical strategies for integrating diverse media, fostering social and emotional support, encouraging critical dialogue, promoting reflection, and ensuring effective collaboration and evaluation. Together, these models offer a comprehensive approach that not only addresses the challenges identified in the research background but also enhances the educational experience for students across cultural and geographical boundaries.

4.5 The Relational Aspects of the Two Frameworks and the Empirical Work of This Project

The development of the BPP was profoundly influenced by the foundational principles of the CoI Model, particularly its emphasis on social constructivism, which underscores the critical role of community and collaboration in the educational process (Picciano, 2017). The CoI Model's integration of social constructivism laid the groundwork for a pedagogical approach that values the interconnectedness of learners within a community, facilitating deeper engagement and shared learning experiences. Recognizing the distinct strengths of both the CoI Model and BPP Model, the researcher realized that their combined application could offer a more holistic and robust framework for understanding the complexities and unique challenges of transnational online art and design education, particularly within the context of Sino-UK educational collaborations. This realization was pivotal in shaping the empirical work of this study, as it informed and guided the research methodology from its inception.

The influence of the CoI Model on the BPP Model is particularly evident in the way the latter incorporates core principles such as community-building, collaboration, and reflective practice, aligning these principles with specific pedagogical goals to create supportive, inclusive, and effective learning environments. The researcher strategically applied these insights throughout the empirical phase of the study, with the aim of leveraging the strengths of both models to better address the multifaceted needs of transnational online education. This dual-model approach not only enriched the theoretical framework of the study but also provided a comprehensive lens through which to analyse the educational practices being examined.

Cognitive presence, as conceptualized by the CoI Model, plays a crucial role in

the learning process by enabling learners to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse. This concept is closely aligned with the 'Content' component of the BPP Model, as both frameworks emphasize the importance of content as a primary driver of learning. In both models, content is not merely a vehicle for information delivery but a catalyst for deeper cognitive engagement. The BPP Model enhances this engagement by integrating various media and technologies, presenting content in diverse formats that cater to different learning styles and preferences. This approach ensures that students are not only exposed to content but are also encouraged to interact with it in meaningful ways, facilitating the construction of new knowledge and the refinement of existing understanding.

Social presence, another key element of the CoI Model, involves the projection of learners as real, authentic individuals within the learning environment, fostering a sense of community and reducing feelings of isolation. This aspect is crucial in online and transnational education, where physical separation can often lead to a sense of disconnection among students. The 'Social/Emotional' support component of the BPP Model directly corresponds with this idea, emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive environment where students feel emotionally connected to their peers and instructors. Both models recognize that the social and emotional dimensions of learning are essential for creating a learning environment where students can thrive. Furthermore, social presence in the CoI Model, which includes fostering group cohesion and open communication, parallels the 'Collaboration' component of the BPP Model. Both models stress the significance of collaborative learning experiences, where students work together, share ideas, and benefit from the diverse perspectives and strengths of their peers. This collaborative approach not only enhances the learning experience but also helps build a sense of community, which is particularly important in the context of transnational education where students come from varied cultural and educational backgrounds.

Teaching Presence in the CoI Model is defined as the deliberate design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. This element is crucial for guiding students through the learning process, ensuring that they remain engaged and supported throughout their educational journey. The teaching presence includes strategies such as guiding critical discourse through dialectics or questioning, encouraging reflective practices to help students connect new knowledge with prior understanding, and providing ongoing evaluation to monitor progress and refine learning strategies. These pedagogical strategies are integral to the BPP Model as well, making teaching presence a critical component in both frameworks. The alignment of teaching presence with the BPP Model's focus on questioning, reflection, and evaluation underscores the importance of these strategies in fostering an effective and supportive learning environment.

During the empirical phase of the study, the researcher adeptly combined the CoI Model and the BPP Model to develop a comprehensive set of tools for research method approach, including participant observation, semi-structured interview, and questionnaire. This integration was essential for capturing the full scope of the learning experiences within Sino-UK transnational art and design programs. By leveraging the strengths of both models, the researcher was able to design a methodology that was both rigorous and flexible, capable of addressing the unique challenges presented by the study's focus on transnational education.

The combination of the CoI and BPP models allows the research to address both the online and blended learning environments. While the CoI Model focuses on fostering meaningful interactions and cognitive engagement in purely online settings, the BPP Model adds value by guiding how to strategically

integrate face-to-face and online components in blended environments. This combined approach ensures that the research captures the unique dynamics of Sino-UK transnational education, leveraging the strengths of both models to support diverse learning modes.

In the early stages of the empirical work, which were conducted entirely online due to the constraints of the pandemic, the researcher structured the 'Services' component of participant observation notes using the CoI Model, a framework that is particularly well-suited for and widely utilized in online learning environments. This approach ensured that cognitive, social, and teaching presences were systematically captured, providing a thorough understanding of how these elements influenced the online learning environment. The careful documentation of these presences allowed the researcher to analyse the interactions and services utilized by educators and students, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the online educational experience.

As the study progressed, particularly during the middle and late stages of the pandemic when the educational project transitioned to a hybrid format combining online and in-person elements, the researcher designed semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to explore the synergies between the CoI Model and BPP Model. These interviews and questionnaires were carefully crafted to investigate how cognitive presence aligns with content delivery, how social presence integrates with emotional and collaborative support, and how teaching presence intersects with pedagogical strategies such as questioning, reflection, and evaluation.

This approach allowed the researcher to gather in-depth qualitative and quantitative data, offering valuable insights into the practical application of these models in an educational setting. The integration of data allowed the researcher to conduct a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of

educational practices within the Sino-UK transnational art and design programs. This mixed-methods approach was crucial for capturing the complexity of the educational experiences being studied, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of how these models can be effectively applied in real-world educational settings.

Through the integration of the CoI Model and BPP Model, the researcher was able to establish a nuanced and effective framework for analysing the related experiences of participants in these distinctive educational environments. This approach not only enriched the empirical work of the study but also provided a more profound understanding of how these models can be applied in practice to enhance educational outcomes in transnational online and blended learning contexts. The insights gained from this research have the potential to inform and improve educational practices, offering practical recommendations for the stakeholders involved in transnational education. By demonstrating the value of combining these models, the study contributes to the broader field of educational research, highlighting the importance of an integrated approach to understanding and improving the learning experience in complex, multicultural, and multi-modal educational settings.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has established a critical foundation for understanding and analysing the complex dynamics of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education by constructing a comprehensive theoretical framework. Through a thorough examination of two key models—the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model—this chapter not only identified but also critically evaluated the educational theories most relevant to the challenges posed by transnational and hybrid learning environments.

The chapter began by exploring the CoI Model, which has become a cornerstone in the study of online education due to its focus on cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. These elements are essential for creating an engaging and effective online learning environment, particularly in contexts where learners are geographically dispersed and where the lack of physical interaction can significantly hinder engagement and community building. The CoI Model's emphasis on fostering a supportive and interactive virtual community was demonstrated to be particularly relevant for addressing the challenges inherent in purely online educational settings. The model's structured approach to facilitating critical thinking, collaborative learning, and sustained inquiry provided a robust framework for understanding how students engage with content, instructors, and each other in an online context.

However, the limitations of the CoI Model became apparent when considering the increasingly hybrid nature of educational delivery, especially in the context of post-pandemic learning environments. As educational institutions worldwide have shifted toward blending online and face-to-face instruction, it became clear that a model focused solely on online learning might not fully address the complexities of these hybrid modalities. In response to this evolving educational landscape, the BPP Model was introduced and explored in depth.

Developed by Picciano, the BPP Model was shown to be a highly adaptable framework that integrates various instructional methods, driven by pedagogical objectives rather than technological imperatives. This model is particularly well-suited to the hybrid educational settings that have become increasingly common, where the interplay between online and in-person learning experiences must be carefully managed to optimize student outcomes. The model’s six core components—content, social and emotional,

dialectics/questioning, reflection, collaboration, and evaluation—were discussed as essential elements that collectively contribute to a holistic and effective learning environment. Each of these components was analysed for its relevance and application within the context of transnational art and design education, where the diversity of student backgrounds and the need for cross-cultural collaboration add layers of complexity to the educational process.

In this chapter, the interplay between the CoI and BPP models was critically examined, concluding that these frameworks are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. While the CoI Model offers a deep understanding of the dynamics within online learning environments, particularly in fostering a sense of community and engagement, the BPP Model extends this understanding by incorporating the additional dimensions of face-to-face interactions and the integration of diverse instructional strategies. Together, these models provide a comprehensive framework capable of addressing both the theoretical and practical challenges of transnational online and hybrid education.

The chapter also explored how these two frameworks relate to the existing research and the empirical work of this study. The research background in Chapter 3 highlighted key challenges in transnational art and design education, such as the need to foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration across cultural boundaries. The CoI Model, with its focus on creating a supportive online community, and the BPP Model, with its emphasis on integrating diverse media and instructional strategies, were shown to be particularly effective in addressing these challenges.

In the empirical context, the integration of these models proved crucial for designing a comprehensive research methodology. The researcher applied these frameworks to develop tools for participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires, enabling a thorough analysis of the learning experiences within

Sino-UK transnational art and design programs. The combined use of the CoI and BPP models allowed for a nuanced understanding of how cognitive, social, and teaching presences, as well as other pedagogical components, influence educational outcomes in both online and hybrid settings.

The chapter concluded by emphasizing the value of combining the CoI and BPP models to offer a more holistic understanding of transnational online and hybrid education. This integration not only contributes to the broader academic discourse on effective practices in online and hybrid learning environments but also offers practical insights that can inform the design and delivery of educational programs in transnational contexts. The insights gained from this analysis will be crucial in shaping the subsequent empirical research, ensuring that the educational practices examined are both theoretically grounded and practically relevant, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective, inclusive, and supportive educational environments in transnational collaborations.

Chapter 5: Online Transnational Art and Design Education — Evidence from China and the UK

5.1 Introduction

This chapter details the approach adopted for data collection in the exploration of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to generate a robust and comprehensive dataset that addresses the complexities of online education in a cross-cultural context. The methodologies utilized include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, each serving a distinct purpose in capturing the nuances of the educational experiences within these collaborative programs.

The participant observation method allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the digital learning environments, gaining first-hand insight into

the dynamics between students and faculty members, the integration of online tools, and the overall flow of instruction in virtual settings. This method is particularly significant in understanding how cultural, pedagogical, and technological factors intersect in the Sino-UK educational partnerships, and how these elements shape the teaching and learning experience. The historical background and theoretical foundations of participant observation are also discussed in this chapter, framing it as an evolving methodology well-suited to analysing contemporary online educational environments.

In parallel, semi-structured interviews were employed to delve deeper into the experiences of individuals directly involved in the educational programs. These interviews targeted both students and faculty members from Chinese and UK institutions, providing a platform for participants to share their personal insights and reflections on the effectiveness of online education, the challenges posed by the cross-cultural dimension, and the role of digital tools in facilitating learning. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for flexibility, enabling the researcher to explore new themes as they emerged while maintaining a focus on the core objectives of the study.

To complement the qualitative data, the researcher also distributed questionnaires to a larger sample of participants, including both students and faculty members involved in the Sino-UK transnational online art and design programs. The questionnaires were designed to capture quantifiable data on various aspects of the educational experience, such as student engagement, the effectiveness of digital platforms, and the perceived impact of online tools on learning outcomes. By employing a Likert scale and other structured question formats, the questionnaires allowed for the collection of standardized data that could be analysed statistically, providing a broader validation of the findings drawn from the qualitative methods.

The combination of these methods reflects the study is grounded in multiple forms of evidence. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data enables a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation, revealing not only the subjective experiences of participants but also general trends and patterns that can inform future practices in online transnational education. This chapter thus lays the groundwork for the subsequent analysis of the collected data.

5.2 Participant Observation

5.2.1 Introduction to the Observed Case

For this empirical observation study, the researcher contacted the programme leader of the BA (Hons) Digital Media Arts from a Sino-UK partnership project. Five years earlier, the researcher attended a similar programme at the same Chinese university, which, at the time, was a purely Chinese-taught initiative. This prior experience facilitated approval for the current study, enabling the researcher to conduct an eight-week participant observation (12 September–1 November 2022) in an online digital media arts module delivered by a UK university in collaboration with a Chinese fine arts institution.

The module comprised 17 level 6 Chinese students and three British lecturers. The programme leader organised and attended all sessions, while the other two lecturers participated once each during the module.

In this study, the researcher's background and prior educational experiences played a crucial role in shaping the approach and perspective brought to the research process. Five years before this study, the researcher had been a student in an educational environment where instruction was delivered entirely in Chinese. This context is markedly different from the current Sino-UK cooperation programme being examined. The curriculum and pedagogical

approaches in the researcher's past educational experience were distinct from those observed in the Sino-UK programme, which emphasised to the researcher how significant change had occurred in programme delivery in a relatively short period of time.

Due to these differences, the researcher’s role in the context of the current study was not that of a complete student participant. Unlike a traditional student, the researcher did not engage in activities such as class brainstorming and after-class assignments within the Sino-UK programme. The rationale behind this decision was twofold. These activities were perceived as quite complicated for the researcher, given the change in language and educational context from their previous experience. The complexity inherent in these tasks stemmed not only from the content but also from the linguistic and cultural nuances present in the Sino-UK educational setting.

The decision to refrain from participating in these activities was also driven by a methodological consideration. By adopting the role of a complete observer during such occasions, the researcher aimed to maintain a clear and objective perspective. In qualitative research, particularly in a study involving direct observation in educational settings, it is imperative for the researcher to balance their involvement to avoid bias the data or influencing the natural dynamics of the setting. Therefore, by stepping back from active participation in certain student activities, the researcher could observe and record events and interactions in their most authentic form.

This approach aligns with the principles of observational research, where the observer seeks to understand the phenomenon under study without becoming an influencing factor in the environment. In the context of this Sino-UK cooperation programme, the researcher's role as an observer was crucial in capturing the essence of the educational interactions and experiences as they

naturally occurred. By maintaining this stance, the researcher could provide a more accurate and unbiased account of the programme's dynamics.

Moreover, the researcher's unique position as a former student who had experienced a different educational system provided a comparative perspective. This background enabled the researcher to identify and appreciate the contrasts and similarities between the previous fully Chinese-taught curriculum and the current Sino-UK cooperative programme. Such a comparative analysis is valuable in understanding the evolving nature of international educational collaborations and their impact on curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and student experiences.

The researcher will refer to this module as 'A Module' in the following discussion. The aim of this module is to give students the opportunity to apply a high level of analytical awareness and theoretical judgement of digital media art terminology. To allow students to investigate and apply new experimental and inventive techniques in the creative process. To develop a personal awareness and disciplinary orientation in digital media art as well as demonstrate competent and appropriate presentation skills in both individual and group contexts. The coursework submission of the 'A Module' consists of four parts, a 10-minute presentation, a Practitioners List, a 1500-word Report and a Diary of progress. At these points, the researcher pursued my role as a complete observer. Meanwhile, the researcher was constantly aware of the danger of "going native, losing my critical faculties to become an ordinary member of the field" (Gold, 1958, p. 221).

In the 'A Module', Monday is the professional practice day, starting at 9 am UK time with a 1 to 2 hours Keynote Lecture by the programme leader, followed by four groups of students, each of which has one hour to work with the programme leader on Learning Groups. Tuesday was the once every two

weeks tutorial contact day for students, with each student having half an hour to discuss their work with the programme leader. Thursday was also the Learning Groups. The researcher received the Participant Consent Forms and Participant Information Forms from all the participants during the first observation which was an induction session.

Also in the first Induction Session, with the help of the programme leader the researcher was introduced to the whole class. The researcher had the opportunity to present the purpose for joining and her research. The researcher also stressed that she would remain quiet during the observation period and would not disturb the smooth running of the course. The hope was that students and staff would gradually lose sight of the presence as a researcher.

As an observer, attention was focused on staff-student interactions, student behavior, teaching strategies, and student relationships. The researchers did not consider themselves to be complete members of the group under study, nor did they see themselves as outsiders trying to understand an alien culture (Coffey, 1999, p. 22). For fieldwork in familiar surroundings, the researcher had to constantly remind herself to retain a sense of detachment in order to maintain a critical attitude as an observer (Coffey, 1999, p. 36). There is a continuous oscillation between unfamiliarity and familiarity.

Because of the privacy and confidentiality of the one-to-one tutorial contact day every Tuesday, the researcher was not permitted to participate in the observations. However, the researcher engaged in semi-structured interviews with the students and the programme leader about the details of the tutorial sessions. As for all the Keynote Lectures and Learning Groups, the researcher was involved in the observations and took detailed recordings as follows.

5.2.2 Participant Observation in the ‘Keynote’ Lecture

The researcher conducted a total of 9 observations in what were termed Keynote Lectures, each lasting one hour. The main software used in the classes is Tencent Conference (VooV) and Microsoft Teams. WeChat and WeChat groups are also used throughout the course before, during and after. It is used to provide course previews, send links for online courses, answer questions from students and review and exchange ideas after the course. This shows that the use of technology in this course has been adapted to the habits of Chinese students as far as possible, as well as a proactive approach to internet regulation in China.

During the observations, the researcher noted that Microsoft Teams was predominantly used for the online sessions, with Tencent Conference (VooV) utilised only three times. This preference may stem from Microsoft Teams' integration with the university’s OneDrive system, facilitating easy recording management and access.

The programme leader typically arrived online 30 minutes before each session, using the WeChat group to remind students of the schedule and key points. Sessions began informally with a warm-up discussion before transitioning to formal teaching, where the programme leader shared their screen and introduced the lesson.

The Keynote Lectures followed a structured progression. The first and second Keynote Lectures served as induction sessions, introducing the academic year’s structure, marking, and assessment criteria. The programme leader also provided a brief history of the Sino-UK partnership project, highlighting its evolution since 2015 and transition to online delivery in 2020. To foster rapport, the programme leader shared his career history and representative works.

The third Keynote Lecture offered a formal introduction to the content of the ‘A Module,’ including its objectives and framework. In the fourth session, key concepts and design approaches related to digital media art were explained, complemented by examples of proven business cases.

The fifth Keynote Lecture, titled Library Introduction, marked the initial research phase. Presented by the Academic Support Librarian, it covered library services, e-resources, referencing, plagiarism, and academic skills, tailored specifically to art and design. Despite encouragement from the presenter and programme leader, students refrained from asking questions, reflecting cultural hesitations among Chinese students about direct classroom queries. This session highlighted the importance of online and private communication for addressing such challenges.

The sixth Keynote Lecture introduced topics such as Space Graphic Systems and Reflective Practice, guiding students as they began experimenting with design materials and sketching. The programme leader’s curriculum, interwoven across sessions, systematically built students’ understanding and skills in digital media art.

As students progressed, lectures introduced advanced topics. The seventh explored specialist options, allowing students to choose from areas like Graphic Design, Photography, and Digital Media Animation. The eighth lecture, a referencing workshop, prepared students for academic writing, emphasising citation accuracy. The ninth and final lecture reviewed exemplary submissions to guide students' work.

Throughout, the researcher observed that students kept their cameras off, making it challenging to gauge their engagement or understanding visually. However, the programme leader consistently sought feedback, ensuring

students were not confused before moving forward. The programme leader's efforts to adapt content for online delivery included sharing images of previous face-to-face teaching and detailed photographs of installation works in the WeChat group, enhancing the online learning experience.

The researcher's dual identity as a Chinese international student provided insight into participants' challenges, particularly the emotional and cultural aspects of adapting to the programme. This perspective informed the researcher's understanding of the transition experiences within the Sino-UK partnership context.

5.2.3 Participant Observation in the Presentation Session

The researchers conducted a total of 14 Presentation session observations. Most of the Presentation sessions divided a total of 17 students into four groups, with each group having a presentation and discussion slot of at least one hour. Therefore, the researcher invested at least 54 hours in the Presentation session observations.

Presentation sessions were delivered in three main modes. The first kind of Presentation session is during Induction sessions. Students were given five minutes to introduce themselves. The second kind of Presentation session is the opportunity of one exercise for the 10-minute formal presentation and one 10-minute formal presentation.

The rest of the Learning group sessions were group-based reviews of their work, with students presenting their work one by one and the programme leader commenting on it individually, which is the third kind of Presentation session. There was one session usually every Monday and one on Thursday. The Monday Learning Groups Sessions follow the Keynote Lecture. This is why the researchers mentioned earlier that each Keynote Lecture is interlinked, as the

programme leader not only provided academic and professional support to the students based on the work， they had to do each week, but also reviewed the students' work from the work student presented in the previous week.

In the first Learning Groups session, the students were asked to spend five minutes introducing themselves. This included basic information about themselves, their Design/Arts Interests, and personal opinions in the fields of music, art, fashion, literature, etc. In the following step, the students received the document on '5 illustrated idioms' the week before the first Learning Groups Session. Students were asked to describe what the '5 illustrated idioms' were when they were illustrated/drawn and to see if others could guess them accurately.

This was a nonserious exercise and gave some insight into students thinking and also provided a fun exchange. It was also the only time during the entire 8-week ‘A Module’ that all students and lecturers had their cameras turned on. All students also created sophisticated and designer slides for their presentations. Meanwhile, for the first Learning Groups session, the programme leader also invited another British teacher who had taught the students before. During the first Learning group session, the two teachers commented on the students' introductions and the '5 illustrated idioms' presentation together. Also, according to the programme leader, the presence of a teacher they had met before helped the students to get into the learning process quickly and to familiarise themselves with the curriculum.

The Learning group sessions started in the second week. The first Learning Groups Sessions consisted of a report on a selected topic. The students were asked to make a Diary of progress slide to support the presentation. This was also one of the requirements of the submission. In the Learning Groups Session,

students were asked to choose a topic that interested them based on the content of the brief and had to find appropriate inspiration for their research from the humanities, history and other cultures of the UK. Therefore, the programme leader's comments were mainly about research suggestions, such as recommending artists' work in areas of interest to the students. It is worth noting that the first student in the first group had the camera on for the presentation, but all the students except her had it turned off. This student also did not turn on the camera for the whole of the subsequent sessions.

During the second group session in week two, the students revised their work in response to the programme leader's previous comments. The Programme Leader also listened to the students' presentations and took notes on the issues that the students needed to be aware of. After the Groups Sessions, he went through them one by one in the WeChat group. Students were also generally grateful and said that the programme leader's advice was very practical and clear. Following on from the last group session where the students reported on topics of interest to them. In this group sessions, students reported on the corresponding research work they had found in the humanities, history and culture of the UK. Because the whole ‘A Module’ was completely online. Most of the students also had no experience of living in the UK before. So, most of the information they found in the research was from the internet. Based on that, the programme leader gave the students some empirical and authentic advice from the perspective of a native British person.

During the third week, students transitioned from initial research to brainstorming and creating mind maps. Presentations focused on professional and academic-related works, with feedback provided by the programme leader and peers, primarily through the chat box. The Keynote Lecture included Reflective Practice and showcased successful business cases to inspire students.

By the fourth week, students began exploring Specialist Options, introduced during the seventh Keynote Lecture. These included Graphic Design, Photography, Fine Art, and Digital Media Animation. Presentations reflected their chosen focus areas, such as animation subplots or initial design sketches. The programme leader also highlighted in his comments to the students that it was already the fourth week of the module and that students needed to be mindful of their timetables in order to hand in their assignments successfully and without delay.

The fifth week marked a turning point as more refined outcomes emerged. Digital sketches for posters and functional app display pages were among the projects presented. The programme leader encouraged students to explore alternative approaches and referenced established works to broaden their perspectives.

As the sixth week unfolded, students' projects neared completion. Peer feedback played a central role, with each group member contributing comments either orally or in writing. The Keynote Lecture featured case studies of previous students' work in the module. On 20 October the programme leader also announced to the students in the WeChat group that to give them more time to complete and refine the 'A Module' submission. The official presentation, originally scheduled for 28 October, has been postponed to 1 November. Many of the students sent messages of satisfaction and appreciation for this arrangement on WeChat, as it meant that the students would have an extra weekend to refine their briefs and presentations.

Leading into the seventh week, the schedule adapted to accommodate the extended deadline. This week was the week before the official presentation. Due to the postponement of the official presentation scheduled for Friday to 1

November. There were also changes to the Learning Groups Sessions in week 7. There are normally two Learning groups Sessions in other weeks, but the Tuesday tutorial in week 7 also becomes a Learning Groups Session. In this way, the students had one more opportunity to discuss their work online with the programme leader and their classmates. Because, the students' work was almost complete by the seventh week. So, the advice given by the programme leader and the students was relatively small detailed adjustments. The programme leader also advised the students on presentation skills. For example, how students can be more confident, how to allocate their presentation time, how to make the audience understand their presentation, etc.

The final week started with a student-by-student mock presentation on Monday, followed by the Learning Groups Session. During the Learning Groups Session, the programme leader asked the students to ask him if they had any questions about the formal presentation that would take place on Tuesday. However, the students rarely asked questions. As a result, the Learning Groups sessions, which were scheduled for one hour each, also almost always ended early. The researcher found that all the students did not turn on the camera during the mock presentation and the final formal presentation. So the researcher was unable to observe their expressions, body language etc.

It is worth noting that before the first presentation session, the programme leader had already arranged the order of the students' presentations and the division of the Learning Groups. So, the students had a clear understanding of the order in which they would be presented during all the Presentation Sessions. No students were absent from any of the Keynote Lectures or Presentation Sessions, and all were on time. However, during the Learning Groups Session in Week 6, one student said he was at driving school and had his driving test coming up and wanted to swap his presence with the first student who had a presentation. The students and the programme leader have readily consented

to this adjustment.

In addition, there was a 10-30-minute gap between the attendance of each of the two groups in the Learning Groups Sessions, depending on the session schedule. However, it often happened that debriefing time for particular students was too long. This resulted in the programme leader having to attend the next set of Learning Groups Sessions directly after completing the previous set of Learning Groups Sessions without a break. This may even result in a bit of delay at the start of the next set of Learning group sessions. However, in such cases the programme leader would warn the students in the WeChat group and the students have shown understanding and cooperation.

5.2.4 Participant Observation in the Online Chat Context

As noted above, a prominent focus was placed on the modes of communication utilized by students to maintain contact with their lecturers in an online educational setting. WeChat, along with designated groups, served as the primary communication channel for ‘A Module.’ The programme leader was the central figure in these interactions, as the other lecturers appeared only once throughout the module, resulting in minimal communication with students.

Consequently, the researcher’s observations primarily focused on the dialogue between the programme leader and students within the WeChat group. WeChat’s role in this study underscores its adaptability as an educational tool, particularly for Chinese students. The programme leader’s proficiency with the platform facilitated a seamless online learning experience, creating an inclusive and engaging environment tailored to students’ cultural and technological preferences.

Before the observation period commenced on 12 September 2022, the programme leader invited the researcher to join the group. This inclusion

allowed the researcher to monitor all exchanges while maintaining a silent, non-participatory role to preserve group dynamics and ensure objective data collection.

WeChat played a significant role in facilitating communication, enabling the programme leader to announce sessions, share course materials, and provide feedback. Session reminders were consistently sent 30 minutes before classes, reflecting the leader's structured and student-centred approach. Additionally, materials and links were distributed through the platform, and comments on students' work were promptly delivered. This immediacy fostered continuous engagement, a critical component of online education. While WeChat served as the main communication tool, Microsoft OneDrive was used for formal submissions, exemplifying a hybrid approach to digital platforms.

Despite these efforts, student participation in the WeChat group was limited, with only three to five students regularly responding to queries. This trend shifted when cultural discussions, such as the Queen's funeral and Halloween, were introduced. The programme leader enriched these discussions with historical context, photos, and videos, which prompted a more active response from approximately ten students. He also shared nostalgic media from pre-COVID teaching in China, bridging cultural and technological divides while enhancing engagement.

The time difference between the UK and China posed challenges. Classes held from 9 am to 2 pm UK time (4 pm to 10 pm China time) led to delays in responses. Reflections sent by the programme leader late at night in China often received replies the following day, hours after students had initially responded.

During the eight-week period, significant events impacted the schedule. The

Queen's funeral and a UK bank holiday led to rescheduling, such as moving a Monday session to Wednesday. Despite these disruptions, the programme leader remained responsive, addressing student queries even during holidays and weekends.

Beyond teaching, the programme leader undertook administrative tasks, including online student registration, Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) applications, and compiling language scores. These responsibilities were managed alongside teaching commitments, with the programme leader often responding to student inquiries, such as registration issues, even on Saturday mornings.

5.3 Semi-Structured Interview

5.3.1 The Purpose of the Semi-Structured Interview in This Research

This phase encompasses a systematic approach to gathering data from a select group of participants engaged in online art and design teaching and learning initiatives, part of Sino-UK partnership teaching projects. The primary objective of these interviews is to critically evaluate and understand the present condition of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education project development through the experiences of the respondents. Moreover, a key aspect of this research is to ascertain the specific requirements and expectations of both students and teaching staff involved in these projects. More broadly, the data gathered can assist in understanding the most effective and practical solutions to align with the aspirations and expectations of the audience engaged in the Sino-UK partnership teaching projects.

The data collection element of the project is structured to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education can be achieved. It acknowledges

the complexities and challenges inherent in such cross-cultural educational endeavours. Moreover, the interviews aimed to identify potential areas for improvement within this educational paradigm. The questions were designed to prompt discussions around challenges faced, limitations observed, and any gaps in meeting the educational objectives. By engaging stakeholders in such conversations, the research sought to gather evidence that could be instrumental in enhancing the quality and impact of online art and design education in this international partnership. By engaging directly with those who are actively participating in these projects, the research aims to garner authentic insights and feedback that can inform future improvements and innovations in this field.

The preparation and execution of the interviews were aligned with the overarching aim of the study: to not only assess the current landscape of online art and design education in the UK-China partnership but also to contribute meaningfully to its evolution and enhancement for future cohorts. The primary objective of these interviews was to thoroughly investigate the existing state of development of online art and design education within the collaborative framework of the UK and China. This encompassed evaluating the current methodologies, technologies, and pedagogical approaches employed in delivering these courses. The questions were crafted to not only understand the effectiveness of these strategies but also to explore the experiences and satisfaction levels of the stakeholders, which included students, educators, and administrative staff. This was pivotal in gauging the effectiveness of online delivery in meeting educational objectives and enhancing student learning experiences. By exploring these areas, the researcher aimed to gather comprehensive insights into the impact of online education on student satisfaction, skill acquisition, and overall educational fulfilment in the field of art and design.

In this study, the semi-structured interviews were divided into two distinct groups, to ensure that the researcher had a comprehensive understanding of the subject, drawing on insights from different perspectives within the educational context. The rationale behind segregating the participants into two groups stems from the need to attain a multi-dimensional understanding of the research subject. The first group, comprising students and the programme leader, directly involved in ‘A Module’, offers an internal, in-depth view of the module's workings, challenges, and strengths. In contrast, the second group, encompassing students from institutions and faculty members other than those observed by the researcher, provides a broader comparative perspective. This methodological approach ensures that the data collected is not only rich and diverse but also balanced, offering insights from both within and outside the immediate educational context of ‘A Module’.

The first group of semi-structured interviews was orchestrated after an intensive phase of participant observation. This approach is rooted in the principle of immersive understanding, where the researcher first engages in a detailed observation of the participants within their natural setting. The researcher selected a random sample of 10 students who participated in ‘A Module’ and interviewed them. These students were chosen based on their direct engagement and experience with the module, thereby positioning them as valuable sources of nuanced insights. Alongside these students, the programme leader was also interviewed. The inclusion of the programme leader is pivotal, as it provides a contrasting perspective, juxtaposing the student experiences with an administrative and pedagogical viewpoint.

The main purpose of the interviews related to ‘A Module’ was to gather nuanced insights from students and the programme leader into the effectiveness, challenges and overall experience of the online Digital Media Arts module in the context of the UK-China educational collaboration. The overall design was

based on the principles of each participant's understanding of ‘A Module’ and being immersed in a transnational online art and design education between the UK and China. This approach ensured that the researcher had access to in-depth interview data which informed and enriched the subsequent second set of interviews. This interview design aimed to provide a holistic view of the online module, taking into account both the student experience and management perspectives, which are essential for evaluating and understanding the dynamics of a collaborative art and design teaching programme between the UK and China in the context of online education.

The second group of semi-structured interviews was more broadly constituted. In this segment, the researcher extended the respondents to encompass 21 Chinese students from institutions external to the ‘A Module’. These students were selected due to their experiences that were deemed pertinent to the study. Furthermore, the interviews were not confined to students alone; the researcher also engaged with five faculty members. The inclusion of faculty members is a strategic methodological choice, allowing for the capture of academic and pedagogical perspectives that are crucial for a holistic understanding of the educational context under study. The participation from a broader range of institution participants enriched the researcher's understanding of the perspectives gained from the participants of ‘A Module’ and contributed to securing a more comprehensive assessment of the online education resources of Sino-UK partnership art and design programs.

5.3.2 The Relational Nature of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Three central themes were highlighted during the semi-structured interviews. These themes, which surfaced as recurrent motifs within and across various narratives, were pivotal in shaping the direction and depth of the research analysis. The researcher designed specific interview questions for each of the three central themes, with five questions assigned to each theme. In addition

to these 15 interview questions, three biographical questions were included. This preliminary step not only served as an icebreaker but also functioned as a key tool for gathering essential background information about each participant (McCracken, 1988). The biographical questions examined participants' academic or teaching disciplines, their respective grade levels, and the duration of their involvement in online learning or teaching within the Sino-UK partnership teaching project.

With regard to the three central themes mentioned above, these are firmly anchored in the theoretical framework of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model. This model, a cornerstone in the study of online learning environments, is predicated on the delineation of three distinct ‘Presences’: Cognitive, Social, and Teaching. These presences form the bedrock of the model and collectively provide a comprehensive lens through which online learning environments can be examined and understood. In essence, these three themes - cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence- collectively offer a holistic view of the educational experience in arts subjects within the contrasting contexts of China and the UK. Each theme provides a unique lens through which the multifaceted nature of art education can be examined, contributing to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the field.

The application of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model to the current study offers a structured yet expansive framework to explore these three key themes. By dissecting the online learning experience into cognitive, social, and teaching presences, the research aims to provide a nuanced and in-depth understanding of the dynamics at play in online educational settings. This model serves not only as a guide for examining the existing state of online learning environments but also as a tool for identifying areas for improvement and innovation in online education practices. The overarching goal is to glean insights that could contribute to the enhancement of learning experiences in digital realms,

ensuring that they are as rich, engaging, and effective as their traditional counterparts.

However, as noted in the previous chapter (See 4.3), online educational resources do not typically emerge as independent items in transnational partnership higher education programs in subjects related to art and design. Therefore, based on the three central research question themes based on the CoI Model, the researcher introduced six fundamental pedagogical objectives from the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model based on each of the characteristics of three presences respectively.

Specifically, in the ‘Cognitive presence’, the researcher introduces the description of ‘Content’ in the BPP Model, where content is one of the main drivers of teaching and learning, and the BPP Model concept suggests the use of a variety of media and technologies in providing and presenting content. In the ‘Social presence’, the researcher introduces the ‘Social/emotional’ aspect of the BPP Model, where teaching is not just about learning content or skills, but also about supporting students socially and emotionally, and where the physical presence of the teacher is reassuring and familiar, in addition to imparting knowledge. As well as the ‘Collaboration’ aspect of the BPP Model, the production of knowledge and information as well as the important tool of peer review and assessment enables measures such as students being able to share information with others. In the ‘Teaching presence’, the researcher introduced interview questions of ‘Dialectic/questioning’, ‘Reflection’ and ‘Evaluation’ related to the BPP Model. Dialectic or questioning is an important activity that allows instructors to explore students' knowledge and help to refine their knowledge, students' learning is extended and enriched by teaching activities that require them to reflect on what they have learnt and share their reflections with the lecturers, professors and other students. Online tools can make it easier to share the evaluation and assessment processes, enabling

students and teachers to access permanent records.

In particular, the detailed interview questions regarding the three presences, developed based on the CoI Model and the BPP Model, primarily focused on the following aspects. The first of these presences, the ‘Cognitive presence’, is a critical element in the learning process. The design of the interview questions aims to explore how cognitive presence interacts with various factors that influence learning. These questions were structured to examine the understanding of the art and design subjects in a transnational online educational environment. They also delve into the strategies students use to enhance their learning efficiency and comprehension, focusing on their active engagement with the online learning delivery method. Additionally, the questions are designed to probe the role of reflective thinking and discussion in deepening students' cognitive engagement. By examining the influence of online and remote learning environments, the questions seek to understand how different teaching methods and platforms affect cognitive development and knowledge application, both inside and outside the online educational environment.

The second theme, ‘Social presence’, delves into the relational aspects of the online learning environment. The design of these interview questions aims to explore how students navigate social interactions, communication, and relationships in an educational context, particularly in an online setting. The questions are structured to investigate how students maintain communication with their peers and instructors, emphasizing the platforms they use to stay connected. This exploration into communication methods helps us understand the dynamics of student interaction and how it influences the learning experience. Additionally, the questions examine students' perceptions of their relationships with classmates and instructors throughout an online course, allowing for comparisons between online and in-person learning environments.

Efforts to adapt to an English-language learning environment are also examined, highlighting the steps students take to bridge language barriers and better engage with their peers and teachers. Finally, the interview questions investigate the differences in how students perceive their interactions with Chinese versus UK-based instructors, offering insights into the social dynamics shaped by cultural and educational backgrounds.

Lastly, ‘Teaching presence’, the third theme, encompasses the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. The questions are structured to investigate teaching quality and student engagement. This inquiry seeks to understand the effectiveness of different instructional approaches in an online setting. Additionally, the questions examine the selection and use of online learning platforms, probing into the reasons behind students' preferences and their experiences with various online tools. This exploration helps to reveal how the choice of technology influences the teaching process and student interaction. The questions also aim to understand how the online format impacts the learning experience. This includes a specific focus on how online resources are applied in art and design education, identifying both the benefits and limitations of these tools in supporting the learning objectives. Finally, the interview questions seek to uncover any significant changes in course content or delivery that have occurred as a result of the transition to online teaching. This exploration is intended to reveal how teaching presence adapts to the challenges and opportunities presented by the online learning environment.

5.3.3 Selection and Recruitment of Participants for Semi-Structured Interviews

The research methodology employed a balanced and thoughtful approach to participant selection. It was a process underpinned by the principles of inclusivity and representativeness, ensuring that the research findings were not

only robust and reliable but also reflective of a diverse range of experiences and viewpoints. The gradual and phased approach to recruitment, combined with the emphasis on diversity and representativeness, underscores the researcher's commitment to conducting a study that was both methodologically sound and ethically responsible. This approach not only facilitated the logistical aspects of conducting the interviews but also contributed significantly to the richness and validity of the data collected.

The recruitment strategy adopted in this study was characterized by a careful balance between practical constraints and the aspiration to capture a wide array of perspectives. The gradual approach to participant outreach, coupled with the emphasis on diversity and representativeness, was instrumental in shaping a research process that was both efficient and inclusive. This methodology not only ensured the smooth execution of the interviews but also enhanced the overall quality and credibility of the research findings.

In the first group of the semi-structured interview process, the researcher was faced with the task of selecting participants from those involved in participant observation. Due to the predetermined number of participants required for this phase, the researcher proceeded to extend interview invitations to all of the individuals. This group finally comprised ten Chinese students, who were integral to the study, and one British faculty member, whose insights were deemed valuable for a comprehensive understanding of the research context.

In the pursuit of expanding the sample for the second group of semi-structured interviews, the researcher embarked on a strategic approach by tapping into an extended network of personal and academic contacts. The researcher proactively reached out to a larger pool of participants. These participants were not randomly chosen; instead, they were selected based on their relevant experience and potential to contribute meaningfully to the research. The

recruitment process was facilitated through the use of forefront social media platforms, which are widely used and trusted by the target demographic. The depth and diversity of these networks played a pivotal role in the recruitment process, as they provided access to a broader range of potential participants, thereby enhancing the representativeness and richness of the research data.

The social media and online platforms employed by the researcher included but were not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, ResearchGate, WeChat, Weibo, Red, and Zhihu. These tools were instrumental in facilitating direct communication with potential participants. In the initial phase, the researcher utilized these platforms to send direct messages to potential participants. This approach was not only efficient but also aligned with the communication preferences of the target audience, thereby increasing the likelihood of engagement.

Following the initial contact through social media, the researcher proceeded to send personalised emails to the participants. These emails were meticulously crafted to offer potential participants a clear understanding of the study and the opportunity to contribute to it. The email included a detailed explanation of the research objectives, the significance of the participant's role, and the ethical considerations involved. This personalisation was crucial in establishing a sense of trust and rapport with the participants, which is essential for the success of semi-structured interviews.

The email also outlined the logistics of the interview process, including the proposed date, time, and format of the interviews. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were informed about how the data collected from them would be used in the research. This transparency was vital in ensuring informed consent, a cornerstone of ethical research practices.

The researcher also utilized these established relationships to make contact

with faculty members who were familiar with these students. This ‘snowball’ method of reaching out to faculty members through student intermediaries proved to be a highly effective way of accessing a more diverse range of academic perspectives. The students, who had existing relationships with these faculty members, facilitated an introduction, thus providing a familiar and trustworthy context for the faculty members to consider participating in the research. This approach not only eased the process of initial communication but also lent a sense of credibility and relevance to the researcher’s request for participation.

This direct yet respectful approach to making contact was carefully designed to ensure that the faculty members felt valued and informed. The researcher's communication underscored the importance of their expertise and experience in enriching the research findings. The researcher's approach of engaging with faculty members through the students not only expanded the research's reach but also fostered a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere. This technique of networking and establishing connections underscored the researcher’s commitment to a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the subject matter, ensuring a robust and diverse pool of participants for the study.

In addition, the researcher provided participants with the option to choose the medium of the interview, be it face-to-face, telephone, or online platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Tencent Meeting (VooV) or Skype. This flexibility was important in accommodating the preferences and convenience of the participants, thereby enhancing their willingness to participate.

Throughout this recruitment process, the researcher maintained a high level of professionalism and ethical conduct. All communications with potential participants were respectful, clear, and considerate of their time and contribution. The researcher also ensured that all potential participants had an

equal opportunity to ask questions about the study and clarify any doubts before consenting to participate.

The combination of using an extended network of contacts, social media outreach, and personalised email communication proved to be an effective strategy in recruiting a diverse and relevant sample of participants for the second group of semi-structured interviews. This approach not only facilitated the identification of individuals with the desired experience and perspectives but also established a foundation of trust and engagement, which is crucial for the success of qualitative research.

In the context of this study, every individual who responded to the initial outreach was extended an invitation to participate in an interview. However, it is noteworthy that a handful of these respondents, after initially expressing interest, subsequently declined the invitation. The researcher, cognizant of the practical constraints such as time and resources, adopted a strategic approach to the recruitment process. The overarching goal was not to over-extend the resources at hand or to overwhelm the research process itself. Thus, a deliberate and measured strategy was employed in approaching potential participants. This approach entailed a gradual and phased outreach, ensuring that each respondent who expressed a desire to participate in an interview was afforded the opportunity, without overburdening the research schedule or diluting the quality of each engagement.

However, the final participant selection process was meticulously designed to ensure comprehensive data collection while adhering to the constraints of practical feasibility. The number of interview participants was deliberately limited, a decision guided by the principle of data saturation. This concept, as elucidated by Given (2008), posits that data collection in qualitative research should continue until no new information or themes are observed in the data,

thereby indicating that the data set is sufficiently comprehensive to support a robust analysis.

The research reached this point of saturation after conducting a series of structured interviews with a select group of individuals. In total, 21 students and 5 staff members were interviewed in the second set of semi-structured structured interviews. This cohort of participants was carefully chosen to provide a diverse yet focused insight into the research topic.

The first type of student, comprised of 4 students who had just received offers from art and design-related undergraduate programs and were about to start their online undergraduate learning journey, thus current stage of study is equivalent to completing Level 3 of the UK academic system. These students were specifically chosen to capture the anticipatory perspectives and expectations these individuals harboured towards the forthcoming digital learning experience. The inclusion of this group is instrumental in understanding the initial perceptions and preparedness of students at the threshold of engaging in online art and design education.

The second group of students comprised those working at Level 4 to Level 6 according to the UK academic system and represents students who were actively engaged in online art and design education at the time of the interviews. The exact distribution of numbers was 4 students at Level 4, 3 students at Level 5 and 5 students at Level 6. The selection of this cohort was pivotal in gaining real-time insights into the ongoing experience of students immersed in the virtual learning environment. These students' feedback and reflections are crucial in evaluating the immediate effectiveness, challenges, and adaptation strategies employed by students amid their online educational pursuits.

Lastly, the third type of respondents selected were 5 students who had just

completed the online art and design-related undergraduate programme and received their BA degrees. These students' experiences and retrospectives are invaluable in providing a post-completion analysis of the online learning module. Their reflections offer a comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts, skill acquisition, and overall satisfaction levels post the conclusion of their online art and design education.

The researcher assigned pseudonyms to the participants based on the names of Atlantic hurricanes. Since there are only 21 Atlantic hurricane names designated each year, yet the total number of participants in this study amounted to 37, the researcher utilised names from both the 2024 and 2025 Atlantic hurricane seasons. This decision was informed by information available on Wikipedia (“2024 Atlantic hurricane season” & “2025 Atlantic hurricane season”, 2025). The details of the participants of semi-structured interviews are presented below.

	Pseudonym	**Age**	**Gender**	**Institution Representing the Chinese Side**	**Institution Representing the UK Side**	**Subject**	**Level of Study / Job Title**
Student 1	Alberto	21	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 2	Beryl	21	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 3	Chris	20	M	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 4	Debby	21	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6

Student 5	Ernesto	22	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 6	Francine	21	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 7	Gordon	22	M	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 8	Helene	20	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 9	Isaac	22	M	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 10	Joyce	21	F	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	level 6
Student 11	Kirk	24	F	F University	University of Ⅰ	Art & Design	BA-Graduate
Student 12	Leslie	22	F	E University	University of Ⅴ	Animation design	Level 6
Student 13	Milton	20	M	G University	University of Ⅶ	Fashion Design	Level 5
Student 14	Nadine	21	M	J University	University of Ⅹ	Visual Communication Design	Level 6
Student 15	Oscar	22	F	B University	University of Ⅱ	Design	Level 6
Student 16	Patty	21	M	A University	University of Ⅰ	Art & Design	Level 5
Student 17	Rafael	22	M	C University	University of Ⅲ	Environmental Design	BA-Graduate

Student 18	Sara	19	F	I University	University of IX	Fashion Design	Level 4
Student 19	Tony	17	M	H University	University of VIII	Environmental Design	Level 3
Student 20	Valerie	21	F	D University	University of IV	Visual Communication Design	Level 5
Student 21	William	24	M	D University	University of IV	Visual Communication Design	BA-Graduate
Student 22	Andrea	21	F	F University	University of VI	Art & Design	Level 6
Student 23	Barry	19	F	J University	University of X	Visual Communication Design	Level 4
Student 24	Chantal	23	F	A University	University of I	Art & Design	BA-Graduate
Student 25	Dexter	17	M	G University	University of VII	Interior Design	Level 3
Student 26	Erin	19	F	H University	University of VIII	Fine Art	Level 4
Student 27	Fernand	18	F	E University	University of V	Art history	Level 3
Student 28	Gabrielle	21	M	C University	University of III	Fashion Design	Level 6
Student 29	Humberto	25	F	B University	University of II	Interactive design	BA-Graduate

Student 30	Imelda	18	F	J University	University of X	Visual Communication Design	Level 3
Student 31	Jerry	19	M	C University	University of Ⅲ	Fashion Design	Level 4
Faculty member1	Karen	55	M	A Module	A Module	Digital Media Arts	Programme Leader
Faculty member2	Lorenzo	31	F	B University	University of Ⅱ	Digital Media Arts	Lecturer
Faculty member3	Melissa	35	F	A University	University of Ⅰ	Art & Design	Senior Lecturer
Faculty member4	Nestor	N/A	M	E University	University of Ⅴ	Design	Programme Leader
Faculty member5	Olga	46	F	J University	University of X	Visual Communication Design	Lecturer
Faculty member6	Pablo	N/A	F	H University	University of Ⅷ	Fashion Design	Teaching Assistant

Table 5.1: Details of Semi-Structured Interview Participants

In terms of participant information, the researcher adopted a specific approach regarding the collection of demographic data. Detailed demographic information about the participants was not actively sought by the researcher. This decision was aligned with the research methodology and ethical considerations, focusing primarily on the experiences and perspectives of the participants rather than their demographic characteristics. As a result, the

demographic information that was available and included in the research was limited to that which was apparent and voluntarily shared by the participants during the interviews, such as their gender and interview information. This approach is consistent with the guidelines suggested by Given (2008), who emphasizes the importance of focusing on relevant data while respecting participant privacy and autonomy.

However, it is important to note that despite the limited collection of demographic data, there is still significant information available on each participant about their profile and involvement in the Sino-UK collaborative online art and design teaching programme. Such background information was invaluable in contextualizing the responses and experiences shared by the participants during the interviews. It provided a deeper understanding of their perspectives and roles within the collaborative programme, thereby enriching the research findings.

5.3.4 The Implementation of the Semi-Structured Interview

Spanning over a period from November 2022 to September 2023, these interviews were carefully scheduled and executed. This extended period allowed for the collection of data over a substantial timeframe, providing an opportunity to capture changes and developments over time. It also provided the flexibility to schedule interviews at times convenient to the participants, thereby maximizing participation and engagement.

The choice of conducting interviews through telephone or video call was particularly significant. This mode of communication offered a level of convenience and accessibility that was crucial in facilitating the participation of a diverse group of respondents. It allowed for a broader geographical reach, enabling the inclusion of participants who might have been otherwise unable to partake due to logistical constraints. Furthermore, the remote nature of these

interviews provided a comfortable and familiar environment for the participants, which often encouraged openness and a more candid dialogue. The duration of each interview varied, with the shortest being approximately 45 minutes and the longest extending up to 1.5 hours. This variance in duration was reflective of the natural flow of conversation and the depth of discussion that each respondent brought to the table. The longer duration of some interviews signified a rich engagement and a willingness of the participants to delve deeply into the subject matter, providing valuable insights and perspectives.

The commencement of each interview was marked by an explicit elucidation of the study's objectives. Students were consistently appraised of critical ethical considerations, chiefly focusing on the assurance of anonymity and their unequivocal right to withdraw from the study at any point. These ethical guidelines were not merely procedural formalities but were integral to fostering a trust-based environment conducive to open and honest communication. This practice, aligned with the high standards of ethical research conduct pursued in the project, served to orient the participants towards the core intent of the research. Upon the issuance of invitations, the researcher undertook the crucial step of acquainting all potential respondents with key documents that are foundational to ethical research practices. These documents included the Participant Consent Form and the Participant Information Sheet. The former was a critical tool in ensuring that all participants were fully aware of their rights within the study and the nature of their involvement, thereby upholding the principle of informed consent. The latter provided a detailed overview of the research, outlining its objectives, methodologies, and the role of participants, thus ensuring transparency and clarity. Following this preparatory phase, the researcher successfully conducted interviews with a significant portion of the invited Chinese students.

The interviews conducted in this research were a fundamental component of

the data collection process. The recording of these interviews was a critical aspect of the data collection process. Each interview was recorded with the prior consent of the participants, ensuring ethical compliance and transparency. The recordings served as an accurate and reliable repository of the conversations, which were later meticulously transcribed. The transcription process was undertaken with great care, ensuring that the transcriptions were verbatim and that they captured not only the content but also the nuances of the conversations. This level of detail was instrumental in the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data. The methodical approach to conducting these interviews – from the choice of communication medium to the recording and transcription of the conversations – was critical in ensuring the quality and reliability of the data. The varying lengths of the interviews, the convenience and accessibility of the telephone or video call format, and the meticulous transcription process all contributed to the collection of rich, detailed, and valuable data. This data, derived from a diverse group of participants over an extended period, provided a robust foundation for the subsequent analysis and contributed significantly to the depth and breadth of the research findings.

Furthermore, the interviews were semi-structured, allowing for a guided but flexible dialogue. This format allowed the researcher to explore specific themes whilst allowing the respondents to express their experiences and perspectives freely and in-depth. Rather than rigidly adhering to a predetermined set of questions, this flexibility ensured that the conversation could evolve organically, led by the participants' insights and experiences. Such a participant-driven approach is particularly effective in uncovering nuanced and in-depth perspectives that might otherwise remain unexplored in a more structured interview format.

More importantly, this approach acknowledged and leveraged the interconnectedness of various topic areas as perceived by the participants. As

Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 645) noted, the links that participants draw between different topics are invaluable in understanding the complex web of relationships that define subject matter areas. By allowing participants the space to make these connections, the researcher could gain a more holistic and integrated understanding of the themes under study. This is critical in qualitative research, where the richness of data lies not just in discrete responses to specific questions, but in the broader narratives and associations that participants construct. The participants, accordingly, were encouraged to engage in discussions on the topics as they organically emerged during the conversation. For example, the researcher frequently posed the question, ‘Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to the field?’ This open-ended question provided the participants with the freedom to explore aspects they might not have initially considered or articulated, thereby enriching the interview data.

This methodical approach in selecting and preparing participants for the interviews not only ensured a high level of engagement but also reinforced the ethical standards of the research. The blend of students and faculty members in the interview process provided a well-rounded view of the research topic, crucial for achieving the study's objectives.

5.4 Questionnaire

5.4.1 The Purpose of the Questionnaire in This Research

The questionnaire aimed to augment participant observation and semi-structured interviews, thereby creating a robust methodological framework and contributing to a richer dataset. This can facilitate a holistic comprehension of the multitude of factors that substantially impact the learning experiences of students involved in online art and design education, with a specific focus on Sino-UK collaborative projects. The significance of this approach lies in its

capacity to delve into the complexities of online learning environments. Online art and design education, being inherently visual and interactive, presents unique challenges and opportunities for students and educators alike. Understanding these nuances is crucial, especially in the context of Sino-UK collaborative projects.

One of the objectives of this research is to identify the key elements that contribute to an effective and engaging online learning experience in art and design. This encompasses a range of factors, from the design and accessibility of online resources to the methods of instruction and interaction within these digital platforms. The research seeks to ascertain what aspects of online education resonate most with students and how these can be optimised to enhance their educational journey. Furthermore, the study aims to explore in depth the practical perceptions of students and educators regarding effective approaches to online art and design education. This involves examining the pedagogical strategies employed in these courses, the use of digital tools and resources, and how students engage with these elements. The aim is to identify best practices and potential areas for improvement in the delivery of online art and design education. Another crucial aspect of this research is the exploration of feasible ways to advance online art and design education, particularly in the context of Sino-UK partnerships. This involves not only assessing the current state of such educational collaborations but also envisioning future possibilities and innovations. The goal is to propose strategies that can foster more effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive online learning environments.

The Sino-UK collaborative aspect adds an additional layer of complexity to this research. It necessitates an understanding of the educational paradigms, cultural values, and technological landscapes prevalent in both China and the United Kingdom. The research aims to explore how these factors influence the design, implementation, and reception of online art and design courses within

these partnerships. It also seeks to understand how students from diverse cultural backgrounds perceive and adapt to these online learning environments. The design of the questionnaire integrated findings from participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The aim was to test the wider applicability of these findings among a larger sample of participants who had also engaged with such transnational educational programs, allowing for a broader validation of trends observed in the earlier, more focused qualitative research.

The research endeavours to conduct a meticulous examination and extensive exploration of the practical perceptions surrounding what constitutes an enhanced learning experience in the realm of online art and design education. This academic pursuit is anchored in a deep-seated commitment to improving student engagement and satisfaction in this increasingly significant educational sector. The study is particularly focused on understanding and enhancing the learning experience within the framework of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education initiatives. In this context, the focus is not merely on the transmission of knowledge but on creating an enriching learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and the development of practical skills. The research will explore a range of strategies aimed at enhancing the student experience, from interactive digital platforms to innovative curriculum designs that cater to diverse learning needs. It will delve into how these strategies can be adapted and optimized to create a more engaging and supportive online learning environment, where traditional classroom dynamics are transformed into meaningful virtual interactions tailored to student success.

5.4.2 The Development and Distribution of the Questionnaire

Collecting demographic information, such as age, educational background, and professional experience, is instrumental in recording respondents' descriptive details (Waterloo, 2022). This approach ensures a more personalized and contextual understanding of each participant's perspective, thereby enriching

the quality of the data collected (Pottruff, 2024).

In this study, the researcher designed 4 biographical questions aimed at capturing key demographic details, with a particular focus on aspects relevant to the unique context of transnational online art and design education. The underlying philosophy behind these questions was to gather essential data that would help contextualize participants' experiences and perspectives, particularly in relation to their diverse backgrounds, academic progress, and areas of specialization within art and design. Questions such as participants' first language, field of study or teaching and academic level were designed to offer a clearer understanding of the varied cultural and academic contexts in which the respondents operate. This approach allows the researcher to identify patterns and differences in educational outcomes and experiences based on these demographic variables. The demographic questions were thus structured to ensure that the study could effectively capture the diverse characteristics of both students and faculty members.

Following the completion of the demographic questions, the researcher proceeded to explore several key dimensions central to the study. These dimensions were informed by both the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model, which also guided the design of the semi-structured interview questions. However, during the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview data, the researcher identified an additional core category beyond the three presences—this category focused on participants' personal and individualised perspectives, as discussed in Section 6.3.6.

These perspectives offered valuable insights into participants' subjective experiences, emotional responses, and individual engagement with the transnational art and design online education context, thereby adding a deeper

layer to the understanding of their educational experience. Consequently, in the design of the questionnaire, the researcher incorporated these insights into a fourth dimension, 'The personal experiences and perceptions,' in addition to the three presences, to specifically examine participants' personal and subjective reflections. Each of the four dimensions contained 10 questions, bringing the total to 40 questions aimed at comprehensively capturing the multifaceted nature of participants' engagement with the study's core themes.

In terms of specific questionnaire questions, the first dimension, cognitive presence, focuses on how the course content helps students recognise previously overlooked issues, prompting more extensive research and deeper reflection. This dimension also highlights the exploration phase, where students are encouraged to gather and assess diverse information sources to address complex problems. Additionally, it investigates how students integrate different ideas and perspectives into meaningful work, enhancing their theoretical understanding. The practical application of new knowledge to real-world art and design projects is a key element, emphasising the importance of translating theory into practice. Critical thinking and higher-order reasoning are fostered through diverse online resources, while ongoing reflection encourages students to devise innovative solutions to complex challenges and apply them to their design work. The use of varied virtual learning materials is also examined, as these support a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts through multiple forms of engagement. Peer discussions and collaborative interactions further support the validation and deepening of knowledge, while independent thought and self-directed learning are promoted to meet the cognitive demands of an online educational environment. Lastly, the dimension highlights the value of reflective practice in integrating theoretical insights with artistic creation, ultimately improving design outcomes.

The second dimension, social presence, focuses on the factors influencing how

students' connections with their teachers and peers contribute to their learning experience and engagement. It examines the degree to which course interactions enable students to express themselves openly and feel understood by others. This dimension also considers how comfortable students are when sharing their ideas, experiences, and creative processes, alongside the importance of trust in encouraging active participation. Additionally, it evaluates how effectively the online course supports collaboration towards common goals, thereby improving learning outcomes. It explores how course interactions enable students to gain new insights and improve their creative work. It also examines whether the course content encourages students to engage with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering an understanding of diversity in art and design. Additionally, the effectiveness of online communication methods is evaluated in terms of promoting collaboration and the sharing of creative ideas among students. The survey also considers whether the feedback mechanisms within the course help students feel supported by instructors, increasing their confidence in the learning process. Finally, it investigates how the course design facilitates cross-cultural collaboration, helping students navigate challenges related to language and cultural differences.

The third dimension, teaching presence, examines various factors related to how instructors facilitate the learning process. It focuses on the clarity of course objectives and planning, which help students grasp the overall direction and intended outcomes. It also assesses the organisation and pacing of course content, ensuring students can follow the learning trajectory effectively. Another key aspect is the role of instructors in providing online guidance to deepen students' understanding of complex concepts. The dimension further explores how teaching strategies in a cross-cultural environment address language and cultural differences, enriching the learning experience. The timeliness and detail of feedback are evaluated for their impact on improving students' design

work and learning approaches. Additionally, the flexibility in course structure and tasks is considered in relation to accommodating diverse learning needs across cultural contexts. The dimension also looks at how instructor support enhances student confidence, promoting active participation in both learning and creative tasks. The use of targeted questions and discussions is assessed for its ability to encourage deeper analysis of key concepts, while tasks requiring regular reflection are evaluated for their role in helping students integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application. Finally, this dimension explores the diversity of assessment methods, considering how they allow students to demonstrate progress and receive constructive feedback.

Lastly, the fourth dimension, personal experiences and perceptions, focuses on how effectively the course facilitates communication between students, peers, and instructors despite challenges such as time zone differences. It also explores how well students can comprehend course material and feedback without relying on non-verbal cues such as facial expressions or body language. This dimension examines the balance between teaching and administrative tasks, assessing whether instructors provide sufficient support to ensure the smooth delivery of online courses. Additionally, it evaluates how the course design integrates the cultural and pedagogical strengths of both Chinese and British systems, enhancing the overall learning experience. Consideration of the needs of international students, particularly in overcoming language barriers in online learning, is also a key focus. The role of cross-cultural activities is examined for its impact on deepening students' understanding of global art trends and cultural diversity. Instructor guidance in fostering inspiration from diverse cultural backgrounds and expanding students' global perspectives is further explored. The dimension also looks at how technical support within the online course enables students to explore interdisciplinary fields in art and design, promoting innovation. Furthermore, it investigates how the course helps students connect with global artists and designers, broadening

their creative horizons. Finally, it assesses the effectiveness of online resources in linking students to international art communities, allowing them to participate in global exhibitions and discussions, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the field.

In the development of the questionnaire of these four dimensions, the researcher employed the Likert scale for each of these questions. This scale, extensively used in quantitative research for data collection and measurement, is highlighted for its robustness and adaptability in various research contexts (Norman, 2010, p. 625; Jamieson, 2004, p. 1217). Its design as an additive scale, with an ordinal level of measurement, makes it an invaluable tool in gauging attitudes, perceptions, and responses.

The Likert scale's principal characteristic is its ordinal nature, where data appears in an ordered format. While these scales are inherently ordinal, consisting of a sequence of ordered categories, their application in research has been subject to thorough examination. Numerous scholars have delved into the nuances of Likert-type data, uncovering evidence that supports treating these variables as approximately continuous (Johnson & Creech, 1983, p. 398; Norman, 2010, p. 625; Sullivan & Artino, 2013, p. 541; Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 390). This understanding permits the assimilation of Likert scale data in parametric analysis methods, thus broadening the analytical scope for researchers.

The accuracy of the Likert scale hinges on the precision with which each item is crafted. Every statement must be a clear and direct representation of the variable to be measured, ensuring that the respondent's reaction is relevant and specific to the research question at hand. This requires each item to be a well-formulated sentence or judgment, prompting the respondent to articulate their level of concordance or discordance (Joshi et al., 2015, p. 396). The final

score derived from this scale is indicative of the subject's overall response within the range of the scale, offering valuable insights into their perceptions or attitudes regarding the topic of study.

Each question on the Likert scale in the survey used in this research was crafted to measure specific aspects of the respondents' attitudes or opinions. The scale offers a range of options, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing respondents to express their position on a particular statement. This range is critical in capturing the nuances and variances in respondents' perceptions. Each response is assigned a numerical value, contributing to a cumulative score that reflects the collective response to all the questions. This scoring method is essential for transforming subjective opinions into quantifiable data, thereby facilitating a more objective and statistically sound analysis. By adopting this approach, the researcher ensures that the questionnaire not only aligns with the high standards of academic rigour but also provides comprehensive insights into the experiences and strategies employed in this educational domain.

The recruitment and distribution of the questionnaire for this study followed a strategic and methodical approach, grounded in the same principles used for recruiting participants for the participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Initially, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to those who had already participated in the earlier stages of the research. This approach helped maintain continuity and further enriched the data by integrating both qualitative and quantitative perspectives from the same group.

To expand the sample size and ensure greater diversity, the researcher employed a recruitment strategy similar to that used during the semi-structured interviews. Leveraging personal and academic networks, the researcher reached out to a broader pool of potential participants who had relevant

experience in transnational online art and design education. This outreach was facilitated through popular social media platforms and online networks, ensuring broad visibility and engagement with individuals within the target demographic. The recruitment process was supported by direct communication through these platforms.

This carefully constructed recruitment process ensured the inclusion of a wide array of perspectives, thereby enhancing the robustness and representativeness of the study's findings. The researcher maintained a professional and ethical stance throughout, ensuring that all participants had the opportunity to engage with the research in an informed and respectful manner.

The questionnaires were administered online using Wenjuanxing, a widely used Chinese professional survey platform. Similar to Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, or CloudResearch, Wenjuanxing offers online questionnaire design and survey tools for businesses, research institutions, and individuals. The questions in the questionnaire were presented in both English and Chinese, ensuring clarity and ease of understanding for all participants. This bilingual format helped accommodate both students and faculty members, making the questionnaires more accessible and promoting more accurate and thoughtful responses.

5.4.3 The Pilot Study of the Questionnaire

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire designed for this research, pre-tests were conducted. These preliminary tests were essential in refining the questionnaire and confirming its effectiveness in gathering relevant data. The pre-testing phase involved distributing the questionnaire to a sample of participants, replicating the process intended for the main study. This phase was critical in identifying potential issues with the questionnaire, such as ambiguous questions or flaws in its overall structure and flow.

In some instances, questionnaires were distributed toward the end of the semi-structured interviews. This approach resulted in higher response and completion rates, possibly because the interview context provided a conducive environment for participants to engage more thoroughly with the questionnaire, perhaps due to the rapport established during the interviews or a clearer understanding of the research objectives.

For the pilot study, a total of 75 questionnaires were distributed, comprising 50 aimed at students and 25 at faculty members. After excluding hastily filled (speeding) responses and those with missing data, 43 valid student questionnaires and 16 valid faculty member questionnaires were retained, totalling 59 valid responses. The valid response rate stood at a notable 78.6%, indicating strong engagement from the participants.

The construct validity of the questionnaire was assessed using factor analysis, guided by recommendations from various academic sources. Field (2005) suggested factor analysis as a validation method, corroborated by the Chinese publication Statistical Data Analysis and Applications of SPSS (Yu and He, 2003), and further supported by Henson and Roberts (2006), who noted that factor analysis is a commonly used method for validating questionnaire constructs. These sources provided a solid foundation for ensuring the academic rigour and methodological soundness of the research.

Factor analysis plays a pivotal role in research, valued for its ability to group questionnaire items into coherent factors that represent the core constructs of the variables being studied (Pallant, 2007). This technique is particularly advantageous in handling large datasets, helping to identify clusters of variables with shared characteristics, which can then be organised into descriptive categories (Béjar, 2013).

A key strength of factor analysis is its scalability, making it useful whether a study involves a few or hundreds of variables. In survey research, where respondents answer a wide range of questions, factor analysis reduces numerous items into a more manageable set while preserving the essence of the gathered information. It goes beyond simplification, allowing researchers to focus on the core aspects most relevant to the research objectives. This technique adds depth to research by uncovering the underlying structure of the data and facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the variables (Yong & Pearce, 2013, p. 79).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic, which assesses the suitability of factor analysis, is a key measure in this process. A KMO value greater than 0.5 is generally considered satisfactory for factor analysis (Field, 2013). In this pilot study, the KMO value is 0.884, well above the minimum threshold. This high KMO value suggested strong commonality among the questionnaire items, supporting the appropriateness of factor analysis and paving the way for more detailed statistical exploration.

After completing the pilot study, the researcher proceeded with the formal distribution and collection of questionnaires, a process that spanned from October 2023 to February 2024. This phase was carefully planned and executed to ensure a thorough understanding of the dynamics involved in Sino-UK art and design education partnership projects. The research sought to capture a wide range of perspectives, thereby enriching the depth and breadth of the findings.

The researcher managed the distribution of questionnaires to both students and faculty members involved in art and design projects within the Sino-UK university partnerships. The response rate was encouraging, with 192 student

responses and 82 faculty member responses received. These responses provided a rich dataset, encompassing diverse insights and experiences from individuals engaged in these collaborative educational projects.

5.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the data collection methods employed in this study, which investigates the use of online education resources in Sino-UK transnational art and design partnerships. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, the researcher has created a multifaceted dataset that captures both the depth and breadth of experiences within these educational collaborations.

The participant observation method was instrumental in providing real-time data on the interactions between students and faculty within the digital learning environments. This method highlighted the evolving role of technology in facilitating or hindering communication, collaboration, and engagement in online art and design courses. The researcher's neutral yet active presence in these online spaces allowed for the collection of detailed observations regarding how students navigate virtual classrooms, access resources, and interact with their peers and instructors in an environment where traditional face-to-face cues are often absent.

Semi-structured interviews complemented these observations by offering a deeper, more personal perspective on the experiences of the participants. Through carefully crafted interview questions, the researcher was able to gather nuanced insights into how students and faculty members perceive the challenges and opportunities of online learning. The interviews revealed the complex interplay between cultural expectations, pedagogical approaches, and

technological limitations in shaping the overall learning experience in these transnational programs. Participants shared their thoughts on the effectiveness of online tools in fostering creativity and collaboration, the impact of cross-cultural interactions on their learning process, and the ways in which online education has transformed traditional teaching methodologies in art and design.

The use of questionnaires added a valuable quantitative dimension to the study, allowing the researcher to collect data from a larger sample of participants and identify broader trends across the Sino-UK partnerships. The questionnaires were designed to measure key variables such as student engagement, satisfaction with online platforms, and the perceived effectiveness of digital resources in supporting learning outcomes. The data gathered through the questionnaires provided a statistical foundation for validating the findings from the qualitative methods, ensuring that the study's conclusions are both reliable and generalizable. Furthermore, the use of factor analysis in the pilot study allowed the researcher to validate the construct of the questionnaire, ensuring that the measures accurately reflected the validity.

In conclusion, this chapter has laid the project’s foundation for the analysis of the data collected through the mixed-methods approach. By combining the strengths of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, the researcher has been able to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. The diversity of methods employed not only enriched the data but also ensured that the findings of the study were well-rounded and robust, offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of online education in a globalized context. These insights will be explored further in the following chapters, where the data will be analysed in detail to inform recommendations for future practices in online transnational education.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis: Understanding Sino-UK Transnational Art and Design Online Higher Education

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the primary focus is on the detailed process of data analysis employed throughout the research. The study utilizes both thematic and descriptive statistical analysis methods, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the data collected. This dual approach allows for a thorough exploration of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research, thereby providing a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter.

Thematic analysis is particularly pivotal to the qualitative component of this study. It plays a crucial role in interpreting data gathered from participant observations and semi-structured interviews. The researcher's active engagement in an eight-week participant observation within a digital media arts module—an initiative that represents a collaborative effort between a UK university and a Chinese institution—provided an invaluable context for exploring the application and impact of online education resources. The observation period allowed researchers to immerse themselves in the

educational environment, closely monitoring and recording the interactions, teaching practices, and learning experiences of the participants. These detailed observation notes formed the foundation of the thematic analysis, enabling the researcher to gain a profound, first-hand understanding of the complex educational dynamics and cross-cultural interactions that defined this international partnership.

To further enrich the qualitative analysis, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with carefully selected participants, including 31 students and 6 faculty members. These interviews offered additional layers of insight, providing personal perspectives and reflections that complemented the data obtained from participant observations. The analysis of these interviews was carried out using a three-step coding technique, a method designed to systematically identify, categorize, and interpret key themes. This approach allowed the researcher to uncover patterns and themes that were not immediately apparent from the observation data alone, thereby adding greater depth and nuance to the qualitative analysis.

On the quantitative side, descriptive data analysis was utilized to thoroughly dissect the data obtained from survey questionnaires distributed to the study's participants. The good response rate, with 192 students and 82 faculty submissions, provided a robust and reliable dataset for analysis. This dataset allowed the researcher to systematically categorize and quantify the responses, enabling the identification of significant patterns, trends, and correlations in how online education resources were utilized and perceived by both students and faculty. By employing various statistical measures, such as frequency distributions and averages, the researcher was able to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the effectiveness and reception of the online educational tools and platforms used in the study.

The integration of thematic and descriptive data analysis methods within this research offers a robust, multidimensional approach to understanding the research topic. The thematic analysis brings a deep, nuanced understanding of the qualitative data, revealing the intricate details of participant experiences, educational practices, and cultural interactions. Meanwhile, descriptive data analysis introduces a layer of quantitative rigour, ensuring that the study's findings are both insightful and statistically sound. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods ensures a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, capturing both the subtle qualitative insights and the concrete quantitative realities of applying online education resources within the Sino-UK partnership. Together, these analytical approaches contribute significantly to a broader and more thorough understanding of the effectiveness and challenges associated with implementing online education resources in international art and design teaching projects.

6.2 Thematic Analysis of Participant Observation Evidence Gathered from an Eight-Week Online Digital Media Arts Module

6.2.1 Data Analysis Techniques

In the field of qualitative research, systematic observation and detailed recording are crucial, especially in the context of field notes, as emphasized by Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte (1999). Field notes, often utilized as a primary data collection tool in participant observation studies, encompass a wide array of recorded observations. These include descriptions of observed events, informal conversations, daily activities, rituals, and the researcher's personal reflections, thoughts, and assumptions. Such comprehensive recording ensures a rich and multifaceted collection of data.

After the observation phase, researchers immerse themselves in these field notes or transcripts, often reviewing them multiple times. This immersion is key

to understanding the depth and breadth of the collected data. Researchers then categorize the data, forming themes that align with their research questions or objectives. This thematic organisation, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 77), helps in identifying patterns, behaviours, and interactions within the data. The creation of a coding system allows for the labelling or ‘tagging’ of specific data elements, like behaviours, emotions, or social interactions, facilitating the identification of connections within the data.

Merriam (1988) and Spradley (1980) provide frameworks for recording and analysing field notes. Merriam's observation guide includes elements like the physical environment, detailed descriptions of participants, activities, interactions, non-verbal cues, and dialogue. Spradley's nine observational dimensions encompass aspects such as space, actor, activity, purpose, events, time, goals, and feelings, offering a comprehensive perspective on participant observation.

Applying these principles, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of observation notes from an eight-week online digital media arts module. This analysis was instrumental in exploring the intricacies of online educational interactions, pedagogical strategies, and cultural dynamics within the module. The observation notes proved invaluable for understanding the effectiveness of online tools in enhancing engagement, creativity, and collaboration among students and instructors of diverse backgrounds.

This detailed approach to data analysis enabled the researcher to uncover key themes and patterns, providing a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the dynamics in Sino-UK collaborative online art and design education. The method not only deepened the researcher's comprehension but also ensured a thorough, contextually grounded analysis, significantly contributing to the study of international online education in the arts.

6.2.2 Design of the Observation Notes

In this study, the researcher employed participant observation as a method to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subjects involved. The aim is to observe and analyse their current state, encompassing aspects like identity, environment, work processes, and their perceptions about these elements. To systematically capture and interpret these observations, the researcher utilized the P.O.E.M.S Framework, an observational tool that facilitates a holistic understanding of various elements within a study's context. As outlined by Fulton Suri & IDEO. (2005), this framework is especially effective in exploring beyond the immediate subject of observation, linking people, services, messages, and environments to a broader context.

Fulton Suri & IDEO. (2005) provides a detailed breakdown of the P.O.E.M.S Framework's components.

People: This includes the demographics, roles, behavioural characteristics, and the number of individuals present in the observed environment.

Objects: This involves items that people interact with, such as furniture, equipment, machines, appliances, tools, and other relevant objects.

Environments: Observations focus on aspects like architecture, lighting, furniture, temperature, and the overall atmosphere.

Messages: This examines the language tone, common phrases, slogans, and the nature of social and professional interactions.

Services: It encompasses all services, applications, tools, and frameworks utilized within the environment.

In this specific study, the researcher's application of the P.O.E.M.S Framework is tailored to the context of participant observation in an educational setting. 'People' refers to the roster of students and educators involved in the observation, 'Objects' are the educational tools and aids employed in the online teaching and learning process. 'Environments' captures the setting and context of the online module, including keynote lectures, presentation sessions, and chat interactions. 'Messages' focuses on the dynamics of online communication between educators and students.

Significantly, with regard to the design of the 'Services' component of the P.O.E.M.S Framework, the participant observation was conducted by the researcher at the early stages of the empirical work and the programme was carried out completely online. Therefore, in designing a key component of the observation notes related to 'Services', the researcher referred to the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model for online learning environments. The 'Services' component is particularly concentrated on the services utilized by educators and students within the realms of cognitive, social, and teaching presence. The observation notes are structured to align with these components, ensuring a comprehensive and systematic collection of data relevant to the study's focus. This approach allows the researcher to not only gather data effectively but also to analyse and understand the interconnectedness of these elements within the educational context.

Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte (1999) suggest that the researcher's feelings, thoughts and assumptions can be recorded separately. Therefore, the researcher's personal experience type of observation was also recorded as a separate section in the notes named 'Individualised expression of participants'. The observation notes template is shown below.

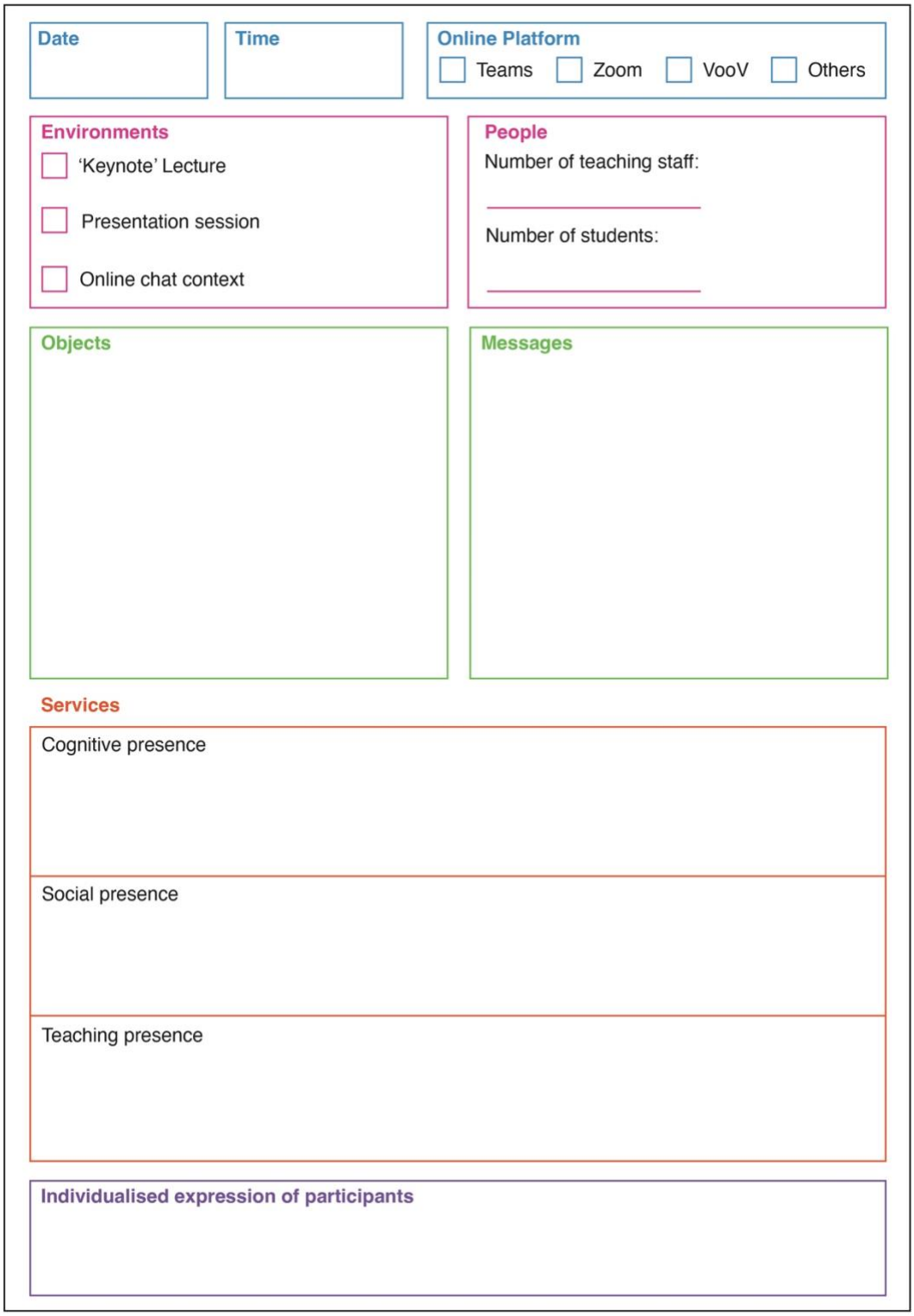

Figure 6.1: Observation Notes Template

6.2.3 Analyses from the Observation Notes

In the thematic analysis of Observation Notes from the online digital media arts

module, the researcher examined several key themes that emerged from the participant observations. This analysis scrutinized how students and instructors engage within these digital environments and the unique dynamics of their virtual communication. Parallel to this was an exploration of the cultural influences on learning, where the researcher observed the impact of differing educational backgrounds from the UK and China on teaching approaches and student perceptions. The researcher was able to uncover the intricate layers of the online educational experience in the Sino-UK collaborative setting, providing valuable insights into the complexities of digital learning, cross-cultural interactions, and the evolving nature of online art and design education.

In the thematic analysis of Observation Notes from the online digital media arts module, the researcher rigorously explored key themes, informed by the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model, across cognitive, social, and teaching presences. These themes were identified through observation in various educational settings, including 9 'Keynote' Lectures, 14 Presentation sessions, and online chat contexts, with each theme mentioned at least ten times in different instances.

For cognitive presence, themes included the instructors' strategies for designing a cohesive and comprehensive online curriculum, fostering inclusivity and cultural sensitivity, adapting content to the digital environment, and promoting student engagement to ensure deep, critical learning. In social presence, the researcher noted themes of enhancing communication through online platforms, facilitating collaborative group activities, building a supportive community, encouraging active participation, and adapting to online communication norms. Teaching presence was characterized by structured curriculum design, effective use of digital tools for instruction, the facilitation of learning activities, adaptation to online teaching challenges, and proactive student engagement and support.

Beyond these presences, the researcher also documented significant personalized observations. These observations, while not directly correlating with the cognitive, social, or teaching presences, were pivotal in understanding the subtleties of the online learning experience. These additional insights provided a more nuanced view of the educational dynamics within the Sino-UK collaborative module, underscoring the complexity and multifaceted nature of this modern educational setting.

Table 6.1 presents a synthesized view of cognitive presence in an online digital media arts module, highlighting key themes such as curriculum design, cultural sensitivity, adaptation to online contexts, engagement strategies, and critical inquiry methods. These themes collectively illustrate the approach to navigating the complexities of online learning in a Sino-UK educational setting.

Theme	Description	Number of Times
Curriculum Design and Content Delivery	Examines the instructors' strategies for structuring and presenting the course material in a way that ensures it is cohesive, comprehensive, and appropriate for online learning.	31
Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Communication	Highlights the instructors' efforts to bridge cultural gaps and foster an inclusive learning environment, acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of students in the Sino-UK educational context.	17

Adaptation to Online Educational Contexts	Addresses how educational content is maintained and adapted in an online learning setting, taking into account the challenges and opportunities specific to digital education.	28
Continuous Engagement and Conceptual Understanding	Examines the instructors' consistent efforts to maintain student engagement with course content, ensuring the development of a comprehensive and nuanced grasp of the subject matter.	15
Deep Learning through Critical Inquiry	Encapsulates the instructors' emphasis on encouraging students to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective practices, fostering deeper learning and understanding.	11

Table 6.1: Themes found through Cognitive Presence Observations

Table 6.2 sets out observations related to social presence in an online digital media arts module, highlighting the initiatives in fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment. It covers the strategic use of communication platforms, facilitation of group activities, building a community of learners, promotion of student participation, and adaptation to online interaction norms. These themes collectively showcase the efforts made to enhance connectivity, participation, and a sense of community in the digital education setting.

Theme	Description	Number of Times
Utilization of Communication Platforms	Explores the instructors' strategic use of online platforms to enhance social interactions and connectivity among students and between students and instructors.	29
Facilitation of Group Activities	Focuses on the instructors' efforts to foster group interactions and promote collaborative learning through well-organised group tasks and discussions.	17
Building a Community of Learners	Addresses the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment where students feel connected to both their peers and the course content.	12
Promotion of Student Participation	Examines the strategies aimed at encouraging active engagement and the expression of opinions, fostering a lively and interactive learning environment.	34

Adaptation to Online Interaction Norms	Considers consistent efforts to help both instructors and students adjust to the norms and etiquettes of online communication, ensuring interactions are effective and respectful.	16

Table 6.2: Themes found through Social Presence Observations

Table 6.3 sets out a consolidated overview of teaching presence observations in an online digital media arts module, encapsulating strategies and approaches. It encompasses themes such as structured curriculum design, effective use of digital platforms for instruction, facilitation of learning activities, adaptation to online learning challenges, and proactive student engagement and support. These elements collectively depict the comprehensive approach to enhancing teaching efficacy in the Sino-UK online educational collaboration.

Theme	Description	Number of Times
Structured Curriculum Design	Highlights the instructors' efforts in developing a well-organised curriculum that aligns with both the objectives of the Sino-UK partnership and the specific demands of online learning.	10
Effective Use of Digital Platforms for Instruction	Discusses how the instructors adeptly utilise digital platforms to enhance	21

	the delivery of instruction and course content.	
Facilitation of Learning Activities	Focuses on the instructors' role in organising and guiding learning activities, such as group discussions and presentations, to support student learning.	32
Adaptation to Online Learning Challenges	Addresses the strategies made by instructors to maintain student engagement by adapting traditional teaching methodologies for the online learning environment.	14
Proactive Student Engagement and Support	Examines the methods used by the instructors to actively engage students in the learning process and provide necessary support, particularly in an online context.	36

Table 6.3: Themes found through Teaching Presence Observations

Table 6.4 presents the researcher's personal perspective observations, capturing insights beyond the structured frameworks of cognitive, social, and teaching presence. This section reflects a unique viewpoint, underscoring the participants' initiatives in the integration of technology in education, addressing

cultural and language challenges, managing the influence of time zone differences, overcoming challenges in online expression, and enhancing the effectiveness of administrative roles.

Theme	Description	Number of Times
Integration of Technology in Education	Analysing the broader implications of technology integration on teaching methodologies and student learning experiences.	22
Cultural and Language Challenges	Observing the difficulties faced by international students in asking questions and interacting in an online environment.	28
Influence of Time Zone Differences	Recognizing how time differences affect communication patterns in online contexts.	16
Challenges in Online Expression	Difficulty in absence of visual cues, such as facial expressions, impacted participants' satisfaction with the quality of education and their comprehension.	32
Effectiveness of Administrative Roles	Observing the instructor's management of administrative tasks alongside teaching responsibilities.	12

Table 6.4: Themes found through Individualised Expression of Participants

6.2.4 Conclusion

The thematic analysis of participant observation notes from the eight-week online digital media arts module has provided a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in an online, cross-cultural educational setting. This segment of the research, grounded in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model and enhanced by the P.O.E.M.S Framework, offers a robust framework for dissecting the complexities of cognitive, social, and teaching presences in a digital learning environment.

Firstly, the analysis revealed the complexities of maintaining cognitive presence in an online environment. Themes such as deep engagement with content, critical thinking, and reflective learning emerged as crucial elements in fostering a rich educational experience. However, these elements were often challenged by the limitations of the online format, such as the absence of face-to-face interaction, which traditionally supports deeper levels of critical inquiry and problem-solving.

Social presence, as indicated by the observation notes, plays a vital role in the success of online learning. The data suggests that fostering social presence requires continuous effort from educators to create a supportive and interactive environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and engaging with peers.

Teaching presence, another critical component of the online learning experience, was found to be most effective when educators were proactive in their engagement with students. The ability to adapt traditional teaching methodologies to an online context was particularly highlighted as a key factor in the success of the module.

Finally, the study also explored the personalized experiences of the participants, offering insights beyond the structured frameworks of cognitive, social, and teaching presence. These personalized observations provided a deeper understanding of the individual challenges and successes experienced by students and educators alike. In conclusion, the thematic analysis strategy outlined in this chapter provides an approach to realise a comprehensive view of the multifaceted nature of online education in a Sino-UK collaborative context.

6.3 Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Evidence Gathered from Students and Faculty Members

6.3.1 Data Analysis Techniques

To assist in the analysis, NVivo version 14 qualitative data analysis software was used in this research. This computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) offers efficiencies for researchers in managing data, ideas, and queries (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). NVivo software has been employed by many academic disciplines for qualitative data analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p. 70). The researcher utilized NVivo as the primary tool to aid in the analysis of interview data. According to Richards (2002, p. 199), NVivo is user-friendly for managing rich text data from interviews. It is renowned for supporting interactive inquiries and sampling, allowing the integration of qualitative research data to provide useful results. NVivo assists the researcher in classifying, sorting, and arranging unstructured information, offering a tool for analysing data to discover patterns, identify themes, glean insights, and develop meaningful conclusions.

NVivo software was instrumental in arranging patterns of meaning as themes and subthemes increased. This increase made shared themes and relationships more apparent, providing moments of ‘discovery’ (Richards, 2002, p. 199). The memo and annotation features in NVivo were particularly helpful

in the researcher's data analysis process. One common critique of coding in qualitative data analysis is that it can fragment data, leading to a loss of context, depth, and complexity (Bryman, 2016). NVivo helped the researcher not only organise the data but also maintain the context, fieldwork notes, and personal ideas together with the data during interpretation.

One advantage of NVivo was the ability to group all quotes under the same free and tree nodes from different respondents, making it convenient to trace the sources and references of nodes. Keeping memos or notes on differences and similarities helped establish core categories and themes. NVivo also proved apposite for handling a large number of transcripts, making it appropriate for analysing the transcripts from the 37 semi-structured interview participants in this research. The software itself did not perform the analysis and interpretations for the researcher; its main function was to facilitate the coding and analysis processes. For instance, when clicking on one node, all relevant raw data appeared on the screen with their sources. Therefore, NVivo proved to be a more efficient and effective method for analysis.

6.3.2 The Coding Process

To identify patterns of meaning within the data, thematic analysis was employed. This method allows for the identification, analysis, and reporting of themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data', which can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches.

This research followed the three-step coding technique described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) due to its reported usefulness and frequent application in qualitative data analysis. Grounded Theory’s core processes, such as coding, memos, and the concept of allowing theoretical ideas to emerge from data,

have influenced the development of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis in recent years. These software programs have been designed with Grounded Theory in mind (Bryman, 2016). For instance, coding in NVivo is similar to that of grounded theory, though it uses different terms. The coding procedures of grounded theory include open coding (the analytic process through which concepts are identified), axial coding (the process of linking codes to their subcategories), and selective coding (the process of integrating and refining the theory) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In NVivo, coding begins with free nodes, which represent the 'stand-alone' nodes without clear logical connections to other nodes. These free nodes are then catalogued into tree nodes, moving on to more specific categories. Subsequently, relationships among tree nodes are established to show connections between nodes. Thus, the three-step coding technique aids researchers in refining and categorizing codes further, guiding them in transitioning from initial to main categories. The three-step coding technique used in this research is discussed below.

Stage 1: Open coding - In this step, different data sources are fragmented and examined. A number of ideas are recognized and their dimensions and properties are developed analytically. Individual ideas, sentences, events, and observations are named. In this study, the researcher began the analysis process by coding each sentence in the interview transcripts, carefully assessing if any single word offered significant insights and required coding.

Stage 2: Axial coding - This step builds upon the first, recombining data to link and regroup categories logically. Based on the similarities and variances in the codes, the researcher divided the codes into smaller groups.

Stage 3: Selective coding - In this step, a core category is selected and related

to other categories. Major groups and themes were created by the researcher using additional parallels, contrasts, and pattern matching. This step builds on the previous one by combining sub-categories into major categories.

6.3.3 Open Coding

Open coding is the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically. By going beyond conventional methods of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data, it aims to provide the researcher with fresh insights (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, the researcher's specific steps in open coding of this research are as follows.

Firstly, the content from the original interview transcripts was extracted, and broken up into separate sentences, and coding elements were extracted from these sentences, which in turn led to a shift from generalised to refined language and the formation of initial concepts. Next, the initial concepts are optimised, analysed and filtered to bring together concepts of the same genus, analyse the links between words and form a cluster of concepts belonging to the same category. Finally, the conceptual clusters are further abstracted and named.

In the specific open coding process, the researcher used Nvivo to meticulously read through the collected interview data word by word, coding and labelling each segment without any preconceived notions or biases. This process generates initial concepts and identifies conceptual categories from the raw data. By performing open coding on the text, the researcher can identify and develop concepts along with their characteristics and dimensions. The steps involve naming and categorizing similar events and situations to form categories, resulting in a list of codes and categories.

The results of the primary theme coding are shown in Table 6.5 Through open

coding, this study identified 113 initial categories, comprising a total of 1,166 nodes, where each category was mentioned no less than 3 times, that is nodes. The top ten categories with the highest frequency are: ‘Lack of practical application and technical experience’, ‘Susceptible to outside interference’, ‘Exposure to massive art resources and technology’, ‘Instructional flexibility and accessibility’, ‘Education in China focuses on the mastery and application of technology’, ‘Education in the UK encourages creative thinking’, ‘Improvement of students' independent learning skills’, ‘WeChat’, ‘Wide range of employment opportunities and development platforms’ and ‘Autonomy of learning’.

It can be seen that the most frequently mentioned categories by respondents were two aspects of online education that they were dissatisfied with. Firstly, they believe that online education does not provide them with sufficient practical application opportunities and lacks hands-on technical experience. Secondly, they find that the online education format is prone to external distractions.

Following this, there are two aspects of online education that respondents are satisfied with. These include the ease with which participants can access a wealth of artistic resources and technologies and the flexibility and convenience that online education offers.

Regarding the cognitions of education in China and the UK, a significant number of respondents believe that Chinese education focuses on the mastery and application of technical skills, whereas the UK encourages creative thinking.

Additionally, a certain number of people think that online education has improved students' ability to learn independently. WeChat is the most frequently mentioned online tool by the respondents. The related project's students often highlighted their broad employment opportunities and development platforms, as well as the enhancement of their autonomous learning skills.

Table 6.5 below shows a sample of the top ten categories with the highest frequency of the open coding themes. The complete table can be seen in the Appendix 8.

Interview Transcript Text	Initial Category	Frequency
This approach can also lead to difficulties in applying knowledge as there is a lack of hands-on practice and direct interaction between peers, so I often organise online practical activities and virtual team projects to enhance students' hands-on skills and teamwork experience.	Lack of practical application and technical experience	61
In addition, due to the flexibility and convenience of online teaching, students may be more susceptible to external distractions, resulting in less effective learning.	Susceptible to outside interference	55
Online resources can make use of massive multimedia technology, such as pictures, video and audio, to vividly display works of art and historical documents, making learning more vivid and	Exposure to massive art resources and technology	53

interesting, and thus allowing students to have an understanding of cross-cultural art to generate diversity.		
One of the unique advantages I see in online education over face-to-face instruction is flexibility and convenience.	Instructional flexibility and accessibility	51
I feel that compared to the UK, Chinese education focuses on teaching students how to master the techniques of art and design software and how to apply these techniques in real business or competition cases, which is very result-orientated.	Education in China focuses on the mastery and application of technology	38
Art and design education in the UK encourages creative thinking and personal expression, and as a result, British-educated students tend to be eclectic in their creations, favouring the use of symbols, metaphors and abstract expressions to convey complex emotions and ideas.	Education in the UK encourages creative thinking	35

The online approach to teaching and learning has had a number of impacts on students' perceptions, perhaps the most obvious of which is for increased autonomy and independence in learning.	Improvement of student's independent learning skills	34
I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to communicate.	WeChat	32
The UK has a well-developed art industry and there is a high demand for art professionals in China. This feature enables students who have been educated in the Sino- UK partnership teaching project to have broader employment opportunities and development platforms.	Wide range of employment opportunities and development platforms	29
The biggest impact has been that I have had more time to study independently and have been able to choose what to study based on my interests and needs.	Autonomy of learning	28

Table 6.5: Open Coding Themes Sample

6.3.4 Axial Coding

In axial coding, categories are related to their sub-categories, and the relationships are tested against data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Additionally, categories are developed further, and signs of them are still sought after (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Subcategories are linked to a category using the "coding paradigm" of conditions, context, tactics, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Therefore, this study derived 19 main categories through axial coding based on the 113 categories obtained from open coding. Table 6.6 below shows a sample of the first category of the axial coding themes. The complete table can be seen in the Appendix 8. Additionally, the researchers provided meanings for each subcategory. These meanings of subcategories were derived by summarising and integrating the interview texts related to each subcategory.

The main categories are: ‘The cognition of education in China’, ‘The cognition of education in the UK’, ‘The cognition of Sino-UK partnership education’, ‘Reasons for choosing a certain online tool’, ‘The social factor in education’, ‘Intimate manifestations of online education’, ‘The utilisation of online tools’, ‘Teaching methods’, ‘Pedagogical focus’, ‘Teaching sessions’, ‘Educational effect’, ‘Characteristics of online education’, ‘Variations in online teaching’, ‘Positive aspects of online education’, ‘Negative aspects of online education’, ‘The advantages of partnership education projects’, ‘The characteristics of partnership education projects’, ‘The optimisation measures of partnership education projects’ and ‘The future expectations of partnership education projects’.

Main Category	Subcategory	Meaning of Category
The cognition of	➢ Education in	➢ China's education system

education in China	China focuses on the mastery and application of technology ➢ Education in China focuses on traditional aesthetic heritage and skill training ➢ Education in China focuses on practical functions ➢ Education in China lacks a sense of innovation ➢ Artistic resources in China are relatively insufficient ➢ Education in China does not place enough emphasis on free expression	emphasises the development of students' practical and technical application skills. ➢ Education in China attaches importance to the inheritance of traditional aesthetics, and students also need to master relevant art and design techniques through extensive training. ➢ Education in China tends to fulfil actual job requirements. ➢ Education in China favours traditional teaching methods and sometimes neglects to emphasise the importance of innovation. ➢ Arts resources in China may be relatively insufficient, e.g. the number and quality of art colleges and museums are not as abundant as in the UK. ➢ As the Chinese education

		system is relatively centralised and standardised, it emphasises a uniform syllabus and examination standards. Under this system, students' learning and expression often need to follow established standards and norms, limiting the space for free expression.

Table 6.6: Axial Coding Themes Sample

6.3.5 Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a ‘core’ category, and categories that need further explication are filled-in with descriptive detail (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Therefore, during the selective coding process, the researchers conducted further thematic summarization based on axial coding. The purpose of this step was to identify the core categories. Using the themes derived from the selective coding, the researchers identified five core categories, as the Table 6.7 shows: ‘The cognition of art and design education’, ‘Online education resources and socialisation’, ‘The educational process’, ‘The evaluation of online education’, and ‘The evaluation of the Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Project’.

Core Category	Subcategory
The cognition of art and design education	➢ The cognition of education in China ➢ The cognition of education in the UK

	➢ The cognition of Sino- UK partnership education
Online education resources and socialisation	➢ The utilisation of online tools ➢ Reasons for choosing a certain online tool ➢ The social factor in education ➢ Intimate manifestations of online education
The educational process	➢ Teaching methods ➢ Pedagogical focus ➢ Teaching sessions ➢ Educational effect
The delivery of online education	➢ Characteristics of online education ➢ Variations in online teaching ➢ Positive aspects of online education ➢ Negative aspects of online education
The evaluation of the Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Project	➢ The advantages of partnership education projects ➢ The characteristics of partnership education projects ➢ The optimisation measures of partnership education projects ➢ The future expectations of partnership education projects

Table 6.7: Selective Coding Themes

6.3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of semi-structured interviews employed thematic analysis and Corbin and Strauss's three-step coding technique to rigorously

analyse qualitative data. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration and understanding of the patterns and themes within the data, offering valuable insights into the findings of this research.

Specifically, through open coding, the researcher obtained 113 initial categories. Then, based on these initial categories, the researcher categorised 19 main categories in axial coding. Finally, through selective coding, the researcher finalised 5 core categories.

Figure 6.3.6 below shows a visualisation of the themes from the three-step coding process. It illustrates how the three ‘Presences’ in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model align with the core categories identified through coding. Specifically, the themes derived from the coding process correspond directly with the key topics of the semi-structured interview questions, which were designed around the three ‘Presences’—Cognitive, Social, and Teaching.

For instance, themes related to ‘Cognitive Presence’ are reflected in the core category of ‘The Cognition of Art and Design Education’; ‘Social Presence’ is represented in the category of ‘Online Education Resources and Socialisation’; and ‘Teaching Presence’ is evident in both ‘The Delivery of Online Education’ and ‘The Educational Process’. The final core category, ‘Evaluation of Sino-UK Art and Design Collaboration Projects’, captures participants' subjective and individual perspectives. This alignment not only demonstrates the theoretical consistency of the research design but also highlights how the themes emerging from data analysis closely reflect the structure of the semi-structured interview questions used in data collection.

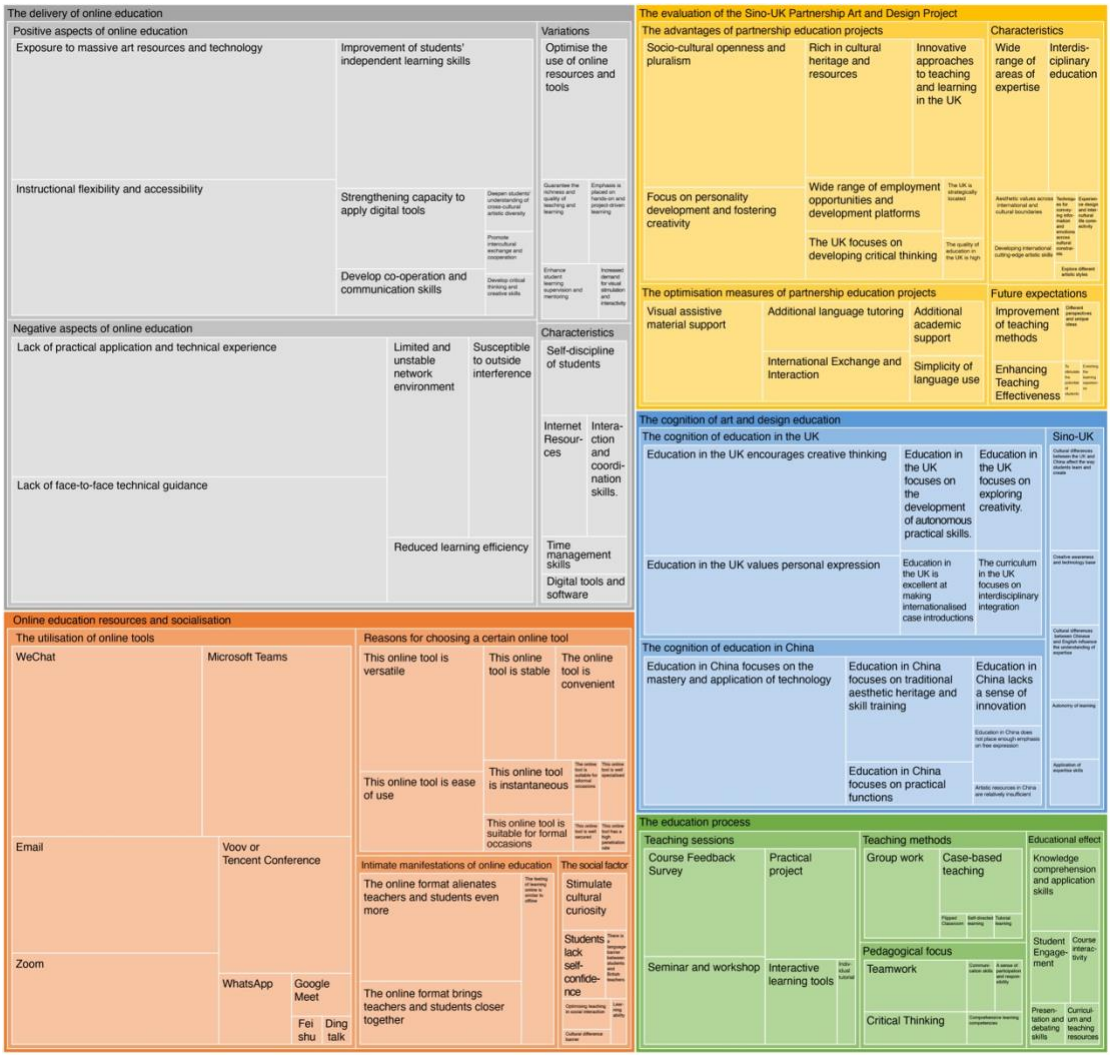

Figure 6.2: Visualisation of the Themes from the Three-Step Coding

Overall, the meticulous application of the three-step coding technique not only validated the theoretical framework used but also enriched the understanding of the participants' experiences, contributing significantly to the overall findings of the research. This rigorous analytical process ensured that the data were systematically categorized and interpreted, allowing for the emergence of meaningful patterns and themes. The insights gained from this process have significant implications for the field of online education, particularly in the context of art and design. They highlight the essential role of cognitive, social, and teaching presences in creating an effective online learning environment. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the value of incorporating participants' lived

experiences into the research, which can lead to more grounded and practical insights that can inform the future findings chapter.

6.4 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Evidence Gathered from Students and Faculty Members

6.4.1 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were managed and analysed using SPSS version 27. The software was chosen for its versatility (Arkkelin, 2014) and user-friendly interface. SPSS is known for being very user-friendly, which makes it a widely used resource in education (Muijs, 2004). Additionally, SPSS offers a comprehensive range of statistical tools and techniques, making it suitable for various types of data analysis. This combination of features ensures that users can perform detailed and accurate analyses with relative ease, thereby facilitating better insights and informed decision-making.

Firstly, the researcher conducted reliability and validity analyses to ensure that the questionnaire possessed robust measurement properties. Reliability analysis was performed to assess the consistency and stability of the questionnaire items. Validity analysis, on the other hand, was carried out to determine whether the questionnaire accurately captured the constructs it was designed to measure.

Next, descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the various dimensions of the questionnaire data. This involved calculating measures such as minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, and median to summarise and describe the basic features of the data. By using descriptive statistics, the researcher was able to provide a clear and detailed overview of the sample's demographic profile, including variables such as age, gender, education level, and other

relevant characteristics. Additionally, descriptive statistics helped in understanding the distribution and central tendencies of each dimension of the questionnaire, offering insights into the general patterns and trends within the data. These steps of data analysis were crucial for setting the stage for more advanced statistical tests and interpretations.

This meticulous approach not only underscores the effectiveness of SPSS as a versatile and powerful analytical tool, but also lays a robust foundation for the subsequent findings in chapter 7. SPSS facilitates a deeper understanding of the data, enabling researchers to uncover nuanced insights and make well-supported decisions based on their findings.

6.4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

6.4.2.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability, also known as dependability, refers to the trustworthiness of a questionnaire, mainly demonstrated through the consistency, uniformity, reproducibility, and stability of the test results (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). A good measurement tool should consistently yield the same results when repeatedly measuring the same subject to be considered reliable (Moser and Kalton, 1989). There are various methods to assess the internal reliability of a scale; this research employs Cronbach's alpha to represent the internal consistency reliability of the scale, which is the most commonly used method in scientific research today (Forero, 2023). The test formula is as follows.

$$a = \frac{k}{k-1}(1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma^2})$$

Cronbach's alpha is viewed as the most appropriate measure of reliability when using Likert scales (Whitley & Kite, 2013; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). Hinton et al. (2004) suggested four cut-off points for reliability, which

include excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below).

In response to the category ‘Corrected item-total correlation’ depicts the correlation between a given item and the sum score of other items. A score above 0.5 means that a strong, positive correlation is found between the scores, while a score between 0.3-0.5 is considered acceptable (Shi, Mo, & Sun, 2012, p. 152). ‘Alpha if item deleted’, there is no significant increase in the reliability coefficient when any question item is deleted, thus indicating that the question item should not be deleted for processing (Shi, Mo, & Sun, 2012, p. 152).

Using the aforementioned method, the reliability of each question in the questionnaire, as well as the overall reliability, was calculated. The results are shown in the Table 6.8, the reliability values of each dimension in this survey of both Students' questionnaires (SQ) and Faculty members' questionnaires (FQ) are above 0.7, indicating relatively high stability and a certain degree of trustworthiness. The CITCs in this study all exceeded 0.5, indicating a good correlation between the analysed items and also a good level of reliability. In conclusion, the research data reliability is of high quality and can be used for further analyses.

Students' questionnaires	Corrected item-total correlations (CITCs)	Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach's alpha	Faculty members' questionnaires	Corrected item-total correlations (CITCs)	Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach's alpha
SQ1	0.636	0.791		FQ1	0.699	0.791	
SQ2	0.656	0.791		FQ2	0.696	0.791	
SQ3	0.643	0.791		FQ3	0.720	0.791	
SQ4	0.665	0.791		FQ4	0.702	0.791	
SQ5	0.651	0.791		FQ5	0.662	0.791	
SQ6	0.663	0.791		FQ6	0.634	0.791	
SQ7	0.641	0.791		FQ7	0.647	0.791	
SQ8	0.672	0.791		FQ8	0.651	0.791	
SQ9	0.672	0.791		FQ9	0.667	0.791	
SQ10	0.668	0.791		FQ10	0.674	0.791	
SQ11	0.644	0.791	0.791	FQ11	0.669	0.791	0.791
SQ12	0.650	0.791		FQ12	0.681	0.791	
SQ13	0.655	0.791		FQ13	0.662	0.791	
SQ14	0.680	0.791		FQ14	0.663	0.791	
SQ15	0.637	0.791		FQ15	0.701	0.791	
SQ16	0.648	0.791		FQ16	0.689	0.791	
SQ17	0.682	0.791		FQ17	0.696	0.791	
SQ18	0.653	0.791		FQ18	0.696	0.791	
SQ19	0.649	0.791		FQ19	0.693	0.791	
SQ20	0.659	0.791		FQ20	0.653	0.791	
SQ21	0.631	0.791		FQ21	0.665	0.791	
SQ22	0.669	0.791		FQ22	0.688	0.791	

Table 6.8: The Cronbach's Alpha of SQ and FQ

6.4.2.2 Validity Analysis

Validity is the extent to which an idea, deduction, or measurement is well-

founded and relates precisely to the real world (Linn & Gronlund, 2000). Validity was traditionally subdivided into three categories: content, criterion-related, and construct validity (Messick, 1989, p. 13). Among these three categories, when the aspect being measured is known as an abstract construct that is estimated from observable events, it is referred to as construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, p. 281). The process of validating the interpretations about that construct as indicated by the test score is called construct validation (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, p. 281).

In construct validation, factor analysis uses mathematical procedures to simplify interrelated measures and discover patterns in a set of variables (Child, 2006). Attempting to discover the simplest method of interpretation of observed data is known as parsimony, which is the main aim of factor analysis (Harman, 1976). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) tries to uncover complex patterns by exploring datasets and testing predictions (Child, 2006). EFA is used when a researcher wants to determine the number of factors influencing variables and analyse which variables group together (Williams, Brown, & Onsman, 2010).

In the context of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are key measures used to assess the suitability of data for factor analysis. A KMO value closer to 0 indicates that the sum of partial correlations is significantly large compared to the sum of correlations, suggesting a diffusion in the pattern of correlations among the variables and implying that the data may not be suitable for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). In such cases, factor analysis is likely to be inappropriate as it would not yield distinct or reliable factors due to the scattered nature of the correlations (Field, 2018).

Conversely, a KMO value that is close to 1 signals that the patterns of correlations among the variables are relatively compact. This compactness is

conducive to factor analysis, as it suggests that the application of this technique is likely to result in the extraction of distinct and reliable factors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The data is, therefore, considered suitable for factor analysis, and the resulting factors are expected to be well-defined and interpretable (Field, 2018).

The KMO values are further categorized into different ranges to aid in the assessment of the data's suitability for factor analysis. Values that range between 0.5 to 0.7 are considered mediocre, implying that while factor analysis can be conducted, the results might not be as reliable or distinct (Kaiser, 1974; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). KMO values in the range of 0.7 to 0.8 are regarded as good, suggesting a higher likelihood of obtaining meaningful and distinct factors. When the KMO values fall between 0.8 to 0.9, they are considered ‘very good’, indicating a very suitable dataset for factor analysis with the expectation of clear and reliable factor extraction (Kaiser, 1974; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Lastly, KMO values above 0.9 are classified as ‘superb’, denoting excellent suitability of the dataset for factor analysis and promising highly distinct and reliable factors (Kaiser, 1974; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

The Approximate Chi-Square (Approx. Chi-Square) value in Bartlett's test evaluates whether the correlation matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix, where variables are uncorrelated. A high Approx. The Chi-Square value indicates that the data is likely suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2018). The degrees of freedom (df) indicate the number of independent values that can vary in the analysis, calculated based on the number of observed variables in the correlation matrix. The higher the number of variables, the larger the df value, which influences the power of the test (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). The significance value (Sig.), where a value less than 0.05 suggests that the correlations between variables are significant, thus supporting the use of factor analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019).

KMO and Bartlett's Test (SQ)		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1262.099
	df	820
	Sig.	0.000
KMO and Bartlett's Test (FQ)		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.852
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1327.941
	df	861
	Sig.	0.000

Table 6.9: KMO and Bartlett's Test of SQ and FQ

By observing the results from both questionnaires from Students and Faculty members, the researcher can see that the KMO is 0.831 and 0.852 respectively. Therefore, this analysis establishes the validity of the data gathered.

6.4.3 Demographic Characteristics

This section considers data from both faculty members and students' questionnaires. The researcher gathered 192 students' responses and 82 faculty members' responses, identifying 22 Chinese universities from seven mainland regions of China - eastern, southern, central, northern, north-western, south-western and north-eastern China all of which have partnered with UK universities to launch art and design related projects.

Figure 6.3: Geographical Division of China

It should be clarified that according to the instructions of the Chinese Ministry of Education's Study Abroad Service Centre, citizens of the People's Republic of China who travel to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan to study are classified as studying abroad (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2020; Zou, 2022). Therefore, these three regions, are not within the scope of this research. For the reliability of the data collected, as presented in Table 6.10, the researcher tried to select the institutions as equally as possible from the seven geographical regions mentioned above, ensuring that between two to four institutions were selected in each geographical region.

SQ	Geographic region	Frequency	Percentage	FQ	Geographic region	Frequency	Percentage

Eastern	4	18.2	Eastern	4	18.2
Southern	2	9.1	Southern	3	13.6
Central	3	13.6	Central	3	13.6
Northern	3	13.6	Northern	3	13.6
North-western	3	13.6	North-western	3	13.6
South-western	3	13.6	South-western	2	9.1
North-eastern	4	18.2	North-eastern	4	18.2
Total	22	100	Total	22	100

Table 6.10: Geographical Regions of the Chinese Institutes of SQ and FQ

It can be observed from Table 6.11 that the gender distribution in the group of student respondents is that males accounted for 38.02% with 73 individuals and females accounted for 61.98% with 119 persons of the total sample. The large proportion of female students in this survey may reflect the general distribution of genders in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects. The first language of all participants is Chinese, indicating that the student group of this research is exclusively targeted at native Chinese speakers, which coincides with the enrolment of the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects.

The distribution of study speciality demonstrates the wide range of subject areas covered by Chinese students in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects and highlights the diversity and depth of courses offered by each institution in the area of Art and Design higher education. Students who majored in Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design) accounted for the largest percentage, 20.31% (39 students). Fashion Design,

Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design and Fine Art all exceeded 20 students, with 14.06%, 13.02% and 11.46% respectively. Industrial Design or Product Design, Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Architecture or Spatial Design), Art History, Animation Design or Game Design all exceeded 10 respondents. Jewellery Design, Film, Television or Photography and other subjects accounted for a smaller proportion of the total number of respondents.

In terms of Level of study distribution, the largest percentage of students interviewed were from the 3rd and 4th year of undergraduate students at 19, 27% and 26. 56%, respectively. The number of students who have graduated from undergraduate and postgraduate studies was the lowest with 16 and 14 students, respectively. The number of students who are currently first-year undergraduates, second-year undergraduates, and postgraduates is 22, 25, and 27, respectively. This diversity in the distribution of study levels contributes to the researcher's access to a wide range of views from students at all study stages.

Subject	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	73	38.02
	Female	119	61.98
	Other	0	0.00
	Prefer not to say	0	0.00
First Language	Chinese	192	100.00
	English	0	0.00
	Other	0	0.00
Subject of	Fine Art	22	11.46

Subject	Option	Frequency	Percentage
study	Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design)	39	20.31
	Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design or Spatial Design)	15	7.81
	Fashion Design	27	14.06
	Jewellery Design	5	2.60
	Industrial Design or Product Design	18	9.38
	Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design	25	13.02
	Animation Design or Game Design	11	5.73
	Film, Television or Photography	5	2.60
	Arts Management or Fashion Management	9	4.69
	Art History	13	6.77
	Other	3	1.56
Level of study	First-year undergraduate	22	11.46
	Second-year undergraduate	25	13.02
	Third-year undergraduate	37	19.27
	Fourth-year undergraduate	51	26.56
	Bachelor's degree graduated	16	8.33
	Postgraduate	27	14.06
	Master's degree graduated	14	7.29
	Total	192	100.00

Table 6.11: Demographic Characteristics of SQ

The following data from Table 6.12 on faculty members can be observed in terms of gender distribution, as the male group continues to be less than the female group, with 57.32% and 42.68%, respectively. Regarding first language, in contrast to the student respondents who all spoke Chinese as their first language, 65 faculty members had Chinese as their first language, 14 respondents spoke English as their first language, and the other three staff members had neither Chinese nor English as their first language. This is in accordance with the fact that Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects consist of an international faculty.

The percentage distribution in the speciality of the study is similar to that of the student respondents. The largest number remains in Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design) with 17 faculty members (20.73%). The number of people who teach Fine Art and Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design is 11. The number of people engaged in Fashion Design, Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design or Spatial Design), Industrial Design or Product Design and Animation Design or Game Design teaching is 9, 8, 7 and 6 respectively. The number of people from Art History, Arts Management or Fashion Management, Film, Television or Photography, Jewellery Design and Other disciplines is relatively low with no more than 5 people. The similarity in the percentage of the number of individuals in the student and faculty groups reflects the insignificant level of study and taught subjects intervening in the results of the data analyses.

Finally, in terms of teaching level, the majority of the respondents' teaching is located at the undergraduate level. The number of those teaching at postgraduate level is low. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the postgraduate programs in the UK are one year long, with a correspondingly

small faculty pool.

Subject	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	35	42.68
	Female	47	57.32
	Other	0	0.00
	Prefer not to say	0	0.00
First Language	Chinese	65	79.26
	English	14	17.03
	Other	3	3.66
Subject of teaching	Fine Art	11	13.41
	Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design)	17	20.73
	Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design or Spatial Design)	8	9.76
	Fashion Design	9	10.98
	Jewellery Design	1	1.22
	Industrial Design or Product Design	7	8.54
	Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design	11	13.41
	Animation Design or Game Design	6	7.32
	Film, Television or Photography	2	2.44
	Arts Management or Fashion Management	3	3.66
	Art History	5	6.10
	Other	2	2.43

Subject	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Level of teaching	First-year undergraduate	19	23.17
	Second-year undergraduate	21	25.61
	Third-year undergraduate	16	19.51
	Fourth-year undergraduate	18	21.95
	Postgraduate	8	9.76
	Total	82	100.00

Table 6.12: Demographic Characteristics of FQ

6.4.4 Descriptive Data Analysis Process

The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). This research is more concerned with ‘what happened’ rather than ‘how or why something has happened’ (Nassaji, 2015). In these circumstances, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In such research, the data is often analysed quantitatively, using frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analyses to determine relationships (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions which were extended by four dimensions. Firstly, the mean is a way of measuring the central tendency in a data set and reflects the general level of assessment results (Nassaji, 2015). From the following Table 6.13, which presents the descriptive statistics of the general performance across the four dimensions, it can be observed that the mean values of both SQ and FQ are relatively similar. The majority are around 3.0. This indicates that both the students and the faculty members respondents rated the dimensions as close to 'medium' overall. Specifically, the lowest mean in the SQ is 2.593 for 'Social presence' and the highest mean in the FQ is for 'Cognitive presence' of at 3.402.

A standard deviation is a measure of how dispersed the data is in relation to the mean (Nassaji, 2015). Low, or small, standard deviation indicates data are clustered tightly around the mean, and high, or large, standard deviation indicates data are more spread out. The standard deviations for all dimensions of the SQ and FQ are relatively similar, ranging from 1.101 to 1.336, which indicates that the ratings fluctuate similarly across dimensions, with no extreme dispersion or concentration. It is noteworthy that in 'Cognitive presence', both SQ and FQ have the most significant standard deviations, 1.336 and 1.275, respectively. The higher standard deviation means that there is a relatively large difference in the ratings of 'Cognitive presence' for both the student and faculty member groups. This indicates an inconsistency in the understanding and experience of the teaching and learning content and the perceived stimuli between different individuals.

In terms of median, both SQ and FQ were generally 3. However, when comparing the students' figures to that of the faculty members, the students were rated lower than the teachers overall. The group of students had a value of 2 for 'Social presence' especially. In contrast, the median for the group of faculty members was generally 3, and for 'Cognitive presence' it was 4.

SQ	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
Cognitive Presence	192	1.000	5.000	2.963	1.336	3
Social Presence	192	1.000	5.000	2.593	1.136	2
Teaching Presence	192	1.000	5.000	3.093	1.129	3
The Personal Experiences and Perceptions	192	1.000	5.000	2.982	1.185	3
FQ	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	Median

SQ	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
					Deviation	
Cognitive Presence	82	1.000	5.000	3.402	1.275	4
Social Presence	82	1.000	5.000	3.002	1.101	3
Teaching Presence	82	1.000	5.000	3.360	1.140	3
The Personal Experiences and Perceptions	82	1.000	5.000	2.968	1.138	3

Table 6.13: General Descriptive Statistics of SQ and FQ

6.4.5 Conclusion

The researcher began by ensuring the reliability and validity of the data through rigorous preliminary analyses. These steps were crucial in confirming the accuracy and effectiveness of the data, thus providing a solid foundation for further exploration.

The initial use of descriptive statistics allowed for a thorough examination of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as their region, gender, first language, area of specialisation, and level of study or teaching. This demographic analysis enabled the researcher to contextualise the findings, offering deeper insights into how the backgrounds of the participants might have influenced their responses. The further descriptive analysis focused on the general performance of the four dimensions, as this study employed a systematic approach to analyse the questionnaire data, specifically evaluating transnational online art and design education through the lens of 'Cognitive presence', 'Social presence', 'Teaching presence', and 'Personal experiences and perceptions'.

The data indicates that both students and faculty members gave moderate

evaluations, as reflected in the mean and median values hovering around 3.0. This suggests a balanced perspective, where neither strong satisfaction nor significant dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the online educational resources. These moderate evaluations allow the researcher to further explore the distribution of extreme ratings further in the subsequent findings chapter. By focusing on these more detailed ratings, the researcher will be able to provide practical and targeted recommendations in the ensuing parts of the study.

Overall, the data analysis provides valuable insights into the perceptions of both student and faculty participants involved in art and design teaching projects, contributing to a broader understanding of how transnational online education is experienced within the evaluated context.

6.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the data analysis strategies employed in the research, utilizing both thematic and descriptive statistics methods to comprehensively examine the gathered data. The integration of thematic and descriptive statistics in this research offered a robust and multidimensional approach to data analysis. The thematic analysis provided a deep, nuanced understanding of qualitative data, while descriptive statistics brought quantitative rigour to the investigation. This combination ensured a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, encapsulating both the qualitative subtleties and quantitative realities of the application of online education resources in the Sino-UK partnership. The findings from both analytical approaches contribute significantly to the broader understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of implementing online education resources in international art and design teaching projects.

The thematic analysis was central to the qualitative aspect of the study, particularly in the interpretation of data from participant observations and semi-structured interviews. The researcher's involvement in an eight-week participant observation within a digital media arts module—a collaborative effort between a UK university and a Chinese institution—provided a rich context for understanding the application of online education resources. This immersive experience allowed the researcher to gain firsthand insights into the educational dynamics and interactions within this international partnership. The thematic analysis of participant observation notes explored key themes related to online educational interactions, pedagogical strategies, and cultural dynamics. The P.O.E.M.S. Framework was utilized to systematically capture and interpret these observations, focusing on people, objects, environments, messages, and services within the online educational context.

Further depth was added through semi-structured interviews conducted with 31 students and 6 faculty members. The semi-structured interviews with students and faculty members were analysed using NVivo software, employing open, axial, and selective coding techniques. The analysis revealed the complexities of cross-cultural online education and provided comprehensive insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions.

On the quantitative side, descriptive statistics was employed to dissect the data obtained from survey questionnaires. The substantial response rate, comprising 192 students and 82 faculty submissions, furnished a solidly acceptable dataset for analysis. The data analysis approach allowed for the systematic categorization and quantification of the responses, revealing significant patterns and trends in the use and perception of online education resources. The descriptive statistics of questionnaire data, managed and analysed using SPSS, revealed a moderately satisfaction with online education resources among students and faculty. Reliability and validity analyses

confirmed the robustness of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics highlighted the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the various dimensions of the questionnaire data.

Chapter 7: Exploring a Framework for Understanding the Findings of This Study

7.1 Introduction

The analysis of the empirical data conducted in this study offers valuable insights into the key findings. These findings, developed from the analysis of the data in Chapter 6, align closely with the researcher's use of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model. These theoretical frameworks guided the implementation of empirical works. Specifically, the researcher's findings are grounded and interpreted through the CoI Model, particularly through its three core presences: Cognitive, Social, and Teaching presence. These elements structured the analysis of observational notes collected during participant observation. The researcher also deployed these presences into the analysis of semi-structured interview and questionnaire data by embedding the six pedagogical objectives of the BPP Model within the three presences of the CoI Model.

In this way, in evaluating the empirical findings, the researcher primarily examined the cognitive, social, and teaching presences, which influenced both the learning environment and pedagogical practices. The analysis of cognitive presence focused on how students engaged with and understood the course content, social presence highlighted the dynamics of interaction and communication among students and instructors, and teaching presence examined the role of instructional design and facilitation in guiding the learning process. Beyond these three presences, the researcher also delved into participants' personal experiences and perceptions, capturing the subjective and individualized aspects of their engagement with the online learning environment. This holistic approach ensured that the analysis was not only informed by the essential elements embedded within the theoretical framework but also considered the diverse and nuanced responses of both students and

faculty members to the challenges and opportunities presented by the online educational experience.

Following - and in the light of - the analysis of the findings related to the empirical data the chapter presents the main conceptual contribution to the knowledge of the research - an original theoretical framework the TOER (Transnational Online Education Resources) Model, a novel framework specifically developed to provide a deeper and more nuanced insight into the dynamics and outcomes of online education within the context of Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects. The TOER Model is derived from a process of data analysis that incorporates elements of the CoI Model and the BPP Model, allowing for a more comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the educational processes involved. Together, these frameworks enable examinations of the educational dynamics at play, ensuring that the study's findings are grounded in both robust theoretical understanding and practical application. The insights generated through this approach not only contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field but also offer valuable, practical recommendations for enhancing the integration and effectiveness of online resources in future transnational Art and Design education initiatives.

7.2 Findings from the Participant Observation Data

7.2.1 Findings Related to the ‘Cognitive Presence’ of the Participants

Five recurring themes related to ‘Cognitive Presence’ emerged from the participant observation data collected during the empirical research, ranked by frequency as follows: ‘Curriculum Design and Content Delivery’ was mentioned 31 times, ‘Adaptation to Online Educational Contexts’ was mentioned 28 times, ‘Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Communication’ was mentioned 17 times, ‘Continuous Engagement and Conceptual Understanding’ was mentioned 15

times, and ‘Deep Learning through Critical Inquiry’ was mentioned 11 times.

Specifically, the first theme of ‘Curriculum Design and Content Delivery’ refers to the instructors' strategies for structuring and presenting the course material in a way that ensures it is cohesive, comprehensive, and appropriate for online learning. The researcher observed that the instructors consistently emphasized the interconnected, thorough, and online-suitable nature of the course content. This strategic approach ensured that the material was not only detailed and well-organised but also designed to be easily navigable and understandable within an online learning environment.

For example, during the first keynote lecture, the programme leader introduced essential tools like VooV and WeChat, familiar to students, ensuring a smooth transition to online learning. The shift from WeChat and VooV to Microsoft Teams aimed to enhance accessibility and organisation, as explained in the third keynote lecture, demonstrating the course's adaptability to technological platforms. The clear explanation of the marking system and assessment criteria is also clarified in this session highlighting a commitment to transparency, crucial for remote learning integrity.

In the first presentation session, the programme leader stressed the importance of trust in digital communication, aligning the course with online learning needs and students’ prior knowledge. The comment, “Once you start this, you’ll hopefully start to love it”, reflected a focus on creating an engaging, supportive environment. In the second presentation session, the programme leader linked upcoming projects to students' interests, particularly the ‘Orientation, Exploration, and Documentary’ project, which encouraged Chinese students to connect UK culture with personal and academic development.

The second theme, ‘Adaptation to Online Educational Contexts’ focuses on how

educational content is maintained and adapted in an online learning setting, taking into account the challenges and opportunities specific to digital education. The researcher observed that the instructors actively discussed the difficulties of sustaining curriculum delivery and ensuring student adaptability in online environments. They also addressed the unique opportunities and challenges posed by digital education, such as the need for enhanced engagement strategies and the potential for innovative teaching methods that effectively leverage technology.

For instance, during the third keynote lecture, the programme leader emphasised the importance of adapting curriculum content delivery to students' prior learning experiences, specifically linking Levels 4 and 5 to the new module. This approach supported student adaptability by providing a coherent progression and facilitating smoother transitions in an online environment. The lecture also underscored the integration of innovative teaching methods that aligned academic rigour with practical, real-world applications, addressing both the challenges of maintaining cognitive presence and the need for active student engagement in digital learning contexts.

In the fifth presentation session, the discussion extended to the use of Blackboard Learn as a tool to enhance the organisation of course materials and communication. The instructor highlighted how the platform offered a more structured and navigable environment for students, with features like resource management, assignment tracking, and integrated feedback systems. This transition showcased the potential for technological innovation in curriculum delivery, as the platform enabled more dynamic and engaging teaching strategies through its file sharing, video recording, and structured interaction features, further addressing the need for enhanced engagement in online learning environments.

The third theme, ‘Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Communication’ focuses on the instructors' efforts to bridge cultural gaps and foster an inclusive learning environment, acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of students in the Sino-UK educational context. The researcher observed that the instructors made significant efforts to address cultural differences and promote inclusivity. They recognised and appreciated the diverse educational experiences of students from both Chinese and English systems. This involved adapting their communication and interaction styles to be culturally sensitive and inclusive, ensuring that all students felt valued and understood.

For example, during the first keynote lecture, the programme leader shared his background in graphic design, highlighting his work in motion graphics, animation, and UX/UI design. He also mentioned collaborations with international organisations such as the BBC and Adidas, showcasing his global perspective. By sharing his international teaching experience, including his involvement with the institute since 2017, the programme leader established a culturally inclusive connection with the students, recognising the value of diverse professional and educational backgrounds. This approach demonstrated sensitivity to students' varied experiences and fostered a sense of belonging in the Sino-UK educational context.

In the third keynote lecture, the programme leader introduced students to significant British cultural events, such as the Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and Halloween, explaining the historical and societal significance of these occasions. By providing cultural context, the leader promoted inclusivity by ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds could better understand and engage with British traditions. This effort to highlight and explain British cultural values and practices reflected an intent to bridge cultural gaps and encourage a more inclusive and globally aware learning environment.

The fourth theme, ‘Continuous Engagement and Conceptual Understanding’ highlights the instructors' consistent efforts to maintain student engagement with course content, ensuring the development of a comprehensive and nuanced grasp of the subject matter. The researcher observed that the courses were structured to actively engage students, a key factor in fostering a deep and thorough understanding of the topics. This was achieved through interactive lectures, discussions, and activities that encouraged active participation from the students.

For instance, during the fourth keynote lecture, the programme leader, alongside the academic support librarian, made deliberate efforts to sustain student engagement, recognising the challenges Chinese students often face in participating in class discussions. Despite initial hesitation, the librarian encouraged students to ask questions and participate actively, reinforcing that continuous interaction was critical to their success in the programme. She reassured students, fostering an environment where they could engage at their own pace, thus promoting an inclusive and supportive setting. This method was crucial in building the students' confidence in both written and oral communication, contributing to a more thorough understanding of the course material through active engagement.

In the ninth presentation session, the programme leader facilitated in-depth group discussions, providing feedback that not only addressed specific design elements but also encouraged students to reflect on how their designs could enhance narrative engagement and intellectual comprehension. This iterative feedback process fostered a deeper understanding of both the design principles and the thematic content being conveyed. The twelfth session built upon this approach, guiding students to refine their presentations with a focus on clarity and depth. The instructor highlighted the importance of linking visual elements with storytelling, illustrating how the integration of practical design and

theoretical knowledge deepens students' engagement with the subject matter and contributes to a more comprehensive conceptual understanding.

The final theme, ‘Deep Learning through Critical Inquiry’, focuses on the instructors' emphasis on encouraging students to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective practices, fostering deeper learning and understanding. The researcher observed that students were consistently encouraged to apply these skills to the learning content. Instructors highlighted the importance of critical thinking and reflection in promoting deeper comprehension. This approach not only helped students grasp the material more effectively but also equipped them with valuable skills for their future academic and professional pursuits.

For example, in the fifth keynote lecture, the programme leader emphasized the development of critical judgment and analytical abilities, encouraging students to reflect on their creative processes and analyse their design choices. Creativity, he stressed, involves not just producing work but understanding its context and reflecting on decisions throughout. He also urged students to think critically about the narratives behind their work, especially in motion and immersive interaction projects. Similarly, the sixth keynote lecture highlighted the importance of peer feedback and collaborative inquiry in fostering critical thinking, encouraging students to question assumptions and propose alternative solutions. This reflective approach required students to develop practical solutions while critically examining the social impact of their projects, promoting an inquiry-driven learning environment.

In the final presentation session, students were asked to present their projects and critically evaluate how specific design influences shaped their creative processes. The focus on peer-based learning encouraged reflection on others' work, fostering deeper understanding through comparison and critique. For

example, one student presented a treasure hunt project, critically examining her design process and narrative development. By explaining her design choices and how she integrated influences, she demonstrated critical thinking and reflection. Instructors further prompted dialogue, encouraging students to consider both the technical and broader cultural and social aspects of their designs. This interaction pushes students beyond surface-level understanding into deeper engagement with their creative processes.

7.2.2 Findings Related to the 'Social Presence' of the Participants

Five recurring themes related to 'Social presence' emerged from the participant observation data collected during the empirical research, ranked by frequency as follows: 'Promotion of Student Participation' was mentioned 34 times, 'Utilization of Communication Platforms' was mentioned 29 times, 'Facilitation of Group Activities' was mentioned 17 times, 'Adaptation to Online Interaction Norms' was mentioned 16 times, and 'Building a Community of Learners' was mentioned 12 times.

Specifically, the first theme of 'Promotion of Student Participation' refers to the strategies aimed at encouraging active engagement and the expression of opinions, fostering a lively and interactive learning environment. The researcher observed that instructors created a comfortable atmosphere by engaging students in informal conversations and warm-up activities via online platforms. These platforms facilitated ongoing communication, allowing students to participate more freely. Additionally, instructors consistently encouraged questions during sessions and designed presentations to promote peer feedback and discussion, offering constructive feedback throughout.

For example, during the fifth keynote lecture, the programme leader encouraged active engagement by making themselves available on WeChat after presenting the brief, inviting students to ask questions individually or in

groups. This extended availability facilitated ongoing communication and created a more relaxed environment, allowing students to participate more freely and engage beyond the formal session. Similarly, in the seventh keynote lecture, the programme leader placed a strong emphasis on peer-based decision-making by encouraging students to nominate class representatives. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of responsibility among students for maintaining communication between the class and the instructor, empowering them to actively contribute to the learning environment. These strategies not only encouraged questions and feedback during sessions but also promoted a participatory and supportive learning community.

In the sixth presentation session, the programme leader encouraged students to engage more freely with their design concepts, building confidence in presenting without relying on scripts. This approach fostered an interactive, supportive environment, motivating students to communicate openly. Peer critique of each other's presentations further stimulated engagement. Similarly, in the twelfth session, the programme leader emphasised communication and collaboration by having students present their works-in-progress and receive constructive feedback. This informal yet focused session encouraged dialogue, helping to create a participatory environment where students felt free to express their ideas.

The second theme, ‘Utilization of Communication Platforms’ focuses on the instructors' strategic use of online platforms to enhance social interactions and connectivity among students and between students and instructors. The researcher observed that instructors employed these platforms not only for logistical purposes, such as announcements and material distribution but also to foster a sense of community. Through informal and casual interactions, they created a comfortable and engaging online space. Instructors initiated conversations, shared personal anecdotes, and provided timely feedback,

encouraging active participation and free expression. These efforts successfully bridged cultural and technological gaps, making the learning environment more inclusive and dynamic.

For instance, during the seventh presentation session, the students were encouraged to use the platform to share updates and ideas related to their projects outside formal class hours. After the presentations, the programme leader also encouraged further discussions on WeChat, enabling peer-to-peer feedback and additional clarification. For example, one student shared a digital sketch outside of class through the WeChat group, and the instructors provided their feedback in this group as well. This extended communication made it easier for students to seek support and share their work, regardless of time zone or cultural differences. This informal yet structured use of WeChat promoted active participation and allowed students to interact more freely with both their peers and the instructor, bridging the gap between formal instruction and personal interaction.

The third theme, ‘Facilitation of Group Activities’ focuses on the instructors' efforts to foster group interactions and promote collaborative learning through well-organised group tasks and discussions. The researcher observed that the instructors took strategic steps to create an environment conducive to teamwork, ensuring that students were not only encouraged but also guided in their interactions. These structured group activities were designed to prompt collaboration, allowing students to exchange ideas, build on each other’s work, and learn from diverse perspectives.

For example, during the fourth keynote lecture, the programme leader facilitated a group task that involved researching the culture of the cities in the UK. This task was designed to promote collaborative learning by encouraging students to work together to uncover topics of interest related to their shared

experiences and the cultural aspects of their surroundings. The programme leader provided structured guidance, encouraging students to document their research visually and through annotation. This approach not only allowed students to explore UK humanities, history, and culture but also fostered group interaction as they exchanged insights and built on each other's work, enhancing their collective learning experience.

Moreover, when the researcher observed the online chat interactions within the WeChat group, the programme leader strategically facilitated collaborative learning by actively providing detailed explanations about the curriculum content, even after class. Through the structured dissemination of photos, videos, and texts, the programme leader created a well-organised and supportive environment that encouraged students to engage with the material and contribute their thoughts. This approach fostered group interactions, prompting students to exchange ideas from each other's insights.

The fourth theme, 'Adaptation to Online Interaction Norms' highlights consistent efforts to help both instructors and students adjust to the norms and etiquettes of online communication, ensuring interactions are effective and respectful. The researcher observed that the instructors encouraged respectful communication by modelling appropriate online behaviour, which contributed to creating a supportive and inclusive virtual classroom. These strategies ensured that online communication was not only effective but also helped maintain a positive and respectful learning atmosphere.

For instance, in the second keynote lecture, the programme leader showed adaptability and commitment to fostering respectful online communication by providing clear instructions via Microsoft Teams and WeChat. He encouraged students to ask questions and offered immediate support through WeChat, helping them adjust to online interaction norms. By promptly addressing

inquiries, he modelled respectful online behaviour, contributing to a supportive and inclusive virtual classroom. Additionally, the programme leader provided advance notice of upcoming sessions via WeChat, demonstrating respect for students' time and fostering a structured learning environment. WeChat was also used to disseminate course materials and provide immediate feedback, facilitating continuous dialogue and keeping students engaged.

Similarly, in presentation session 10, the programme leader highlighted soft skills like time management, interpersonal skills, active listening, and presenting, emphasizing their importance for future careers. He reinforced the need for active online participation, encouraging students to engage in pitch sessions and contribute. Through WeChat, he continued guiding students, addressing concerns and offering support for presentation tools. This approach modelled professional, adaptable online behaviour, and his timely responses helped create a supportive learning environment, promoting student engagement, confidence, and motivation.

The final theme, ‘Building a Community of Learners’ highlights the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment where students feel connected to both their peers and the course content. The researcher observed that students’ positive engagement with each other was a direct result of the instructors' efforts to foster this sense of community. This inclusive approach was essential in promoting a socially engaging online learning atmosphere, enhancing both individual and collective student participation.

One clear example occurred during the third presentation session, where the discussion of virtual classroom designs fostered a more inclusive and collaborative environment. Students were encouraged to engage with one another during the design presentations, with the programme leader ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and ideas while

receiving feedback from their peers. This structured interaction and collaborative critique of design concepts helped students feel more connected to both each other and the course content, which was crucial in promoting a socially engaging and supportive online learning atmosphere.

Additionally, when the researcher observed the online chat, it became evident that the programme leader consistently made efforts to connect students with the cultural context of the UK, sharing multimedia materials and discussing his personal experiences of life in the UK. These cultural references not only deepened students' understanding of the UK but also encouraged greater interaction, with students actively engaging in the WeChat discussions. This inclusive approach, which bridged both cultural and geographic gaps, allowed students to feel comfortable sharing their ideas, thereby enhancing individual engagement and fostering a sense of community within the online learning environment.

7.2.3 Findings Related to the 'Teaching Presence' of the Participants

Five recurring themes related to 'Teaching presence' emerged from the participant observation data collected during the empirical research, ranked by frequency as follows: 'Proactive Student Engagement and Support' was mentioned 36 times, 'Facilitation of Learning Activities' was mentioned 32 times, 'Effective Use of Digital Platforms for Instruction' was mentioned 21 times, 'Adaptation to Online Learning Challenges' was mentioned 14 times, and 'Structured Curriculum Design' was mentioned 10 times.

Specifically, the first theme, 'Proactive Student Engagement and Support' refers to the methods used by the instructors to actively engage students in the learning process and provide necessary support, particularly in an online context. The researcher observed that consistent encouragement helped students become more comfortable with participating, fostering a more

engaging and supportive online learning environment.

For example, during the seventh keynote lecture, the programme leader actively engaged students by discussing essential academic skills such as referencing. He explained how this skill would support their future studies and encouraged students to ask questions throughout the session. By focusing on building confidence in these academic areas, the programme leader created an inclusive space where students could interact, clarify doubts, and deepen their understanding. His approachable manner, reinforced by his availability for tutorials, helped foster a supportive atmosphere that motivated students to engage in the learning process.

In the eighth presentation session, the programme leader made a clear effort to engage students by initiating a discussion on the progress of their creative projects. The programme leader encouraged active participation by prompting students to share their work with their peers. For example, the session began with the programme leader saying, ‘Let's see your project, let's see what you've been producing, and what we should be doing over this next week is looking into the best way of actually getting that content and presenting it’. The programme leader consistently invited input from the students, such as asking them to present their design processes and visions for their posters. By directly addressing students and encouraging them to showcase their progress, the programme leader fostered a dynamic and supportive atmosphere, helping students feel more involved in the learning process.

The second theme, ‘Facilitation of Learning Activities’ focuses on the instructors’ role in organising and guiding learning activities, such as group discussions and presentations, to support student learning. The researcher observed that students participated in a wide range of activities, including group discussions and presentations. This approach ensured that students remained actively

engaged and well-supported throughout the course.

For instance, during the third keynote lecture, after completing their initial research, students engaged in brainstorming and creating mind maps. The programme leader facilitated this by providing feedback and encouraging peer input on each other's presentations, fostering a dynamic and collaborative learning environment. Additionally, by showcasing proven business cases and conducting Reflective Practice sessions, the programme leader helped students apply theoretical concepts to practical situations, ensuring they remained actively engaged and well-supported throughout the course.

In the second presentation session, the programme leader organised a structured activity where students delivered five-minute presentations on their creative briefs. He provided guidance on effective presentations and emphasised the importance of peer feedback, which helped students critically engage with each other's work. This approach not only ensured active participation but also offered ongoing support, fostering engagement throughout each stage of the learning process. Building on this foundation, in the later stage, the programme leader facilitated in-depth discussions of individual design concepts, encouraging students to articulate their design process in the eleventh presentation session. By focusing on building students' confidence and fostering a more interactive, conversational approach, the programme leader enabled them to refine their communication skills and engage more deeply with the content. This progression created a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that supported both individual growth and collaborative learning.

The third theme, ‘Effective Use of Digital Platforms for Instruction’ focuses on how instructors adeptly utilise digital platforms to enhance the delivery of instruction and course content. The researcher observed that this approach

kept students connected and engaged, facilitating a smooth learning experience. It allowed students to engage deeply with the course material while benefiting from continuous support and interaction, demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating digital tools into the teaching process.

For example, during the second Keynote Lecture, the programme leader emphasized the critical importance of selecting appropriate communication channels to maintain student engagement. Platforms like VooV and WeChat enabled Chinese students to transition smoothly into online learning without discomfort. Microsoft Teams was introduced as a key platform for formal teaching, praised for its versatility in recording lectures, providing continuous access to learning materials, and fostering an environment conducive to participation and collaboration.

The fourth theme, ‘Adaptation to Online Learning Challenges’ highlights the strategies made by instructors to maintain student engagement by adapting traditional teaching methodologies for the online learning environment. The researcher observed that instructors effectively used online tools to modify their teaching methods, ensuring that students could engage with the course content seamlessly, regardless of the medium.

For instance, during the fourth keynote lecture, the programme leader emphasised the importance of empathy in selecting communication channels like WeChat, which the students were already comfortable using. He explained, ‘We use those tools exclusively because you had a familiarity with them’. This reflects a deliberate effort to align teaching strategies with the students’ online learning experience. Additionally, the instructor reassured students that transitioning to new tools, such as Microsoft Teams, would be seamless, expressing confidence in the ability of both staff and students to adapt to this platform: “Today I’m going to show you around what Microsoft Teams looks like

and how we actually use it, and hopefully you'll see some of the benefits. There's nothing to be scared of whatsoever." This demonstrates a proactive effort to introduce new tools that enhance learning while also maintaining student engagement by addressing potential fears and concerns.

The final theme, 'Structured Curriculum Design' highlights the instructors' efforts in developing a well-organised curriculum that aligns with both the objectives of the Sino-UK partnership and the specific demands of online learning. The researcher observed that the instructors worked diligently to create a curriculum that met these teaching requirements in different cultural contexts. This structured approach ensured that the content was not only comprehensive but also adaptable to an online transnational teaching format, facilitating seamless navigation and enhancing students' understanding.

For instance, during the first keynote lecture, the programme leader emphasized the meticulous structuring of the curriculum to help students navigate both UK and Chinese educational frameworks, aligning with the Sino-UK partnership's objectives. In the fifth keynote lecture, the programme leader highlighted the curriculum's flexibility through professional practice projects aligned with industry standards, integrating individual and group tasks. The sixth keynote lecture further demonstrated how the curriculum's adaptation to digital platforms ensured comprehensive and accessible content across time zones, meeting the demands of online transnational teaching. This structured yet adaptable approach supported students' diverse needs while fostering key academic and professional skills.

In the fourth presentation session, the programme leader emphasised the structured approach in a foreign language to project presentations. This highlights the curriculum's integration of collaborative learning for meeting the Sino-UK partnership's objectives by balancing theory and practice across UK

and Chinese contexts. The twelfth session further demonstrated the curriculum's structured design, guiding students step-by-step through project submissions. The clear timeline and organised tasks ensured students could manage their responsibilities, making the curriculum both comprehensive and adaptable to online learning. Similarly, the thirteenth session reinforced this adaptability by balancing individual research and teamwork in industry-relevant projects, illustrating the curriculum's structured yet flexible nature to meet the demands of transnational online education while supporting academic and professional growth.

7.2.4 Findings Related to 'The Personal Experiences and Perceptions' of the Participants

Five recurring themes related to 'The personal experiences and perceptions' emerged from the participant observation data collected during the empirical research, ranked by frequency as follows: 'Challenges in Online Expression Analysis' was mentioned 32 times, 'Cultural and Language Challenges' was mentioned 28 times, 'Integration of Technology in Education' was mentioned 22 times, 'Influence of Time Zone Differences' was mentioned 16 times, 'Effectiveness of Administrative Roles' was mentioned 12 times.

Specifically, the first theme, 'Challenges in Online Expression' refers to how the absence of visual cues, such as facial expressions, impacted students' satisfaction with the quality of education and their comprehension. The researcher observed that this limitation often led to misinterpretations, reduced engagement, and a sense of disconnect in online interactions, making it more difficult for students to fully understand the emotional tone and intent behind the communication.

For example, in the third keynote lecture, when discussing student presentations, the programme leader noted, "I hope to cultivate your self-

confidence in the virtual environment as well, so don't be shy, let me see you." This reference to building confidence in an online setting highlighted the discomfort students experienced when participating in virtual presentations, which likely arose from the absence of in-person interaction and visual cues. The programme leader's comments further suggested that, while communication tools were available, they still contributed to a sense of disconnect.

During the fifth keynote lecture, the programme leader also emphasised the importance of interaction in teaching: "Teaching should be a two-way communication, not just me talking at you and telling you what to do." This statement underscored the challenge of fostering interactive and engaging communication in an online environment, which was often hindered by the lack of non-verbal cues.

The second theme, 'Cultural and Language Challenges' focuses on the difficulties faced by international students in asking questions and interacting in an online environment. The researcher observed that international students often struggled with language barriers and cultural differences, which made it challenging for them to ask questions, engage in discussions, and effectively interact in the online environment, leading to feelings of isolation and hesitation in participating fully.

For instance, during the second presentation session, a student struggled to express herself confidently, saying, "I'm not very good at expressing myself, and I'm very nervous now, especially as the virtual environment seems to make this feeling worse." The programme leader responded, "That's okay, you can write your thoughts on paper so that we can understand you better." reflecting an effort to compensate for the absence of facial expressions and body language. Similarly, in the seventh presentation session, a student faced

difficulties in clearly conveying the meaning of his work, which involved physical installations. The programme leader had to guess the intended meaning, further demonstrating how the lack of immediate visual feedback, such as facial expressions, hindered effective communication.

The third theme, ‘Integration of Technology in Education’ focuses on the broader implications of technology integration on teaching methodologies and student learning experiences. The researcher observed that while technology provided new opportunities for flexible learning and access to resources, it also introduced challenges such as diminished personal interaction, increased dependence on digital tools, and the time-consumption for both students and educators in adapting to new platforms and technologies.

For example, during the sixth keynote lecture, the use of digital tools such as Microsoft Teams and VooV for personal tutorials was discussed, with some students noting that they preferred Microsoft Teams rather than VooV for real-time translation features during one-on-one sessions. However, the programme leader emphasised that relying too heavily on real-time translation could hinder students' language proficiency. He also pointed out that the translation function often makes errors when dealing with specific academic and technical terms, which could mislead students. This example highlights how technology integration can cater to diverse needs, but also how dependence on digital tools can create additional challenges, such as the need for reliable translation and concerns about clarity in communication.

Additionally, in the seventh keynote lecture, the programme leader discussed the use of Microsoft Teams to record the course progression in the form of videos, enabling the sharing of materials and feedback. While this technology facilitated organisation and improved access to resources, the lecturer also highlighted the challenge of maintaining student engagement and interaction.

He pointed out that while technology enhanced certain aspects of education, it also introduced challenges, such as the risk of students becoming overly reliant on video recordings when not attending live sessions, thereby neglecting valuable opportunities for real-time interaction during class.

The fourth theme, ‘Influence of Time Zone Differences’ highlights how time differences affect communication patterns in online contexts. The researcher observed that time zone differences often disrupted the flow of communication, leading to delays in responses, difficulty in scheduling synchronous activities, and increased frustration for both students and educators, as the lack of alignment in working hours made real-time interaction and collaboration more challenging.

During the seventh presentation session, a student expressed difficulties in attending future sessions due to severe migraines and insomnia. Since British time is later than China’s, he often had to attend classes at night in the Beijing time zone, which seriously affected his health and required medical treatment. As a result of the time zone difference, the student had to rely on video recordings to keep up with the course, limiting his ability to participate in real-time discussions. This illustrates how time zone differences disrupted the synchronous learning experience.

In another instance, during the final presentation session, the programme leader highlighted that scheduling upcoming assessments was complicated by time zone differences. Some instructors had to attend to marking duties outside their regular working hours, forcing the programme leader to spend additional time coordinating their availability. This delay impacted the scoring process and the timing of marks release.

The final theme, ‘Effectiveness of Administrative Roles’ refers to the instructor's

management of administrative tasks alongside teaching responsibilities. The researcher observed that the programme leader was effectively managing administrative tasks, such as overseeing course logistics, handling student enrolment, managing resource allocation, and coordinating meetings with staff. This approach allowed for timely responses to administrative queries, improved communication across departments, and ensured that students benefited from well-coordinated support throughout their educational experience.

For example, during the researcher's observation of the online chat interactions within the WeChat group, the programme leader consistently ensured that students were informed about upcoming sessions by providing at least half an hour's notice before each session. This structured approach reflects effective management of course logistics, ensuring that students are well-prepared for their educational engagements. Additionally, the researcher noted that the programme leader handled multiple administrative tasks, such as managing student enrolment, overseeing the enrolment paperwork, and summarising language scores, all alongside teaching responsibilities. The programme leader was highly engaged in addressing student queries, even responding to issues related to student email registration on a Saturday morning. This demonstrates a strong commitment to providing timely responses to administrative queries, ensuring that students receive well-coordinated support throughout their educational experience.

7.3 Findings from the Semi-Structured Interview Data

7.3.1 Findings Related to the 'Cognitive Presence' of the Participants

For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher identified a core category related to 'Cognitive Presence' during the selective coding process: 'The cognition of art and design education'. This core category is divided into three subcategories: 'The cognition of education in China', 'The cognition of

education in the UK', and 'The cognition of Sino-UK partnership education'.

The first subcategory, 'The cognition of education in China' refers specifically to the approach taken in arts and design education, where the focus is placed on the development of practical and technical skills within a framework that values traditional aesthetics. In Chinese arts and design education, students undergo rigorous training to master techniques rooted in cultural heritage, with an emphasis on the preservation of traditional art forms. However, this focus on tradition often results in a reliance on conventional teaching methods, which may limit the encouragement of creativity and innovation in design practices. Furthermore, compared to countries like the UK, the availability of arts and design resources, including high-quality institutions such as art colleges and museums, is relatively limited. This resource gap can hinder students' exposure to diverse artistic and design perspectives. Additionally, the centralised and standardised nature of the education system in China requires students to follow established norms and curricula, which can restrict their capacity for free expression and experimentation in the field of arts and design.

Specifically, the responses of participants in this subcategory covered several viewpoints. Firstly, China's education system places a strong emphasis on developing students' practical and technical skills, aligning education closely with job market demands. This approach ensures that students are well-prepared for their future careers. Additionally, there is a high value placed on the preservation and transmission of traditional aesthetics, with students required to master art and design techniques through rigorous training.

> *"…Chinese education emphasizes the proficiency in software operation and the precision of technical implementation, such as mastering Photoshop, 3D modelling, and animation production..." (Gordon)*

"The Chinese education environment places more emphasis on practical skills in fashion design, such as tailoring techniques, fabric studies, and market analysis…this teaching model is highly focused on cultivating students' industry adaptability, ensuring that they can quickly meet the demands of the fashion industry after graduation." (Milton)

"In the curriculum of visual communication in China, there is likely to be more emphasis on the teaching of techniques and skills, particularly under the influence of traditional art education, which often emphasizes fundamental skills such as sketching, painting, and colour theory..." (Nadine)

"…Chinese design education pays more attention to traditional aesthetics and practical functions, emphasizing directness and clarity in content…" (Lorenzo)

Moreover, the availability of art resources in China, such as the number and quality of art colleges and museums, is often perceived as insufficient compared to other countries like the UK. This scarcity can restrict students' exposure to diverse artistic expressions and limit their ability to develop a broad cultural and aesthetic sensibility, which is essential for fostering a rich and engaging learning experience.

"…there are relatively few art museums and other art institutions in China, especially outside of such major cities as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, which directly affects the practical opportunities of art and design. As a result, programs in China are more focused on theoretical learning, such as art history lectures and case studies…these programs often lack practical activities directly related to practice and site management." (Andrea)

The centralized and standardized nature of the Chinese education system, with its uniform syllabus and examination standards, further constrains students' learning experiences. This rigid structure may inhibit the freedom needed for students to explore, question, and express themselves creatively. Such an environment might not be conducive to the kind of intellectual engagement that promotes deep understanding and meaningful learning.

> *"In China, the education system is relatively centralized, and the curriculum and examination standards are quite uniform…this rigid structure indeed limits students' learning experiences and freedom of expression to some extent, inhibiting their ability to explore and question freely..." (Melissa)*

> *"…this educational system is not conducive to promoting deep understanding and meaningful learning. In this environment, it is difficult for students to engage in free exploration and creative expression..." (Humberto)*

The second subcategory, 'The cognition of education in the UK' refers to the UK education system placing significant emphasis on individual expression and the constant pursuit of innovative thinking. It seeks to cultivate independent thought and innovation, focusing not only on the transmission of knowledge but also on developing problem-solving skills and fostering an innovative spirit. Moreover, the UK system promotes independent learning and practical skills, encouraging interaction and participation, with students learning through exploration and active engagement. A global perspective is also a key feature, as the education system stresses the importance of international understanding and cross-cultural communication. Additionally, UK education emphasises interdisciplinary thinking, encouraging students to integrate knowledge and methods from various disciplines to address complex, real-world problems.

Some participants considered that education in the UK prioritizes exploring creativity and encourages students to practice and experiment with their ideas. This educational approach focuses on individual student expression and constantly seeks innovative ways of thinking. Emphasizing the importance of independent thought and innovation, the UK education system not only transmits knowledge but also fosters problem-solving abilities and an innovative spirit.

> *"The education in the UK has allowed me to be highly valued for my creativity and personal expression, with an open-minded approach to education that encourages students to explore. " (Alberto)*

> *"…in the UK, art education is more focused on stimulating creativity and individual expression. Students are encouraged to explore novel ideas, be brave enough to experiment with different art forms and incorporate their personal views into their work..." (Beryl)*

The education system in the UK places significant emphasis on developing independent learning and practical skills, with a strong focus on interaction and participation. Students are encouraged to learn through exploration and hands-on practice. Additionally, the UK education system promotes a global outlook, underpinned by an educational philosophy that values international understanding and cross-cultural communication.

> *"In the UK education system, courses in fashion design tend to push students to explore themselves and innovate…for example, in our programme, there are often projects that require students to incorporate elements of technology, art or even philosophy into their clothing design as a way to break the boundaries of tradition and create something never seen*

before." (Milton)

"…I value students' ability to learn independently and utilise diverse learning resources. The cross-cultural exchanges and co-operation that students can engage in during the programme…Through exchanges and cooperation with classmates from different countries and regions, students can better broaden their horizons and increase their understanding of and respect for different cultures, which is also very beneficial to their overall literacy and cross-cultural communication skills..." (Nestor)

Furthermore, the UK's educational philosophy stresses the development of interdisciplinary thinking skills. It encourages students to integrate knowledge and methods from different disciplines to address complex real-life problems. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are well-equipped to navigate and contribute to an increasingly interconnected and dynamic world.

"…one of the projects during my study experience in the UK was to design a futuristic clothing collection, which required us to not only consider the aesthetics and functionality of the clothing but also to think about how sustainable technologies and new materials could be used in the production of the clothing..." (Milton)

"…design education in the UK encourages creative thinking and personal expression and, as a result, students under the UK education system tend to be eclectic in their designs, favouring the use of symbols, metaphors and abstract expressions to convey complex emotions and ideas..." (Lorenzo)

Regarding the third subcategory, 'The cognition of Sino-UK partnership education' the focus is on students' ability to navigate and integrate the educational approaches of both countries. Chinese students must understand

and respect the cultural differences between the UK and China, adapt to diverse learning styles, and employ creative methods that align with the educational expectations of both nations. In Sino-British cooperative education, students are required to merge two types of thinking, fostering innovation while ensuring that fundamental skills are not overlooked. The distinct histories, cultures, and social values of China and the UK can influence how students perceive and understand the same subjects in different contexts. Additionally, online education plays a significant role, focusing on the systematic transfer and standardised assessment of basic knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on students completing their work and applying their expertise within defined parameters. This mode of education further demands greater autonomy and independence from students, requiring them to take a more proactive role in managing their learning process.

Some respondents considered that it would be useful for Chinese students to understand the cultural differences between the UK and China, adapt to different learning styles, and adopt creative methods that meet the educational needs of both countries. The history, culture, and social values of China and the UK are relatively different, thus affecting students' knowledge and understanding of the same subject in different contexts. This cultural divergence necessitates a nuanced approach to learning, where students must integrate the two kinds of thinking in the process of Sino-British co-operative education. This integration should be both innovative and attentive to the development of basic skills.

> *"…during my study experience in both the Chinese and British education systems, I found that British education places extreme importance on students' independent thinking, as well as developing self-confidence. While Chinese education neglects these two points." (Chris)*

"In the UK, I feel that they attach great importance to innovation and personal expression, and the education style is very open and encourages students to explore. But then, in China, it may be more focused on technique and basic skills training…this difference makes me have to integrate the two kinds of thinking when I create my artworks, both with a sense of creativity and without losing the essence of technique..." (Ernesto)

"In the context of the Sino-British joint programme, we try to combine the strengths of these two educational models. By fusing the UK's creativity-driven educational approach with China's technology application orientation, we have designed a curriculum system that aims to develop students' technological proficiency as well as their creative vision." (Karen)

Furthermore, this mode of education requires students to become more autonomous and independent, necessitating a proactive approach to managing and controlling their learning process. By embracing these challenges, students can effectively bridge the educational paradigms of both countries and thrive in a diverse learning environment.

"…our programme offers a number of creative design workshops and art practice courses in collaboration with the UK and China. The focus is on the understanding and mastery of the contemporary transnational art and design industry, as well as the development of sensitivity to industry trends and market needs..." (Kirk)

"In the context of the Sino-British joint programme, for example, students are encouraged to utilise technology to create works of personal expression, while their feasibility and effectiveness in practical application must also be considered. Such teaching strategies not only enhance students' employability but also stimulate their interest and ability to explore new

areas of digital media art." (Karen)

7.3.2 Findings Related to the 'Social Presence' of the Participants

The researcher identified a core category related to 'Social presence' during the selective coding process of the evidence gathered: 'Online education resources and socialisation'. This core category is divided into four subcategories: 'The utilisation of online tools', 'Reasons for choosing a certain online tool', 'The social factor in education' and 'Intimate manifestations of online education'.

In particular, the first subcategory 'The utilisation of online tools,' highlights WeChat as the most frequently used tool, followed by email and Microsoft Teams. VooV (Tencent Conference) and Zoom were also used relatively often. Additionally, some respondents mentioned using WhatsApp, Google Meet, Feishu, and Dingtalk. These tools were chosen based on their accessibility, ease of use, and ability to facilitate effective communication and collaboration in both formal and informal educational settings. The respondents' views were as follows.

"…I mainly use WeChat to communicate with teachers and classmates. We have special groups in which we often discuss assignments and projects, and the teachers on the British side used WeChat quite often..." (Beryl)

"…I mainly keep in touch with my teachers and classmates through WeChat and email. WeChat is used for quick daily communication, while email is used to send important documents or formal content…This combination of communication methods is perfect for our learning and communication needs, ensuring timely delivery of information and effective communication..." (Chris)

"I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to communicate. Initially, I was not comfortable using WeChat, but over time, I have found it to be not only popular but also exceptionally powerful and perfect for quick, informal communication. I often use it to answer students' immediate questions or send some course-related notifications and reminders." (Karen)

Regarding the second subcategory, 'Reasons for choosing a certain online tool ', evidence suggests several key factors that make tools such as WeChat ideal for Sino-British collaborative teaching programs. Its widespread usage and high penetration rate make it an effective communication tool for cross-cultural education. The tool's versatility and operability enable it to be used across a wide range of online educational settings. Additionally, its user-friendly interface facilitates instant communication, allowing users to send and receive messages effortlessly, greatly enhancing communication between students and teachers. Similarly, tools like Microsoft Teams also offer specialized features designed to meet the needs of both students and educators, accommodating various online learning requirements. Their powerful functionality, combined with high reliability, makes them suitable for formal educational settings, while their flexibility allows them to be used informally as well. The intuitive and simple design ensures ease of use, even for those new to online education platforms, guaranteeing a smooth learning experience. Moreover, these tools provide a secure operating environment, offering a reliable and seamless experience for users.

"…we use WeChat and Teams most often. WeChat is used for quick daily communication, such as asking for details of assignments or sharing some inspiration and resources. Teams, on the other hand, are mainly used for formal classroom teaching and meetings, as their video conferencing feature is very stable and supports multiple people online at the same time, which is perfect for us to have group discussions and present our design

work…I've found that these tools, while not a complete replacement for face-to-face communication, are very effective in keeping in touch and collaborating..." (Chris)

"…the software I often use includes WeChat, WhatsApp and Teams. On WeChat and WhatsApp, I can directly communicate with my teachers and classmates one-on-one or in a group by text, voice and video, which is convenient and fast. And on online learning platforms such as Teams, we can arrange class discussions and group projects, interact in real-time, share materials and improve communication efficiency..." (Leslie)

"…for daily communication, my students and colleagues and I mainly use email and WeChat. WeChat is popular among us because it supports quick messaging, file sharing, and video calling, which is perfect for a fast-paced academic environment. In addition, for formal meetings and distance learning, we prefer to use Zoom and Microsoft Teams. …these tools are very powerful in terms of conferencing features, supporting large-scale video conferencing and rich interactive options such as screen sharing, real-time polling, and breakout rooms, which make online teaching and collaborating much more effective…with these tools, I am able to stay in close contact with my students and colleagues in China and the UK, and promptly solve the problems they encounter in their studies and work." (Lorenzo)

The third subcategory, 'The social factor in education,' refers to the influence of interpersonal and cultural dynamics on educational outcomes. Improving teaching methods by fostering more direct interaction with students can significantly enhance the quality of education. However, Chinese students may sometimes exhibit less confidence in expressing their ideas, which can hinder active participation. Encouraging students to engage in discussions and

explore different cultural perspectives is essential for stimulating curiosity and enhancing learning. Language barriers can also negatively impact communication between students and British teachers, affecting teacher-student relationships and overall teaching effectiveness. Additionally, the challenges posed by cultural differences in intercultural communication necessitate a high level of sensitivity and adaptability to achieve meaningful and effective exchanges. Finally, differences in academic performance may also arise based on students' individual personalities, highlighting the importance of tailored approaches in teaching.

Some respondents suggested the following concerns regarding the need to enhance teaching methods to better engage with students. Notably, Chinese students may lack confidence in expressing their ideas, so it is crucial to encourage them to participate actively in discussions and stimulate their curiosity about different cultural perspectives.

> *"…I think the online lectures are quite good. Despite not being able to communicate face-to-face, we have established close ties and good cooperation through video conferencing and online discussion platforms. Teachers usually organise classes in an open-ended way, encouraging students to ask questions, discuss and share ideas to make the classroom atmosphere more active and interactive…they also regularly arrange online discussions and group activities, giving us the opportunity to have in-depth academic exchanges and collaboration with our classmates..." (Leslie)*

Language barriers can hinder effective communication between students and UK-based teachers, negatively impacting teacher-student relationships and teaching outcomes. Addressing the challenges posed by cultural differences in intercultural communication requires participants to develop sensitivity and adaptability to achieve effective and meaningful interactions.

"Firstly, I ensure that all course materials are available in advance, including handouts, slides and references, so that students have more time to adapt and understand the content. In addition, I encourage students to attend language tutoring classes and one-on-one sessions with native English-speaking peers, all of which can help them improve their English listening and speaking skills. Finally, I often provide extra office hours to encourage students to come in and discuss language barriers and other issues they are experiencing in their studies to ensure that they do not fall behind due to language difficulties..." (Melissa)

Additionally, academic performance may vary among students with different personality traits, highlighting the need for tailored approaches to meet diverse student needs.

"…engaging with the Chinese students in the Sino-British Joint Programme was an inspiring experience. I was inspired by their love of art and curiosity, and at the same time, I felt my responsibility and mission…my communication and interaction with them have given me a deeper understanding of the learning habits and cultural background of Chinese students, which has also motivated me to continuously adjust and improve my teaching methods to better meet their needs and expectations..." (Nestor)

Regarding the last subcategory, 'Close contact manifestations in online education,' the focus is on the dynamics of teacher-student relationships in virtual settings. While online education has, in some ways, enhanced the cohesion between teachers and students, allowing them to maintain close contact through digital communication tools, the absence of physical interaction can make these relationships feel more distant. This reduced face-to-face

engagement may create a sense of detachment, even though the technological platforms enable regular interaction and collaboration.

The vast majority of faculty members and students believed that the online format has made professional relationships more distant. They noted that despite the convenience and flexibility of online communication, it has led to less meaningful and more superficial interactions compared to in-person engagements.

> *"Honestly, I feel like I've become more distant from my classmates and teachers. The lack of face-to-face interaction in online courses makes it difficult for us to make deeper connections…most of the time, we were completing our own tasks, lacking teamwork and real social interaction..." (Humberto)*

> *"Teaching online did make me feel really a bit detached from my students and colleagues. After all, the lack of face-to-face interaction meant that many non-verbal communication signals, such as body language and facial expressions, could not be conveyed through the screen. However, over time, we are all adapting to this new way of communicating. I try my best to bridge the gap created by this physical distance through regular video conferencing and online socialising." (Karen)*

On the contrary, some participants thought that the online format has brought the distance closer. What is more, some respondents considered that the intimacy of online learning was not significantly different from in-person instruction, as the digital environment allowed for frequent and flexible communication, fostering strong connections despite the lack of physical presence.

"…I thought the online lectures felt pretty good. Despite not being able to meet face-to-face, we developed a strong bond and good cooperation through video conferencing and online discussion platforms…teachers usually organise the class in an open-ended way, encouraging students to ask questions, discuss and share ideas to make the classroom atmosphere more active and interactive. They also regularly arrange online discussions and group activities, giving us the opportunity to have in-depth academic exchanges and collaboration with our classmates." (Chantal)

7.3.3 Findings Related to the 'Teaching Presence' of the Participants

During the selective coding process of the gathered evidence, the researcher identified two core categories of 'The delivery of online education' and 'The educational process', related to the 'Teaching presence'.

First of all, the first core category of 'The delivery of online education' is divided into four subcategories: 'Characteristics of online education', 'Variations in online teaching', 'Positive aspects of online education' and 'Negative aspects of online education'.

Specifically, the responses of participants in the first subcategory of 'Characteristics of online education' covered several viewpoints. Firstly, some responses suggested that online education's reliance on tutorials and instructional videos inherently pushes students to depend more on digital tools and software. As a result, this format places greater emphasis on students' self-discipline and active learning, requiring them to take increased responsibility for managing their own education. Furthermore, students must cultivate strong time management skills to effectively organise their study schedules in this independent learning environment.

"…online education provides students with immediate access to a wide

range of digital resources, which enhances their ability to explore different subjects at their own pace and convenience. However, this also means students become more reliant on digital tools and platforms to facilitate their learning…" (Joyce)

"One downside of online education is that it lacks direct, face-to-face interaction, which can leave students feeling isolated…to succeed, students need to be highly self-motivated and capable of managing their own learning progress and time effectively." (Kirk)

Moreover, instructors in online education should be capable of interacting and coordinating online to ensure teaching effectiveness and enhance the student learning experience.

"…given the absence of face-to-face interaction, online education faces challenges such as ineffective teacher-student communication and students' struggles with self-directed learning…to address these issues, I have implemented several strategies, such as increasing the frequency of virtual office hours, using online tools like discussion forums and live polls, and providing more detailed feedback on assignments…these efforts aim to foster better engagement, ensure clearer communication, and help students stay on track with their independent learning…" (Pablo)

The second subcategory, 'Variations in online teaching' refers to several key aspects that can improve the online learning experience. To enhance the learning experience and understanding, evidence gathered suggests that students need more engaging and visually stimulating teaching approaches. They benefit from incorporating hands-on activities and real-world projects that help them bridge the gap between theory and practical application. Engaging students in such dynamic learning approaches allows them to deepen their

comprehension and apply their knowledge in meaningful, real-life situations.

> *"…the teachers designed practical projects that allowed us to apply the theoretical knowledge we had learnt. We need to produce digital artefacts or design multimedia works so that we can not only understand the course content but also develop practical skills and creative skills…" (Chris)*

Instructors should place greater emphasis on utilizing digital teaching resources and tools to support student learning effectively. Additionally, they should provide more supervision and personalized mentoring to help improve students' performance. Finally, instructors need to make timely adjustments to both the content and delivery of their teaching to ensure that the overall learning experience is continuously enhanced for students.

> *"…I have strengthened the supervision and guidance of the student's learning process, through online quizzes and assignments to keep abreast of students' learning, and timely adjust the teaching strategies and methods in order to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning experience…" (Pablo)*

Regarding the third subcategory, 'Positive aspects of online education', some responses were positive about online education, highlighting several benefits. They pointed out that it allows students to access art resources and the latest technology on a global scale, which deepens their understanding of the diversity and cross-cultural nature of the arts. Additionally, online education strengthens students' knowledge of various art and design-related software, enhancing their capacity for independent learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Students can learn according to their own schedules and at their own pace. They also gain valuable skills in effective cooperation, division of tasks, and multilingual communication. Intercultural communication and

cooperation foster open-mindedness and tolerance among students. Developing critical thinking and creative skills through online education not only contributes to academic success but also provides a strong foundation for personal development.

> *"First of all, I think online learning resources can provide us with a huge amount of learning materials and resources. As you know, digital media art relies a lot on the combination of various technologies and creativity, and online learning platforms have a variety of teaching videos, hands-on projects, tutorials on software tools and so on, which makes our learning choices more diversified and makes it easier for us to find a suitable learning path for ourselves. Secondly, online learning also makes our learning more flexible. Sometimes learning may be limited by time and place, but through online learning, I can study anytime and anywhere, and arrange my study time according to my own pace and interest, so that learning is no longer limited by time and place, which is more convenient." (Alberto)*

> *"…through the online platform, I am able to access top educational resources and lectures by renowned teachers from all over the world, expanding my learning horizons…no longer confined to the four walls of the classroom, I can study anywhere and at any time, unleashing the freedom of learning…" (Kirk)*

The fourth subcategory, 'Negative aspects of online education,' highlights perspectives that contrast with those in the third subcategory. The evidence suggests that the limitations of online education cannot be overlooked. This format restricts the development of students' practical skills, hands-on experience, and real-world problem-solving abilities. In virtual environments, students often lack direct access to live technical instruction and

demonstrations from instructors, which are more readily available in physical classrooms. At home, students are easily distracted by various environmental factors, affecting their focus, attention, and overall learning efficiency. Additionally, the absence of face-to-face supervision and real-time monitoring in online education makes students more vulnerable to external distractions during their studies. Finally, online education is constrained by the technological devices and network conditions available to students.

> *"…without the hands-on, practical experience in the field, most of the time we're just listening to lectures or watching some online demos, which lack challenge and engagement. Many of our courses are simply theoretical knowledge explained through videos and lack the kind of practical opportunities that stimulate creativity and deeper thinking." (Rafael)*

> *"However, online education also has some disadvantages, such as the lack of face-to-face communication and interaction, where communication between students and teachers may not be as direct and in-depth as face-to-face teaching…secondly, online education may also lack practical and experiential aspects, and certain courses that require fieldwork and experimentation may not be fully realised online…" (Melissa)*

When it comes to the second core category, 'The educational process' also consists of four subcategories: 'Teaching methods', 'Pedagogical focus', 'Teaching sessions' and 'Educational effect'.

Specifically, the responses of participants in the first subcategory of 'Teaching methods' cover several viewpoints. Some responses noted that students' practical skills and intercultural understanding are developed through the analysis of specific project examples.

"…teachers often use case studies and practical projects to help us better understand the theory and apply it in practice." (Andrea)

Independent learning of course content before classroom discussion and practice strengthens active learning and creative thinking skills.

"At first, I found the concept of 'Moving Images' really difficult and abstract, and I wasn't sure how to approach the brief the teacher gave us. So, I reached out to my teacher on WeChat and mentioned my confusion. She sent me some links to online tutorials, and I started going through them before the actual class. Getting familiar with the material ahead of time really helped me understand things better and made the class discussions and exercises much easier to follow…in some other courses, the teacher has us review tutorials and readings before each session as well. This way, when we get to class, we don't waste time going over the basics. Instead, we jump straight into discussing different techniques and experimenting with creative ideas…I really enjoy this approach because having already explored the content on my own, I can focus more on trying out new filming methods and discussing creative solutions with my classmates. It makes the class much more interactive and helps me think more critically about the material…" (Leslie)

Collaborative skills and multiple perspectives in cross-cultural projects are fostered through team projects. They noted that independent exploration and self-management skills are enhanced by providing rich resources and flexible learning arrangements.

"In my experience with cross-cultural team projects, I've seen students develop strong collaborative skills and learn to appreciate different perspectives by working together. I also make sure to provide plenty of

resources and flexible learning arrangements, so students can explore topics independently and manage their own progress. This combination really encourages them to take responsibility for their learning while benefiting from the diversity of ideas in a team setting…" (Pablo)

Personalized guidance and regular feedback help students solve learning challenges and enhance their professional skills.

"…I regularly collect feedback from students to understand their learning needs and difficulties, and adjust the teaching strategies and contents in time to improve the effectiveness of teaching…" (Melissa)

The second subcategory, 'Pedagogical focus' refers to several key aspects. It argues that students whose critical thinking skills are systematically developed are more likely to come up with unique insights and innovative solutions. Developing good presentation skills not only contributes to academic success but also enhances confidence and influence in social interactions. Active participation in teamwork is expected to help students develop their collaboration, communication, and problem-solving abilities. By enhancing students' sense of participation and responsibility, they can develop positive learning attitudes, self-management skills, and teamwork. The development of general competence reflects not only academic achievement but also contributes to the overall development of the student.

"…our teachers often emphasise the importance of teamwork and encourage us to be brave enough to express ourselves as well as praising us often to give us a boost of confidence." (Imelda)

"…as teachers, we focus on developing the overall capabilities of our students to ensure that they not only excel academically, but also benefit in

the long term. We actively create a teamwork environment where students work collaboratively to enhance their communication and problem-solving skills. At the same time, we encourage students to express their ideas and boost their self-confidence through frequent praise and recognition. These approaches help to develop students' self-confidence, teamwork spirit and expression skills, and enhance their overall qualities, laying a solid foundation for future development..." (Pablo)

The third subcategory 'Teaching sessions' suggests that seminars and workshops should be organised more frequently, providing students with rich and interactive learning opportunities. One-on-one tutorials should be held to help students with specific problems in their studies. Interactive learning tools not only enhance the interest and attractiveness of the classroom but also promote active participation, motivation, and independent learning. Regular feedback from students on teaching methods and content would be collected. Practical activities offer students hands-on experience, helping them to better understand and grasp what they have learned.

"Our teachers do try many ways to improve the quality and satisfaction of their teaching. For example, they often use interactive teaching, such as real-time design reviews and online seminars, so that students can be directly involved in the learning process…" (Leslie)

"I also have a strong focus on individual tutoring to help students with specific problems in their learning through regular one-to-one meetings." (Karen)

Regarding the last subcategory, 'Educational effect', evidence from responses suggests the view that communication and sharing not only stimulate students' interest in learning but also promote cooperation and mutual support among

them, thereby enhancing the learning experience and its effectiveness.

> *"Yes, my teachers used a variety of methods to make the learning experience more engaging, such as encouraging creative brainstorming sessions and organising portfolio-based projects. These activities really helped us collaborate and exchange ideas with each other. They also designed hands-on assignments where we could apply the concepts we learned, which made the whole process more immersive and fostered a strong sense of teamwork." (Alberto)*

Instructors can organise various practical activities, project studies, and social surveys to enable students to apply what they have learned in real situations. Encouraging students to present their own views will not only enhance their ability to express themselves but also sharpen their debating skills.

> *"…teachers often encourage us to take part in hands-on projects and creative workshops, where we can apply what we've learned in real-world contexts. We're also given the chance to present our ideas, which not only boosts our ability to express ourselves but also helps us refine our critical thinking and problem-solving skills through discussions and feedback…" (Joyce)*

Utilizing diverse resources to support and enhance teaching and learning effectiveness further aids in the development of student competencies. Additionally, encouraging students to participate in class discussions and group projects increases their engagement and fosters a collaborative learning environment.

> *"…I actively encourage students to take part in class discussions and collaborative projects to boost their engagement and teamwork skills. I also*

organise regular workshops and practical sessions, where students can apply what they've learned, helping them refine their skills and improve both their academic and practical performance…" (Melissa 3)

7.3.4 Findings Related to 'The Personal Experiences and Perceptions' of the Participants

The semi-structured interviews conducted in this research allowed the researcher to collect unstructured data and gain insights into the personal experiences of the participants. The open-ended nature of the interviews enabled participants to share their experiences and thoughts more freely, leading to the discovery of subtleties and complexities within their responses. Therefore, in addition to the responses to the three 'Presences', the researcher also obtained enriched and detailed information from the participants' experiences. This detailed information provided the researcher with first-hand knowledge of the research topic, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' interactions and perceptions. This depth of information was instrumental in identifying another new core category, which is 'The evaluation of the Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Project'.

The core category 'The evaluation of the Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Project' is divided into four subcategories: 'The advantages of partnership education projects', 'The characteristics of partnership education projects', 'The optimisation measures of partnership education projects' and 'The future expectations of partnership education projects'.

The first subcategory, 'The advantages of partnership education projects' emphasizes several key benefits for students in arts and design programs. Both the UK and China boast rich cultural heritage, with long histories, deep artistic traditions, and diverse cultural resources. The UK, in particular, offers an innovative teaching approach that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and

integrative skills. Its prime location provides students with access to excellent facilities and numerous opportunities to research and gather materials throughout Europe. Furthermore, the UK's education system prioritizes the holistic development of students, encouraging the growth of their personalities, independent thinking, and creativity.

> *"…my teachers introduced a variety of approaches to enhance the quality of our learning experience. For example, we had to create visual campaigns or design prototypes based on specific themes related to the culture and history of the UK or China. One project involved researching exhibitions related to both British and Chinese artistic in the 18th century, where we explored how these cultural influences could be blended into a modern design concept…we were also tasked with applying theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, like developing creative solutions for public installations or digital storytelling projects. These activities not only helped us better understand the material but also encouraged independent thinking and pushed us to explore different creative perspectives…" (Helene)*

Students participating in Sino-UK arts and design partnership programs benefit from the cultural richness and varied career opportunities of both countries, which enhances their competitiveness in the international arts field. The UK's flexible education system and diverse teaching methods further stimulate students' creative potential, while its world-class teaching standards and extensive educational resources support their growth. Additionally, the openness and cultural diversity of UK society creates a vibrant environment for cultural exchange and integration, enriching the overall learning experience.

> *"…to better understand the course material, I often engage in practical, hands-on learning. For instance, when learning new tools or techniques, I*

research different approaches and immediately apply them to projects I'm working on. This method not only helps me quickly absorb the process but also allows me to see how these techniques are applied in different cultural contexts…working on collaborative projects with peers from diverse backgrounds broadens my perspective, and discussing various creative approaches gives me a deeper understanding of how to integrate global influences into my work…during one of these projects, I had the opportunity to collaborate with a UK-based company in jewellery design, which eventually led to an internship offer. This experience not only improved my technical skills but also gave me direct exposure to the international creative industries, making me more competitive in the global arts field…" (Chris)

The second subcategory, 'The characteristics of partnership education projects' highlights several key aspects of Sino-UK collaboration in art and design. These programs cover a wide range of specialisations and promote the multi-faceted development of students. The British education system, in particular, emphasizes interdisciplinary integration, encouraging students to explore various fields and techniques to create innovative works of art. This partnership fosters commonality and inclusiveness on a global scale, promoting intercultural understanding and exchange. Students are prepared to be competitive and innovative at the forefront of the global arts scene, equipped with the ability to effectively convey information and emotions through their artwork. By incorporating diverse cultural backgrounds, students are able to create resonant and inclusive pieces that enable people from different backgrounds to connect and understand each other through artistic exchanges.

"In my experience with online teaching, I found that maintaining more frequent communication with students greatly enhances their learning experience, especially in collaborative projects that involve diverse cultural

elements. For example, regular discussions and feedback sessions help me understand their creative processes and challenges, allowing me to tailor my guidance accordingly…by introducing international design case studies and showcasing examples from global exhibitions, I can help students broaden their perspectives and see how their work fits into a larger, intercultural context. This approach not only boosts their confidence but also encourages them to incorporate different cultural influences, enabling them to create pieces that resonate with global audiences…by fostering these interdisciplinary connections and offering continuous support, I aim to prepare students to be competitive and innovative in the global arts scene…" (Nestor)

"I introduce resources like design case studies that blend Eastern and Western artistic traditions, encouraging students to explore interdisciplinary approaches and innovative techniques. I also adjust the pace of the course to better align with students' comprehension and integrate more interactive sessions, such as collaborative design critiques, where students can apply global perspectives to their projects…additionally, I incorporate English-language video materials into Chinese-taught classes to expose students to international design trends and cross-cultural influences, helping them improve their communication skills and adapt to the global arts scene. This approach enables students to integrate diverse cultural elements into their work…" (Lorenzo)

The third subcategory, 'The optimisation measures of partnership education projects' highlights several strategies for improving the effectiveness of these programs. One recommendation is to incorporate more visual aids, such as charts, videos, and animations, to enhance student understanding.

"…I frequently adjust my teaching methods and content based on the

feedback I receive from students…for example, when students find it challenging to understand certain design techniques or concepts, I introduce more engaging materials like visual breakdowns of projects or hands-on demonstrations. This approach helps them better grasp complex ideas and improve their overall understanding…" (Melissa)

Additionally, fostering cultural exchanges is emphasized as a way to broaden students' horizons and improve their global competitiveness. Providing additional language support and training is also suggested, along with using accessible language that avoids overly complex terminology or slang. Furthermore, offering additional academic resources, such as academic writing centres, online learning tools, seminars, and workshops, is recommended to enrich the overall learning experience and support student success.

"…when learning new design techniques or tools, I often rely on tutorials and online videos, but sometimes struggle to fully understand how to apply them in practical, creative projects. In group discussions, I also find it challenging to express my ideas in English clearly and to effectively engage with the feedback from my peers…I would benefit from more language learning opportunities to practice communication skills, particularly in collaborative, cross-cultural settings, where understanding different perspectives is key…additionally, I think having access to more academic resources, like workshops or seminars focused on design communication and practical project execution, would help me better integrate feedback and improve my overall learning process…" (Humberto)

The last subcategory, 'The future expectations of partnership education projects' suggests providing students with diverse perspectives and innovative ideas to stimulate creativity and critical thinking. Additionally, teachers should continue refining their teaching methods to better address the learning needs

of their students. Actively encouraging class discussions and offering support to build students' self-confidence is also highlighted as essential. Furthermore, the need to adapt teaching strategies and methods in a timely manner is stressed, as this can enhance the quality of teaching and improve the overall learning experience for students.

"…teachers could do much more to improve our learning experience, as the current approach feels far too rigid and formulaic. In many cases, lessons are reduced to simply reading off PowerPoint slides, which doesn't engage us or stimulate creativity…there's a noticeable lack of diverse perspectives and innovative ideas that could challenge us to think critically and creatively. Students have different ways of processing information and expressing their creativity, but the teaching methods seem to follow a one-size-fits-all model…it's frustrating because many of us are eager for a more dynamic and supportive learning environment that fosters both personal growth and artistic innovation. We really need teachers to make the lessons more interesting, especially in online environment…" (Humberto)

"…over the past year, I've observed a growing concern: while students are passionate about creative projects, they consistently struggle to bridge the gap between theory and practical application. Many fail to apply design techniques effectively or incorporate cultural influences into their work, and worse, they often disregard feedback, missing critical opportunities for growth…if these issues are not addressed immediately, students risk falling behind in their ability to create meaningful, competitive work, which will severely hinder their potential in the global arts arena. Without this change, students may continue to produce technically weak and culturally disconnected work…this shift must happen now if we want to ensure they develop into globally competitive creators who can make an impact…" (Olga)

7.4 Findings from the Questionnaire Data

7.4.1 Findings Related to the ‘Cognitive Presence’ of the Participants

As shown in the descriptive statistics of the overall performance across the four dimensions in Section 6.5.4 of the data analysis chapter, the researcher found that the mean of most assessment results was close to 3.0, with the median also being 3.0 for the majority of the data. This suggests that participants' ratings generally clustered around the midpoint, indicating a neutral or 'medium' stance. This trend implies that while participants did not strongly express dissatisfaction, they also did not show strong agreement or satisfaction. This overall pattern of moderate responses prompted the researcher to further investigate the distribution of ratings at the extremes. Therefore, when analysing the descriptive statistics for specific questions within each dimension, the researcher focused on the proportion of participants who selected '1 and 2' or '4 and 5' on the Likert scale.

By focusing on the proportions of choices 1 and 2, the researcher aimed to identify areas where participants experienced dissatisfaction or disagreement. Selections of 1 and 2 on the Likert scale typically indicate lower levels of satisfaction or a perception that certain methods were ineffective. This analysis helps highlight the specific aspects where improvements are most urgently needed, as they represent the areas where participants faced the greatest challenges or unmet expectations. On the other hand, by examining the proportions of choices 4 and 5, the researcher sought to gain insights into areas that were considered most effective. These higher ratings reflect stronger levels of satisfaction or agreement, signalling the components that participants found particularly useful or beneficial. By analysing both ends of the scale, the researcher could develop a balanced understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the resources in question.

This targeted analysis allows the researcher to identify which specific questions in each dimension had the most prominent impact on the research results, and to discern clear patterns of strengths and weaknesses. As a result, this approach provides a more nuanced understanding of participant feedback, enabling a focused direction for further improvement and optimization, ensuring that the tools and resources can be refined to better meet the needs and expectations of both students and faculty.

The descriptive statistics of 'Cognitive presence' in the participants' responses, are shown in Table 7.1. The data of SQ (Students' questionnaire) indicated that Q10, Q8, and Q6 received higher levels of disagreement, with 56%, 51%, and 50% of students selecting options 1 and 2, respectively. Each of these percentages represents half or more of the total responses, pointing to notable areas of concern.

Q10 assesses students' ability to effectively integrate theoretical knowledge with artistic creation through repeated reflection and practice. Q8 evaluates how course discussions and collaboration enable the exchange of ideas among peers, facilitating the confirmation and deepening of their understanding. Q6 explores whether the course structure encourages students to discover new solutions to complex problems through ongoing reflection and apply these solutions in practice.

The significant level of disagreement in responses suggests that students may be facing challenges in key areas of the online course. Specifically, they may be struggling to effectively integrate theory with practice, engage in peer exchange to deepen understanding, or reflect continuously to solve complex problems. These findings highlight the need to reconsider how cognitive presence is fostered in the online course design, to better support and enhance

students' learning experiences.

In contrast, students showed a higher level of agreement with Q3 and Q1, with 60% and 55% of students selecting options 4 and 5, respectively. Q3 assesses students' ability to integrate diverse information and perspectives into meaningful work, thereby deepening their understanding of theoretical knowledge. Q1 evaluates how the course content encourages students to identify previously unnoticed issues, prompting them to engage in more extensive research and thinking.

The data suggest that students generally perceived the course as effective in fostering the skills assessed through Q3 and Q1. The strong agreement with Q3 indicates that many students felt confident in their ability to synthesise diverse information and perspectives to enhance their theoretical understanding. Similarly, the positive response to Q1 demonstrates that students felt encouraged by the course content to identify overlooked issues and engage in deeper research and reflection.

SQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q1	10	15	20	28	27	25	55	4	192
Q2	18	22	30	15	15	40	30	3	192
Q3	10	12	18	35	25	22	60	4	192
Q4	21	18	25	22	14	39	36	3	192
Q5	23	19	25	21	12	42	33	3	192
Q6	23	27	26	12	12	50	24	2	192
Q7	19	18	24	23	16	37	39	3	192

Q8	24	27	27	11	11	51	22	2	192
Q9	20	19	26	22	13	39	35	3	192
Q10	26	30	30	8	6	56	14	2	192
FQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q1	4	12	18	35	31	16	66	4	82
Q2	6	14	22	33	25	20	58	4	82
Q3	7	16	25	32	20	23	52	3	82
Q4	5	15	24	34	22	20	56	4	82
Q5	8	17	27	30	18	25	48	3	82
Q6	4	13	21	34	28	17	62	4	82
Q7	10	15	28	28	19	25	47	3	82
Q8	3	14	22	37	24	17	61	4	82
Q9	10	14	26	32	18	24	50	4	82
Q10	10	18	28	27	17	28	44	3	82

Table 7.1: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Cognitive Presence’

Contrary to the students' responses, FQ (Faculty members’ questionnaire) generally held a more positive attitude towards questions related to the 'Cognitive presence' dimension. Nevertheless, data with low agreement should not be underestimated. The proportion of faculty members selecting lower agreement levels, specifically options 1 and 2, was significantly lower than that of the student group, with 28%, 25%, and 25% for Q10, Q5, and Q7, respectively.

Among these, faculty members, like the student group, expressed similarly pessimistic views towards Q10. Q5 assesses whether the various online resources provided in the course support students in developing critical thinking

during their learning process. Q7 examines whether the virtual learning materials offered by the course help students deepen their understanding of theoretical knowledge through different approaches.

The data indicate that while faculty members generally held a more positive view of cognitive presence, the relatively lower agreement levels suggest areas where further improvement may be needed. The lower ratings for the integration of theoretical knowledge with artistic creation, as well as for the role of online resources and virtual materials in fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding, indicate potential gaps between the intended course design and its perceived effectiveness in supporting these learning outcomes.

Regarding the selection of options 4 and 5, faculty members demonstrated a higher level of agreement in several aspects, particularly with Q1, Q6, and Q8, each exceeding 60%. Among these, faculty members, like the student group, showed relatively optimistic attitudes towards Q1. In contrast, while students showed lower levels of agreement with Q6 and Q8, faculty members were more optimistic in their responses.

The data reveal notable differences in the perceptions of students and faculty regarding cognitive presence within the course. While students expressed significant challenges in areas related to integrating theory with practice, engaging in peer collaboration, and applying reflective thinking to solve complex problems, faculty members generally held a more optimistic view. Specifically, students demonstrated higher levels of disagreement in areas tied to theoretical integration and critical thinking, suggesting that these aspects may not be fully supported by the current course structure. In contrast, students showed greater confidence in their ability to synthesise diverse perspectives and identify previously overlooked issues, indicating some success in fostering higher-order thinking.

Faculty members, however, consistently exhibited more positive attitudes across most areas, especially in relation to the development of critical thinking and the use of online and virtual resources. These findings suggest a potential misalignment between student experiences and faculty expectations, highlighting areas where the course design could be refined to better support students' cognitive engagement.

7.4.2 Findings Related to the ‘Social Presence’ of the Participants

The descriptive statistics of 'Social presence' in the participants' responses, as shown in Table 7.2, indicate that students generally expressed disappointment with several aspects of this dimension. The data show that Q13, Q16, Q11, Q15, and Q18 received higher levels of disagreement, with 54%, 49%, 48%, 48%, and 48% of students selecting options 1 and 2, respectively.

Q13 assesses whether students feel comfortable in the online environment, enabling them to freely share personal ideas, experiences, and creative processes. Q16 evaluates the extent to which course interactions allow students to gain new insights and improve their work. Q11 examines whether students feel connected to their teachers and peers in the online course, contributing to their learning experience and engagement. Q15 investigates whether discussions within the course help teams achieve common goals, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. Q18 assesses the effectiveness of the online communication methods in promoting collaboration and creative idea sharing among students.

The results suggest that students did not feel sufficiently comfortable sharing their ideas and creative processes, nor did they believe that interactions within the online course offered valuable insights or opportunities for improvement. Furthermore, students indicated a lack of connection with their peers in the

online environment and felt that discussions were less effective in fostering teamwork and achieving shared goals. Additionally, the online communication methods were perceived as inadequate in promoting collaboration and the exchange of creative ideas. These findings highlight potential areas for improvement in enhancing social engagement and collaboration within the online course.

In contrast, students showed a higher level of agreement with Q14 and Q19, with 38% and 34% of students selecting options 4 and 5, respectively. Q14 examines whether the online course fosters a relationship of mutual trust between students and teachers, thereby promoting active student participation in the learning process. Q19 evaluates whether the feedback mechanisms within the course make students feel supported and valued by the teachers, thereby enhancing their confidence in learning.

The data suggest that students responded more positively to aspects of the online course related to trust and support. The results indicate that a notable proportion of students felt the online course design successfully fostered a sense of mutual trust between students and teachers, which in turn encouraged their active participation. Additionally, the positive responses suggest that the feedback mechanisms within the online course were perceived as effective in making students feel supported by their teachers, thereby boosting their confidence in the online learning process.

SQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q11	8	40	24	15	13	48	28	2	192
Q12	9	37	30	14	10	46	24	2	192
Q13	10	44	25	11	10	54	21	2	192

Q14	7	27	28	21	17	34	38	3	192
Q15	9	39	26	17	9	48	26	2	192
Q16	12	37	24	20	7	49	27	2	192
Q17	11	36	29	15	9	47	24	2	192
Q18	6	42	29	13	10	48	23	2	192
Q19	9	35	22	28	6	44	34	2	192
Q20	8	38	27	18	9	46	27	3	192
FQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q11	9	26	36	22	7	35	29	3	82
Q12	10	29	42	11	8	39	19	3	82
Q13	7	33	34	18	8	40	26	3	82
Q14	6	15	24	37	18	21	55	4	82
Q15	12	10	25	33	20	22	53	4	82
Q16	10	20	32	30	8	30	38	3	82
Q17	5	18	27	30	20	23	50	3	82
Q18	11	20	33	25	11	31	26	3	82
Q19	6	18	37	30	9	24	39	3	82
Q20	4	40	22	25	9	44	34	2	192

Table 7.2: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Social Presence’

Faculty members provided slightly more positive evaluations of various aspects of the 'Social presence' dimension compared to the student group. The highest proportions of disagreement, indicated by selecting options 1 and 2, were observed for Q20, Q13, and Q12, with 44%, 40%, and 39%, respectively. Q20 examines whether students feel that the course design facilitates cross-cultural collaboration, helping them to overcome the challenges posed by language and cultural differences. Faculty members, like the student group, expressed

similarly pessimistic views towards Q13. Q12 assesses whether the interactions and communication within the course enable students to authentically express their ideas and feel understood by others.

The data suggest that faculty members expressed some reservations regarding aspects of the online course related to cross-cultural collaboration and communication. The relatively high levels of disagreement with Q20 imply that some faculty members may feel the online course design could do more to facilitate cross-cultural collaboration and support students in overcoming language and cultural challenges. Similarly, the responses to Q13 and Q12 indicate potential concerns about whether the online course environment sufficiently enables students to comfortably share personal ideas and whether interactions within the course effectively support authentic expression and mutual understanding. These findings point to possible areas where the online course could be enhanced to better promote communication and collaboration.

Regarding the selection of options 4 and 5, faculty members demonstrated a higher level of agreement in several aspects, particularly with Q14, Q15, and Q17, each at or exceeding 50%.

Among these, faculty members, like the student group, showed relatively optimistic attitudes towards Q14. In contrast, while students showed lower levels of agreement with Q15, faculty members were more optimistic in their responses. Q17 examines whether the course content encourages students to engage with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, helping them to understand the diversity within art and design.

The data suggest that the high level of agreement with Q14 indicates that faculty members believe the online course design successfully fosters mutual trust between students and teachers, which promotes active student

participation. Similarly, the responses to Q15 suggest that faculty members feel course discussions effectively support teamwork and the achievement of shared goals, enhancing collaborative learning. Furthermore, the positive feedback on Q17 highlights faculty members' belief that the online course content encourages meaningful interaction among students from diverse cultural backgrounds, enriching their understanding of social and cultural diversity in art and design.

The analysis of the 'Social presence' dimension indicates that both students and faculty members identified several areas where the course could be improved, particularly in terms of communication, collaboration, and cross-cultural engagement. Students expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to comfortably share ideas, interact meaningfully with peers, and collaborate effectively in online discussions. They also indicated a lack of connection with peers and felt that the course's communication methods did not adequately promote creative idea-sharing and teamwork.

However, students responded more positively to aspects related to trust and support, noting that the course design fostered mutual trust between students and teachers and that the feedback mechanisms provided by teachers were supportive and boosted their confidence. Faculty members, on the other hand, provided slightly more positive evaluations overall but expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the course in promoting cross-cultural collaboration and supporting authentic communication among students.

Despite these reservations, faculty members generally felt that the course successfully fostered mutual trust, supported collaborative teamwork, and encouraged meaningful interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds, enhancing their understanding of diversity within art and design. These findings suggest that while there are strengths in the course's approach

to trust and collaboration, there remain areas where improvements can be made to better support social interaction and cross-cultural engagement within the learning environment.

7.4.3 Findings Related to the ‘Teaching Presence’ of the Participants

The descriptive statistics of participants' responses regarding the 'Teaching presence' are presented in Table 7.3. In this dimension, the responses from the student group appear relatively consistent. The data shows that there is a relatively high degree of disagreement in Q24, Q23, and Q30, with 44%, 35%, and 33% of students, respectively, selecting options 1 and 2.

Q24 examines whether, in a cross-cultural context, the teaching strategies employed by instructors can help students overcome language and cultural barriers, thereby enhancing their learning experience. Q23 assesses whether instructors actively provide online guidance to assist students in deepening their thinking and understanding of complex concepts. Q30 evaluates whether the course offers diverse assessment methods, enabling students to demonstrate their learning progress and design capabilities in various forms, while also receiving effective feedback.

The data suggest that students hold differing views on the effectiveness of teaching strategies, online guidance, and assessment methods within the course, particularly in a cross-cultural learning environment. The relatively high percentage of students selecting lower ratings (options 1 and 2) for Q24, Q23, and Q30 indicates that a significant portion of students perceive challenges in overcoming language and cultural barriers, receiving adequate online support for complex concepts, and experiencing diverse assessment opportunities. These areas may require further refinement to better meet the needs of a diverse student population and enhance the overall learning experience.

In contrast, students demonstrated a higher level of agreement with Q22 and Q28, with 44% and 41% of students, respectively, selecting options 4 and 5. Q22 examines whether the structure and organisation of the course content allow students to systematically follow the learning progress and maintain an efficient learning pace, while Q28 assesses whether instructors, through carefully designed questions and discussion activities, encourage students to deeply analyse and explore the core concepts of the course.

The data suggest that some students found the online course well-organised and that the instructors' use of thoughtfully crafted questions and discussions is effective in fostering deeper engagement with key concepts. These findings highlight the strengths of the online course design in supporting both efficient learning and effective instructional practices.

SQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q21	8	21	39	22	10	29	32	3	192
Q22	7	19	30	28	16	26	44	3	192
Q23	10	25	40	15	10	35	25	3	192
Q24	10	34	22	27	7	44	34	2	192
Q25	9	23	33	22	13	32	35	3	192
Q26	8	22	32	23	15	30	38	3	192
Q27	7	21	39	21	12	28	33	3	192
Q28	6	23	30	25	16	29	41	3	192
Q29	8	19	34	22	17	27	39	3	192
Q30	11	22	31	25	11	33	36	3	192
FQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q21	7	15	25	35	18	22	53	4	82

Q22	8	20	35	25	12	28	37	3	82
Q23	6	22	38	24	10	28	34	3	82
Q24	5	12	20	38	25	17	63	4	82
Q25	5	18	27	30	20	23	50	3	82
Q26	8	20	35	28	9	28	37	3	82
Q27	7	13	28	35	17	20	52	4	82
Q28	11	14	26	31	18	25	49	4	82
Q29	3	26	35	27	9	29	36	3	82
Q30	5	18	27	30	20	23	50	3	82

Table 7.3: Descriptive Statistics of ‘Teaching Presence’

When examining the perspectives of faculty members on the questions within this dimension, the highest proportions of disagreement, as indicated by selecting options 1 and 2, were observed for Q29, Q22, Q23, and Q26. The proportion of disagreement for Q29 was 29%, while the remaining three questions each had a proportion of 28%.

Q29 examines whether course tasks enable students to regularly reflect on and summarise their learning process, helping them integrate new theoretical knowledge with the practical creative experience. In contrast, while students demonstrated higher levels of agreement with Q22, faculty members were more pessimistic in their responses. Faculty members, like the student group, expressed similarly critical views towards Q23. Q26 assesses whether instructors, through flexible course organisation and task design, are able to help students better adapt to diverse learning needs and the cultural contexts of both China and the UK.

These responses indicate concerns among faculty about the course's ability to facilitate regular student reflection and the integration of theoretical knowledge

with practical experience, the effectiveness of the online course structure in maintaining an efficient learning pace, the adequacy of online guidance to deepen students' understanding of complex concepts, and the flexibility of the course design to accommodate diverse cultural and learning needs. These areas may require further attention to align with faculty expectations and improve course delivery.

Regarding the selection of options 4 and 5, half of the questions received positive feedback from 50% or more of faculty members, specifically Q24, Q21, Q27, Q25, and Q30.

In contrast, while students demonstrated lower levels of agreement with Q24 and Q30, faculty members were more optimistic in their responses. Q21 examines whether instructors can help students better understand the overall direction and expected outcomes of the course through clear objectives and planning. Q27 assesses whether instructors enhance students' confidence through guidance and support, encouraging more active participation in learning and creative processes. Q25 evaluates whether instructors provide timely and detailed feedback in online courses, enabling students to continuously improve their design skills and learning methods.

The data indicate that instructors believe the online course is effective in helping students overcome language and cultural barriers, providing clear objectives to help students understand course goals and expected outcomes, boosting students' confidence and encouraging active engagement through guidance and support, delivering timely and detailed feedback in online courses, and offering diverse assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate their progress and receive constructive feedback. These areas are seen as strengths of the online course from the faculty’s perspective.

The findings reveal differing perceptions between students and faculty members regarding the teaching practices within the online course, particularly in relation to cross-cultural challenges. Students expressed concerns about the effectiveness of teaching strategies in helping them overcome language and cultural barriers, with many indicating dissatisfaction with the online guidance provided for complex concepts and the diversity of assessment methods. These responses suggest that the teaching approaches may need refinement to better cater to the varied needs of a diverse student cohort, enhancing the overall learning experience.

Nevertheless, students acknowledged certain strengths in the online teaching practices, particularly in the clear organisation of course content and the effective use of thoughtfully crafted questions and discussions, which were seen as promoting deeper engagement with the material. This highlights that, while some areas of online teaching require improvement, others are perceived positively by students in supporting their learning process.

Faculty members, on the other hand, raised concerns about the online course's ability to facilitate reflective learning, integrate theoretical and practical knowledge, and offer flexibility in accommodating diverse learning needs across different cultural contexts. However, they were more optimistic about the online course's teaching strategies in helping students navigate cross-cultural challenges, providing clear objectives, boosting student confidence through guidance, and offering timely and constructive feedback. These findings suggest that while both students and faculty recognise strengths in the online teaching approach, key areas—such as enhancing the flexibility and effectiveness of teaching methods—require attention to align the online course more closely with the expectations of both groups.

7.4.4 Findings Related to ‘The Personal Experiences and Perceptions’ of the Participants

The descriptive statistics for participants' responses concerning the dimension of 'Personal experiences and perceptions' are detailed in Table 7.4. The data reveals a significant level of disagreement among students regarding Q33, Q31, and Q38, with 46%, 44%, and 44% of respondents, respectively, selecting the lower ratings of options 1 and 2.

Q33 examines whether instructors are able to effectively manage both teaching and administrative tasks, ensuring the smooth delivery of online courses while providing students with sufficient support. Q31 assesses whether students can communicate effectively with instructors and peers despite the challenges posed by time zone differences in an online learning environment. Q38 evaluates whether the technical support available in the online course enables students to freely explore interdisciplinary fields within art and design, fostering innovative thinking.

The data suggest that some students perceive a lack of sufficient support from instructors, which may hinder the smooth operation of the online course. Additionally, difficulties in effective communication across time zones appear to impact the learning experience, potentially limiting student interaction with both instructors and peers. Furthermore, the current level of technical support may not fully facilitate the exploration of interdisciplinary fields, which is critical for fostering creativity and innovation in art and design. These areas highlight potential gaps in the online course's design and delivery that may require further attention to better meet students' expectations and support their learning needs.

In contrast, students demonstrated a higher level of agreement with Q39 and Q34, with 43% and 40% of respondents selecting options 4 and 5, respectively. Q39 evaluates whether the online course facilitates connections with global

artists and designers, thereby broadening students' creative perspectives. Q34 assesses whether students perceive that the course design in the Sino-British collaborative programme effectively integrates the cultural and pedagogical strengths of both countries, enhancing their learning experience.

The data indicate that students generally hold positive views regarding the online course's ability to broaden their creative perspectives and enhance their learning experience through international connections and cultural integration. Many students recognise the value of the online course in establishing links with global artists and designers, which expands their creative outlook. Additionally, students appreciate the course design's successful blending of cultural and educational strengths from both China and the UK, suggesting that this aspect of the programme contributes positively to their overall learning experience. These aspects stand out as clear strengths of the online course, playing a significant role in effectively supporting students' creative growth and cross-cultural development.

SQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q31	14	30	27	16	13	44	29	2	192
Q32	13	30	25	22	10	43	32	3	192
Q33	11	35	32	14	8	46	22	2	192
Q34	8	28	24	25	15	36	40	3	192
Q35	12	29	26	22	11	41	33	3	192
Q36	9	33	26	21	11	42	32	3	192
Q37	10	30	27	18	15	40	33	2	192
Q38	16	28	26	26	4	44	30	3	192
Q39	9	26	22	30	13	35	43	3	192
Q40	9	27	28	23	13	36	36	3	192

FQ	Agreement (%)					1+2	4+5	Mean	Total
	1	2	3	4	5				
Q31	8	23	28	27	14	31	41	3	82
Q32	11	29	32	16	12	40	28	3	82
Q33	3	41	22	24	10	44	34	2	192
Q34	9	24	32	24	11	33	35	3	82
Q35	10	26	34	21	9	36	30	3	82
Q36	12	30	32	19	7	42	26	3	82
Q37	15	22	34	21	8	37	29	3	82
Q38	8	28	33	22	9	36	31	3	82
Q39	6	14	28	36	16	20	52	4	82
Q40	9	30	36	13	12	39	25	3	82

Table 7.4: Descriptive Statistics of ‘The Personal Experiences and Perceptions’

When examining the perspectives of faculty members on the questions within this dimension, the highest proportions of disagreement, as indicated by selecting options 1 and 2, were observed for Q33，Q36 and Q32. The proportion of disagreement for 44%, 42% and 42% respectively.

Faculty members, like the student group, expressed similarly pessimistic views towards Q33. Q36 examines whether cross-cultural activities within the course help students deepen their understanding of global art trends and cultural diversity. Q32 evaluates whether, in the absence of facial expressions and body language in the online course, students are able to comprehend accurately the information and feedback provided.

The data suggest that there is notable scepticism about the ability of cross-cultural activities to enhance students' understanding of global art trends and

cultural diversity, as well as doubts about whether students can accurately interpret information and feedback in the absence of non-verbal cues in the online setting. Additionally, faculty members expressed similar concerns to students regarding the management of teaching and administrative tasks. These issues highlight key areas where improvements may be needed to better support both teaching effectiveness and students' learning experiences in the online course.

Regarding the selection of options 4 and 5, faculty members demonstrated a higher level of agreement in Q39 and Q31, each exceeding 40%. Among these, faculty members, like the student group, showed relatively optimistic attitudes towards Q39. In contrast, while students demonstrated lower levels of agreement with Q31, faculty members were more optimistic in their responses.

The data indicate that faculty members believe the online course effectively facilitates interactions with international artists and designers, broadening students' creative perspectives. Additionally, faculty members express confidence in the online course’s ability to support effective communication between students, instructors, and peers, even in an online environment with time zone differences.

The findings reveal a complex set of perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the online course in supporting student engagement and fostering a productive learning environment. Both students and faculty members express concerns about the course's ability to provide sufficient support for teaching and administrative tasks, as well as challenges in communication due to the absence of non-verbal cues and time zone differences.

Students, in particular, highlight issues with technical support, which they believe limits their ability to explore interdisciplinary fields and stimulate creative

thinking. However, there are positive perceptions surrounding the course's role in fostering global connections, with both students and faculty recognising its value in broadening creative perspectives through interactions with international artists and designers. Additionally, the course's integration of cultural and pedagogical strengths from both China and the UK is seen as enhancing the learning experience.

These findings suggest that while the course succeeds in certain areas—such as cross-cultural and global engagement—there remain significant areas that require improvement to better align with the needs and expectations of both students and faculty, particularly in relation to communication and technical support.

7.5 Using the TOER Model to Understand the Findings of This Research

7.5.1 Introduction to the TOER Model

This section presents an original theoretical framework for Sino-UK transnational art and design education, developed from the empirical data and findings analysed in the thesis to this point. This analysis leads to the development and presentation of the Transnational Online Educational Resources (TOER) Model, illustrated in Figure 7.1, with a particular emphasis on Sino-UK partnership art and design teaching projects.

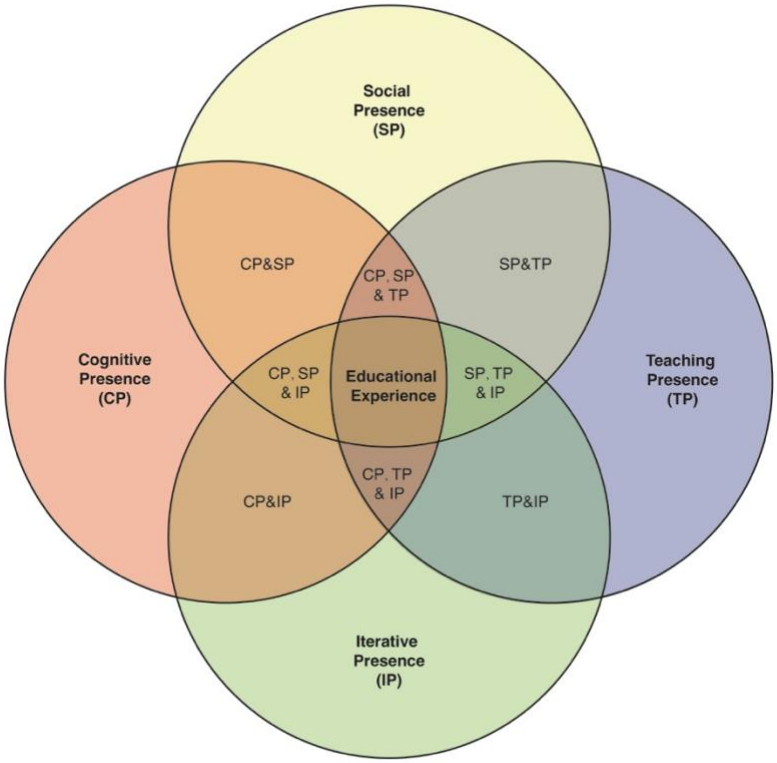

Figure 7.1: Transnational Online Education Resources (TOER) Model (With a Particular Focus on Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Teaching Projects)

At the fundamental basis of this model are three foundational presences, adapted from the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model: Cognitive Presence, Social Presence, and Teaching Presence. These presences are directly informed by the empirical findings discussed in Sections 7.2 to 7.4, with each presence corresponding to insights derived from participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires.

In addition to these established presences, the researcher introduces the original presence of ‘Iterative Presence,’ grounded in findings related to the participants' personal experiences and perceptions, as explored in Sections 7.2 to 7.4. This presence emphasizes the evolving and reflective nature of the participants' engagement throughout the transnational educational projects, adding a dynamic and personalized layer to the theoretical model.

Moreover, the intersections between the different presences have been discussed. These intersections illustrate how these presences combine to enhance the educational experience. Each overlap in the diagram signifies an essential point where the presences merge to support and reinforce learning outcomes. Moreover, at the heart of this model lies the central, core intersection area — Educational Experience — which represents the culmination of the synergy between the four presences. This core signifies the holistic experience of the students and educators involved in transnational educational projects. The Educational Experience delineates a dynamic space where the findings converge to foster deeper engagement and learning, tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the Sino-UK partnership in art and design education.

7.5.2 'Cognitive Presence' of the TOER Model

7.5.2.1 Curriculum Design and Content Delivery

This aspect of cognitive presence pertains to the strategies that instructors use to structure and present course material in a way that is cohesive, comprehensive, and suitable for online learning environments. Participant observation findings indicated that instructors emphasized the need for content that is interconnected and suitable for online platforms, ensuring that it is well-organised and aligned with students' learning needs. The focus is on ensuring that the material is well-organised, clearly connected, and navigable for students. Instructors were observed utilising web-based learning management systems (LMS) such as Blackboard Learn to enhance content organisation, enabling smoother navigation and comprehension. Semi-structured interviews revealed that students perceived the UK education system as fostering creativity and independent learning through the organisation of course materials, reflecting the importance of structuring content to support engagement.

The design and delivery of the curriculum also involve adapting course materials to fit the technological tools and platforms used in online education, ensuring that students can access and engage with the material seamlessly. Questionnaire results supported this by showing that students found platforms like Microsoft Teams and VooV effective in helping them engage with course content. Moreover, the structure is not just about the content but also about the clear communication of expectations, including assessment criteria and grading systems, which further contributes to joint awareness of instructional material by helping students stay oriented and engaged in their learning. Both participant observation and semi-structured interviews highlighted that clear explanations of assessments and grading enhanced transparency, a key factor in maintaining cognitive engagement in an online environment.

7.5.2.2 Adaptation to Online Educational Contexts

This aspect highlights the need to adapt traditional educational methods to the challenges and opportunities of online environments. Participant observation showed that instructors recognised the shift required changes in content delivery, including adapting curriculum design and using digital tools effectively. Online learning significantly alters how students and faculty interact with content and each other. Semi-structured interviews revealed that the digital setting introduced both barriers and opportunities, with students needing more structured guidance. A critical component is how instructors modify teaching methods to engage students facing barriers to interaction or collaboration. Questionnaire data showed dissatisfaction with peer collaboration, highlighting the need for instructors to adjust approaches to facilitate digital interaction.

This adaptation also includes leveraging technology to maintain common understanding of learning content, using platforms that support dynamic learning through interactive tools. Participant observations revealed how

platforms like WeChat introduced interactive elements and feedback systems, keeping students engaged. Additionally, adapting to online contexts requires considering students' prior digital education experiences, ensuring continuity in their learning. Both observations and interviews underscored the importance of building on students' existing tech knowledge for smooth transitions. The cognitive aspect is reinforced when instructors create structures that support student adaptability, ensuring online delivery maintains depth and quality of engagement. Questionnaire responses pointed to the need for better integration of theory with practice, reinforcing the importance of structured digital learning in maintaining coordinated insight into learning objectives.

7.5.2.3 Creating Inclusive Learning through Cultural Understanding

Creating inclusive learning through cultural understanding is central to fostering cognitive presence, particularly in an international educational setting like Sino-UK collaborations. Participant observation findings indicated that instructors made significant efforts to address cultural differences and promote inclusivity. They created a supportive environment by sharing their international experiences and adapting their communication styles to ensure students from diverse cultural backgrounds felt comfortable and understood. This aspect reflects the efforts made by instructors to bridge cultural differences and foster an inclusive learning environment. Semi-structured interviews revealed that both students and faculty emphasised the value of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, which helped students feel more connected and engaged.

In a diverse classroom, students bring varied cultural, educational, and personal experiences that influence their approach to learning. Questionnaire data showed that students whose cultural backgrounds were acknowledged in class discussions and materials reported higher engagement and satisfaction. Instructors enhance consensus on academic content by incorporating these

differences into course structure, communication methods, and interaction styles. Both participant observation and interviews highlighted the importance of tailoring communication to meet the needs of students from different cultural backgrounds, supporting their cognitive engagement. This includes making the material accessible and ensuring all students feel valued and understood. Questionnaire findings indicated that students appreciated when instructors explained cultural references and used examples from both Chinese and UK contexts, strengthening their connection to the course. Culturally sensitive communication helps students feel more connected to the content by linking personal experiences with academic concepts, deepening cognitive engagement and understanding.

7.5.2.4 Deep Learning through Critical Inquiry

Deep learning through critical inquiry involves encouraging students to engage in reflection, analysis, and problem-solving. Participant observation findings showed that instructors consistently emphasised the need for critical thinking and reflection to help students engage more deeply with the material. This aspect is crucial, as it shifts students from surface-level understanding to a more profound and critical engagement with the material. Semi-structured interviews revealed that students recognised the importance of moving beyond rote learning to develop a deeper analytical understanding of their work.

Instructors facilitate this by fostering environments where students are encouraged to question assumptions, reflect on their learning processes, and apply critical thinking to the tasks at hand. Questionnaire responses highlighted that students struggled with integrating theoretical knowledge into practice, showing the need for more opportunities to engage in reflection and problem-solving. This can involve active discussions, peer feedback, and the development of projects that require students to not only absorb information but to critically analyse and synthesise it. Participant observation revealed that

instructors regularly used group discussions and peer-based projects to encourage students to evaluate their work critically. The focus on critical inquiry ensures that students are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but are actively constructing their understanding, which deepens their comprehension of the curriculum and leads to more meaningful learning outcomes. Semi-structured interviews confirmed that students appreciated this approach, as it encouraged them to think more independently and creatively.

7.5.3 'Social Presence' of the TOER Model

7.5.3.1 Promotion of Student Participation

This aspect focuses on strategies to engage students and ensure active involvement in the learning process. Participant observation showed that instructors frequently used informal discussions and peer feedback to create an environment conducive to participation. Semi-structured interviews supported this, highlighting how platforms like WeChat extended discussions beyond class, fostering ongoing engagement. Encouraging student participation is vital, as it helps students feel more connected and comfortable sharing their thoughts. Observations revealed that instructors cultivated an open atmosphere, easing students into expressing opinions. Interviews confirmed that structured interaction opportunities, such as group activities, helped students feel integrated.

Instructors played a key role in motivating students by fostering an inclusive environment. Observations showed that ongoing communication and instructor availability beyond formal hours were crucial. Interviews emphasized how feedback and guidance encouraged engagement, though some questionnaire responses suggested the course structure could better support meaningful participation. Methods like informal conversations, warm-up activities, and peer feedback helped lower participation barriers. Interviews indicated these interactions boosted students' confidence, though some questionnaire

responses noted a need for more encouragement. By encouraging questions and using WeChat to extend discussions, instructors deepened learning and empowered students. Observations highlighted WeChat's role in maintaining engagement, and interviews stressed the importance of this availability.

7.5.3.2 Utilisation of Communication Platforms

The effective use of communication platforms was a key element in establishing social presence in an online learning environment. Instructors leveraged online tools to create a bridge between formal instruction and informal social interaction, thereby enhancing student engagement and collaboration. Participant observation highlighted the frequent use of tools such as WeChat, Microsoft Teams, and email to facilitate communication, bridging the gap between formal and informal interactions. Interviews supported this, with participants noting that these platforms were crucial for communication across different time zones and cultures. These tools allowed for real-time communication, which helped reduce the perceived distance between instructors and students, as well as among students themselves. The questionnaire responses reflected students' appreciation for the immediacy of feedback and interaction these platforms enabled.

Through the use of multimedia, timely feedback, and informal exchanges, these platforms provided students with opportunities to communicate freely, share ideas, and seek support outside of traditional class hours. Both the participant observation and interviews confirmed the importance of this continuous availability for maintaining student engagement and promoting collaboration. Instructors' deliberate integration of these tools into the learning environment promoted a dynamic and inclusive space where students could express themselves more openly and interact more effectively with peers and instructors. The questionnaire indicated that while these tools fostered interaction, some students believed there was room for improvement in supporting deeper

collaboration and connection.

7.5.3.3 Facilitation of Group Activities and Collaboration

Facilitating group activities was essential in promoting collaborative learning and strengthening community involvement among students. Participant observation highlighted the role of group tasks in fostering interaction, with structured activities frequently used to encourage collaboration and engagement. Instructors used group tasks not only to encourage cooperation but also to build trust and communication among students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Interviews revealed that students appreciated how these tasks helped them connect with peers, overcoming cultural and language barriers to enhance communication. Structured group activities, such as collaborative research projects or design critiques, encouraged students to share ideas, learn from one another, and contribute to a collective learning experience. Participant observation and interviews showed that these activities promoted the exchange of ideas, with students learning from each other's perspectives and experiences.

By offering clear guidance and fostering a supportive environment, instructors ensured that students were able to engage meaningfully with each other, thereby enhancing their social connections within the online classroom. The questionnaire reflected that students valued the structured environment provided by instructors, which facilitated smoother interactions and built a sense of trust among peers. These collaborative activities played a vital role in helping students develop a sense of belonging, which is crucial for effective online learning. Both interviews and participant observation emphasized that this sense of belonging was key to creating a more engaging and socially interactive learning environment.

7.5.3.4 Fostering a Cohesive Community of Learners

Creating a cohesive community of learners is fundamental to fostering social presence in an online educational setting. Participant observation highlighted the importance of fostering a learning community where students felt supported and included, which was emphasized in the structured group activities and discussions. Instructors worked to cultivate a strong sense of community by encouraging inclusive and collaborative interactions. Interviews supported this by noting that students felt more comfortable engaging when instructors actively encouraged collaboration and inclusivity, allowing for deeper interactions across cultural lines. Through structured discussions, cultural exchanges, and personal connections, instructors helped students build deeper relationships with their peers and the course content.

Both participant observation and interviews reflected that structured discussions and cultural exchanges facilitated stronger connections between students and the course material, especially when instructors incorporated personal and cultural experiences. By integrating cultural references and personal experiences into the online environment, instructors bridged geographic and cultural divides, allowing students to feel more connected to each other and the learning process. Interviews showed that this integration of cultural references helped students from diverse backgrounds feel more connected to the content and each other, while questionnaire responses indicated students appreciated these efforts in bridging cultural gaps. This focus on building an inclusive and supportive community allowed students to feel more comfortable sharing their ideas, participating in discussions, and engaging with the material, thereby enhancing both individual and collective learning experiences. The questionnaire responses confirmed that students felt more comfortable and engaged when instructors created an inclusive environment, which improved both individual and group participation.

7.5.4 ‘Teaching Presence’ of the TOER Model

7.5.4.1 Facilitated Engagement through Dynamic Activities

This aspect involves engaging students through dynamic, structured activities that promote participation and interaction. Participant observation shows that instructors foster engagement by encouraging student participation and questions, creating a dynamic learning environment. Semi-structured interviews reveal that students value hands-on projects that bridge theory and practice, while questionnaire responses indicate some students seek more variety and engaging content. Instructors should create opportunities for students to actively engage with material, making them co-constructors of knowledge. Observation highlights that guiding students in discussions and reflective practice helps deepen engagement. Interviews confirm students appreciate activities that apply theory to practice, though some questionnaire responses suggest a need for more diverse assessments to demonstrate engagement.

Organising discussions, group tasks, and projects help students critically interact with concepts. Observation shows group tasks and discussions keep students engaged and encourage collaboration. Interviews emphasize the benefits of collaborative projects, and questionnaire data suggests that well-facilitated discussions enhance critical engagement. Dynamic activities boost student involvement, encouraging contributions, questions, and collaboration. Observation notes that activities like presentations and brainstorming effectively stimulate involvement. Interviews suggest these tasks enhance critical thinking, though some questionnaire responses highlight a desire for more interactive variety. A learning environment rich in interaction and peer collaboration deepens student engagement and motivation. Observation and interviews indicate that peer collaboration fosters deeper understanding and motivation. Questionnaire results show that students involved in discussions and group projects felt more engaged. This approach enriches the learning

process with diverse perspectives and active participation, as observation shows peer feedback and varied perspectives create a more engaging and non-linear learning experience.

7.5.4.2 Structured Guidance and Feedback

Providing clear, structured guidance and regular feedback is essential for effective teaching. Participant observation shows that such guidance keeps students engaged and supported, while interviews confirm that students value clarity in understanding tasks and applying theory. The questionnaire suggests that while some students felt well-supported, others desired more diverse feedback. Structured guidance helps students understand goals, and regular feedback allows them to track progress and improve. Observation findings indicate that guidance and feedback keep students aligned with objectives, and interviews highlight that students rely on feedback to refine their work. Questionnaire data shows some students desired more frequent feedback.

Timely, constructive input helps students refine knowledge and skills, fostering iterative learning. Observation shows timely feedback creates a supportive environment for continuous improvement, and interviews emphasize its importance in applying knowledge. Questionnaire results indicate students felt more confident when receiving regular feedback. This approach not only aligns students with course objectives but also fosters accountability. Observation reveals structured feedback helps students take ownership of their learning, with interviews reinforcing the sense of accountability when expectations are clear. Questionnaire data shows students felt more responsible with detailed feedback. Actionable feedback enables informed adjustments, boosting confidence and understanding. Observation highlights that specific feedback helps students refine their work, and interviews confirm its value in improving practical and theoretical understanding. Questionnaire results indicate students were more confident and adjusted their learning effectively with actionable

feedback.

7.5.4.3 Adaptation to Diverse Learning Needs

Effective teaching should adapt to the varied learning needs of a diverse student population. Participant observation highlights the importance of proactive engagement and support in addressing diverse needs, while interviews show that students value teaching approaches that cater to different learning styles. Questionnaire data suggests that although some students felt supported, others desired more personalized attention. This includes acknowledging different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and prior knowledge. Observation indicates that instructors adapted their methods, especially in online environments. Interviews confirm that students appreciate when instructors recognize these factors.

Adapting teaching strategies ensures that all students engage meaningfully with the content. Observation shows that adjustments increased student engagement. Interviews confirm these adaptations improved understanding. Instructors play a key role in identifying diverse needs and adjusting their methods for individual and group learning. This may involve varying explanations, offering additional support, or modifying tasks to be more inclusive. By recognizing diversity, instructors make teaching more equitable and responsive, fostering an inclusive learning environment. Observation confirms that tailored teaching created a more inclusive environment, while interviews indicate students felt more connected when their needs were acknowledged.

7.5.4.4 Developing Analytical Skills through Reflective Processes

Encouraging students to engage in reflective processes is essential for developing their analytical skills. Participant observation shows that reflective activities promote critical thinking and deeper engagement, while interviews

reveal students appreciate these opportunities to understand and analyse their learning. Reflective practice involves prompting students to critically assess their work, think about their learning journey, and draw connections between theoretical concepts and practical applications. Observation highlights that reflective activities help students critically assess their work, leading to stronger connections between theory and practice. Interviews confirm students value this for applying knowledge, though some questionnaire responses show a need for more guidance in connecting theory to practice.

Through reflection, students deepen their understanding, as it pushes them to go beyond surface-level comprehension and consider broader implications and applications of their knowledge. Observation shows that reflection encourages students to explore broader implications, and interviews support this, with students noting enhanced understanding of real-world applications. Some students in the questionnaire struggled with deeper analysis without guidance. Reflection also fosters self-assessment, enabling students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. This approach encourages them to take responsibility for their learning, apply critical thinking, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter, ultimately leading to both personal and academic growth. Observation shows that reflective practices foster responsibility and critical thinking. Interviews highlight reflection as crucial for personal and academic growth, with questionnaire responses indicating that students who engaged in reflection felt more empowered and experienced growth.

7.5.5 ‘Iterative Presence’ of the TOER Model

7.5.5.1 Continuous Adjustment in Communication and Engagement

Ongoing communication adjustments in online learning are vital for maintaining student engagement, as the research highlights. Participant observations repeatedly indicated that the absence of visual cues, such as facial expressions,

often led to misinterpretations, reducing students' engagement and satisfaction. This lack of non-verbal communication in an online environment often caused a sense of disconnect, requiring regular updates to communication strategies to maintain clarity and participation. Semi-structured interviews further emphasized that maintaining regular, clear communication, particularly in projects involving diverse cultural perspectives, is essential for improving student engagement. Additionally, the questionnaire findings underlined concerns about communication effectiveness, particularly in managing time zone differences and overcoming the limitations imposed by the lack of non-verbal cues, thus stressing the need for continuous refinement in communication methods.

These communication challenges are even more pronounced for international students, who often face additional difficulties due to language barriers. Participant observations showed that cultural and linguistic differences made it harder for these students to engage fully in discussions, further reinforcing the need for frequent adjustments in communication strategies. Semi-structured interviews revealed that faculty members continually adapted their approaches to ensure their instructions were clear and catered to the diverse needs of their students. This ongoing process of refining communication helped mitigate the isolation and disengagement often experienced by students in a virtual environment, improving participation and the overall learning experience. The iterative nature of these adjustments was essential to fostering a more inclusive, connected, and responsive online learning environment for all students.

7.5.5.2 Technical Support as a Cycle of Improvement

The provision of technical support in online learning is a continuous process that requires constant adaptation and refinement. While technology offers opportunities for flexible learning, participant observations revealed significant challenges, particularly due to the reliance on digital tools, which often disrupted

personal interaction and engagement. This reliance underscores the need for ongoing improvements in technical support to maintain an effective learning environment for students and educators alike. Semi-structured interviews emphasized that technical support must remain flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of students, particularly when addressing issues like technical malfunctions or inadequate infrastructure. Without such adaptability, both the student experience and the learning process risk disruption, leading to dissatisfaction and decreased engagement.

As technological tools are critical to online education, both students and educators must regularly adjust how they use these resources. Participant observations noted that while digital platforms provided essential access to learning materials, the need for continuous adjustments to address challenges such as reduced interaction and engagement became evident. Semi-structured interviews reinforced the importance of aligning technical support with ongoing advancements in technology and the specific demands of virtual learning environments. For instance, unreliable translation tools and over-reliance on video recordings led to miscommunication, diminishing real-time engagement. Questionnaire findings further revealed that students, especially those in interdisciplinary fields, often found the available technical support insufficient, prompting them to seek additional external resources. Faculty members acknowledged these limitations and actively worked to enhance the technological infrastructure to better cater to students' evolving needs, ensuring a more responsive and effective online learning experience.

7.5.5.3 Recurrent Adjustments to Administrative Support

Managing administrative tasks in an online learning environment requires constant adjustment to adequately support both the academic and personal needs of students. Participant observations emphasized that effective administrative management necessitated ongoing refinements to address

logistical challenges and ensure that students consistently received both academic and personal support. Semi-structured interviews further highlighted that administrative systems needed to be adaptive to meet the evolving needs of students, particularly with the complexities posed by online education. Questionnaire findings reinforced this, showing that administrative processes required continuous improvement to sufficiently meet students' academic and personal demands in an online setting.

Key areas that required ongoing adjustments included enrolment, scheduling, and resource allocation, particularly in the context of a global programme. Time zone differences and the coordination of cross-cultural activities added further complexity, with participant observations identifying these as recurring logistical challenges that needed constant attention. Semi-structured interviews underscored the importance of refining these processes to manage resources effectively across different regions. The questionnaire findings revealed that both students and faculty often expressed frustration with the timing and scheduling of activities, further highlighting the necessity of flexible and responsive administrative strategies. The overall goal was to establish a well-coordinated administrative framework that addressed logistical concerns while ensuring timely communication and smooth academic operations, thereby fostering a more supportive and efficient learning environment.

7.5.5.4 Ongoing Engagement with Diverse Global Perspectives

In a transnational academic programme, exposure to diverse perspectives is a continuous process that demands ongoing engagement. Participant observations revealed that students frequently struggled with understanding and integrating different cultural viewpoints, emphasizing the need for constant adaptation and interaction with global ideas. Semi-structured interviews confirmed that both students and faculty recognized the importance of this continuous exchange to deepen cultural understanding and foster inclusion.

Questionnaire results further indicated that students highly valued this repeated exposure, as it not only enhanced their learning experience but also broadened their creative outlook by incorporating international elements into their thinking.

Both students and faculty must regularly integrate these diverse cultural influences into their teaching and learning processes. Participant observations showed that students often found it challenging to express their ideas clearly in a global context, underscoring the importance of consistently integrating cultural perspectives to enhance communication and understanding. Semi-structured interviews revealed that faculty members took an active role in facilitating this process by adapting their teaching methods to incorporate global case studies and interdisciplinary exploration. This regular engagement with international perspectives, as confirmed by questionnaire findings, allowed students to enrich their creative work, fostering innovation and enhancing their ability to produce culturally resonant and inclusive projects in an interconnected world. Through this iterative process, both students and faculty were able to continuously expand their understanding and better navigate the complexities of a globalized educational environment.

7.5.6 The Intersections between Presences of the TOER Model

Based on the researcher's in-depth analysis of the four 'Cognitive Presence', 'Social Presence', 'Teaching Presence,' and 'Iterative Presence' of the TOER Model in sections 7.5.2 to 7.5.5, this section will discuss the intersections between the presences within the TOER Model. This detailed exploration aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these interconnected elements contribute to the TOER Model.

Intersection Between Cognitive Presence (CP) and Social Presence (SP)

The intersection between Cognitive Presence and Social Presence is primarily concerned with how course structure facilitates engagement and collaboration

among students. The organisation of materials using online platforms like Microsoft Teams, as noted in participant observations, allows students to navigate content more easily, thereby increasing their cognitive engagement. Questionnaire results supported this by showing that students found platforms like Microsoft Teams effective in engaging with course content, reflecting the importance of structuring the material for cognitive engagement.

Simultaneously, social presence is enhanced when students are able to engage with peers in an inclusive environment that fosters participation. Informal discussions, peer feedback, and group activities, such as those facilitated on platforms like WeChat, create a community atmosphere that encourages cognitive reflection. The semi-structured interviews highlighted that these interactions help to lower participation barriers and motivate students to share opinions, directly engaging their cognitive processes through social interaction. Questionnaire responses indicated that students valued these peer interactions and group discussions, which promoted both social integration and enhanced cognitive engagement.

Intersection Between Social Presence (SP) and Teaching Presence (TP)

The overlap between Social Presence and Teaching Presence lies in how instructors use structured guidance to foster interaction and collaboration. Instructors utilise online tools, not only to provide instruction but to encourage social interactions that deepen engagement, as evidenced by frequent use of platforms like Microsoft Teams. Questionnaire responses reflected students' appreciation for the immediacy of feedback and real-time interaction provided by these platforms, which fostered engagement beyond formal instruction. Teaching presence is established through clear communication and the structured facilitation of group activities, where instructors play a vital role in ensuring that interactions align with the learning objectives.

For example, participant observation showed that instructors reduced the perceived distance between themselves and students by maintaining regular availability outside class hours, creating a social dynamic that supports learning. This regular guidance helped to build trust among students, enabling them to participate more fully in both formal discussions and informal interactions.

Intersection Between Teaching Presence (TP) and Iterative Presence (IP)

The iterative nature of Teaching Presence is most clearly seen in how instructors continuously adapt their methods to meet students' evolving needs, particularly in the context of online learning. Teaching presence is reflected in the structured feedback and guidance that instructors provide, allowing students to track their progress. However, as highlighted by both semi-structured interviews and participant observations, the effectiveness of these teaching strategies often depends on the continuous refinement of communication and content delivery, particularly to address cultural or technological barriers. Questionnaire responses also indicated that students felt the need for more personalised feedback to better support their learning process.

Iterative Presence is established when these teaching adjustments are made in response to student feedback and emerging challenges. For example, the continuous improvement of technical support enabled instructors to address issues with digital tools that disrupted engagement, ensuring that students stayed connected and received adequate support. Questionnaire data highlighted that technical issues often hindered participation, but iterative adjustments to these challenges improved overall engagement.

Intersection Between Cognitive Presence (CP) and Iterative Presence (IP)

Cognitive Presence and Iterative Presence intersect in how content delivery and learning processes are continuously improved to enhance cognitive

engagement. Cognitive Presence is established when students are encouraged to engage in deep learning through critical inquiry. For instance, instructors foster cognitive engagement by structuring projects and group discussions that prompt students to analyse, reflect, and problem-solve. Questionnaire responses showed that students appreciated these opportunities for critical inquiry but expressed a desire for more frequent feedback to guide their reflections.

However, for this engagement to be effective, it requires ongoing adjustments to ensure that teaching strategies align with the students' needs in a digital environment. Iterative Presence is reflected in the continuous improvement of these learning methods. As noted in participant observations, instructors regularly adjusted their communication tools, like WeChat, to better facilitate interaction, thereby ensuring that cognitive engagement remained strong despite the limitations of an online platform. This adjustment was reinforced by questionnaire data, where students indicated a need for improved communication channels to support their cognitive engagement in the digital learning environment.

Intersection Between Cognitive Presence (CP), Social Presence (SP), and Teaching Presence (TP)

The intersection of Cognitive, Social, and Teaching Presences is most apparent in the design of the curriculum and the role instructors play in facilitating collaborative learning. Questionnaire responses indicated that students valued structured content and clear guidance, which supported their independent learning. Teaching Presence supports this by providing clear guidance and structured activities that help students navigate complex ideas.

Social Presence, in this context, is reinforced through peer collaboration, with instructors facilitating group discussions and projects that allow students to

engage with content together, exchanging ideas and feedback. Participant observations and semi-structured interviews indicated that such collaborative activities, when combined with structured instructor input, led to deeper cognitive engagement and a stronger sense of community among students. Questionnaire data echoed this, with students reporting a sense of belonging and improved learning outcomes due to the collaborative nature of the learning environment.

Intersection Between Social Presence (SP), Teaching Presence (TP), and Iterative Presence (IP)

This intersection focuses on the continuous adaptation of social and teaching strategies to improve engagement. Social Presence is maintained through regular, meaningful interaction between students and instructors, which encourages participation in group activities and discussions. Teaching Presence supports this by offering structured guidance and feedback to help students achieve their learning objectives.

Iterative Presence is reflected in the ongoing refinement of these strategies to meet the diverse needs of students, particularly in an online setting. Semi-structured interviews highlighted that instructors regularly adjusted their teaching methods and communication tools, such as WeChat and Microsoft Teams, to improve participation and reduce barriers related to time zones or cultural differences. These adjustments helped maintain a dynamic and responsive learning environment, with questionnaire responses confirming that students felt more engaged when instructors addressed these barriers.

Intersection Between Cognitive Presence (CP), Teaching Presence (TP), and Iterative Presence (IP)

The intersection between Cognitive, Teaching, and Iterative Presences lies in the ongoing process of fostering critical thinking and reflection through dynamic

and adaptable teaching strategies. Cognitive Presence is enhanced when students are encouraged to engage in deep learning activities, such as reflective practice and problem-solving. Questionnaire responses indicated that students valued opportunities for reflection but sought more structured guidance to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications. Teaching Presence ensures that students receive structured guidance that helps them understand how to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios.

Iterative Presence is essential in continuously refining these teaching strategies. Participant observation revealed that instructors frequently adjusted their feedback mechanisms to better guide students, ensuring that both cognitive and practical skills were developed. This ongoing cycle of feedback and adaptation allows students to critically engage with content and improve their understanding. Questionnaire data highlighted that iterative feedback processes helped students feel more confident in their learning and their ability to apply theoretical concepts.

Intersection Between Cognitive Presence (CP), Social Presence (SP), and Iterative Presence (IP)

Cognitive, Social, and Iterative Presences intersect when continuous adaptations to communication strategies are used to maintain both cognitive and social engagement. Cognitive Presence is promoted when students are given opportunities to engage with course material in a way that challenges them to think critically. Social Presence supports this through collaborative discussions, where students interact with their peers and exchange ideas, as facilitated through platforms like WeChat. Questionnaire data suggested that students valued these collaborative opportunities but also expressed the need for more structured feedback to guide their cognitive engagement.

However, Iterative Presence plays a crucial role in ensuring that these interactions remain effective. For example, semi-structured interviews revealed that instructors frequently adjusted their communication methods to address issues such as language barriers or misunderstandings, thus maintaining both cognitive focus and social connectivity among students. This ongoing refinement ensures that students remain engaged with both the content and their peers, despite the challenges posed by an online environment. Questionnaire responses confirmed that students appreciated these adaptations, which supported both their social integration and cognitive development.

The Core Intersection Area — Educational Experience

'Educational Experience' in the TOER Model, represented at the center of the model, symbolizes the synergy between the four key presences: Cognitive Presence (CP), Social Presence (SP), Teaching Presence (TP), and Iterative Presence (IP). This area represents the culmination of the various interactions and overlaps between these presences, which combine to form a comprehensive and dynamic educational experience for students and educators alike.

The core intersection area represents the integrated space where the combination of cognitive, social, teaching, and iterative dimensions creates a rich and immersive educational environment that adapts to the unique challenges and opportunities of transnational educational projects, particularly within the Sino-UK partnership in art and design education.

In the context of Sino-UK transnational art and design education, the core intersection signifies the holistic learning and teaching environment shaped by the interactions of these presences. It highlights how educational engagement is deepened when cognitive, social, and teaching efforts are aligned, with an

iterative, reflective element adding adaptability and growth over time. This central area is where the practical application of theory, peer collaboration, instructional guidance, and continuous reflection merge to foster an enriched educational experience.

By emphasizing educational experience as the core, the model underlines the importance of creating a cohesive and adaptive learning environment, one that is flexible enough to accommodate diverse learning needs, cultural contexts, and iterative growth. This approach ensures that students are not just passively receiving knowledge but actively engaging with content, reflecting on their learning processes, and applying these insights to produce meaningful academic and creative outcomes.

7.6 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the empirical findings, focusing on the key components that shaped the online learning experiences in the Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects. The data gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires were explored using the Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model's core presences—Cognitive, Social, and Teaching—and were further enriched by the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose (BPP) Model. These theoretical frameworks not only provided structure to the analysis but also allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how students and instructors navigated the complexities of online education in an international context.

The chapter began by examining the influence of Cognitive Presence, highlighting how students interacted with course content and developed critical thinking skills in the online setting. It emphasized the importance of structured curriculum design, seamless integration of digital platforms, and ongoing peer

and instructor engagement. The Social Presence findings reinforced the collaborative aspects of learning, where peer interaction and group discussions played a crucial role in creating a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, Teaching Presence findings shed light on the effectiveness of instructor facilitation, guidance, and the use of innovative teaching methods to overcome challenges posed by the online format. Furthermore, the analysis of personal experiences and perceptions further enriched the understanding of how participants experienced the online education environment.

In addition to these core findings, the researcher introduced an original framework, the Transnational Online Education Resources (TOER) Model. This model incorporated the empirical insights gained throughout the study and introduced Iterative Presence as a new dimension. Iterative Presence, as reflected in the ongoing adaptation of teaching strategies and participant engagement, provided a dynamic understanding of the evolving educational experience. These insights not only added depth to the empirical data but also informed the development of practical recommendations aimed at improving the use of online educational resources in future projects.

In conclusion, the findings of this study not only contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on online education but also offer valuable, actionable insights for the future application of online educational resources in Sino-UK transnational Art and Design teaching projects. The study emphasises the importance of refining digital teaching strategies to accommodate the unique challenges posed by cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning environments. By addressing the diverse needs of both students and educators, these strategies can help create more effective, flexible, and adaptive learning frameworks. The research underscores the necessity of continuous reflection, feedback, and innovation in online education, ensuring that educational practices remain aligned with the evolving demands of globalised, student-

centred education. These insights lay the groundwork for further exploration into optimising digital learning in cross-cultural settings, with the ultimate goal of enhancing both the educational experience and outcomes for participants in transnational art and design programs.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

As this thesis approaches its culmination, the final chapter undertakes the critical task of synthesizing the findings from the comprehensive study of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education. The research has systematically explored the profound shift from traditional, in-person learning environments to online modalities—a transformation that has been particularly accelerated by global technological advancements and the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift has had significant implications for international educational partnerships, particularly in creative disciplines like art and design, where the pedagogical framework traditionally relies on hands-on practice, real-time feedback, and direct interaction between students and educators.

This chapter revisits the study's core research questions, reflecting on how the transition to online education has been perceived and experienced by stakeholders within Sino-UK partnerships in art and design educational contexts. This exploration is rooted in both the empirical data collected through participant observation, interviews, and surveys, and the extensive review of existing research that has informed the study. The researcher aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how stakeholders—comprising both students and educators—perceive the quality and effectiveness of online education compared to the conventional in-person methods that have long been the cornerstone of art and design education.

The discussion will delve into the multifaceted views held by stakeholders, examining the balance between the flexibility offered by online education and the challenges it presents, particularly in replicating the collaborative and interactive nature of traditional learning environments. The researcher will

consider the implications of these perceptions for the future of Sino-UK educational partnerships, particularly in how they might influence the continued evolution of online education in creative fields.

Furthermore, the chapter will conclude with commentary on the Transnational Online Educational Resources (TOER) Model, which the researcher has developed as the core theoretical contribution to this study. The TOER Model is designed to address the complex and evolving nature of online education in transnational settings, particularly in contexts where cultural, pedagogical, and technological factors intersect in unique and challenging ways. By incorporating elements such as iterative presence, cognitive engagement, and social interaction, the model offers a structured framework for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of online art and design education.

By employing a rigorous mixed-methods approach and developing the TOER Model, the researcher has not only advanced theoretical understanding but also provided practical solutions that can be directly applied to enhance educational practices. These contributions are particularly significant in the context of global higher education, where the need for effective, inclusive, and adaptable online learning solutions is increasingly critical. The researcher will articulate how these contributions add to the existing body of knowledge and offer a foundation for future research and practice in the field.

In addition to discussing the TOER Model, the chapter will also identify the primary barriers and challenges that have been uncovered through the research. These challenges—spanning technological disparities, cultural and linguistic differences, and pedagogical limitations—are critical to understanding the constraints that currently hinder the full realization of online education's potential in transnational contexts. The researcher will propose strategies for overcoming these obstacles, drawing on both the empirical findings and the

insights gained from the research background. These strategies will be discussed in relation to their potential to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of online education in Sino-UK partnerships, ensuring that they remain responsive to the diverse needs of students and educators.

Finally, the researcher will address the limitations of this study, acknowledging the constraints that may affect the generalizability and depth of the findings. These limitations also open up valuable avenues for future research, suggesting areas where further investigation could build on the insights gained from this study. By exploring these potential directions, the researcher sets the stage for continued inquiry into the evolving landscape of transnational online education, particularly in the context of creative disciplines like art and design.

8.2 Revisiting the Project's Research Questions

In addressing the core research questions of this study, it is essential to draw upon both the empirical findings and the insights gained from a comprehensive review of relevant research. The research focused on exploring the perspectives of stakeholders involved in Sino-UK transnational partnerships within the context of online art and design education, a field where the shift from traditional in-person learning to (partial) online modalities has generated significant debate.

By synthesizing these insights, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how stakeholders perceive the quality and effectiveness of online education compared to traditional methods, while also identifying strategies to optimize online education resources and address the unique challenges of implementing effective online education in this culturally diverse context.

This study offers a holistic understanding of the complexities and opportunities

in online art and design education within transnational partnerships by integrating research background with empirical research findings. The research highlights the need for continuous innovation and adaptation to meet the high standards of traditional education, positioning this study as a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse on the evolution of global education in creative disciplines.

I. How do stakeholders in higher education perceive the quality and effectiveness of online art and design education compared to traditional in-person learning?

The research reveals that stakeholders involved in Sino-UK transnational partnerships hold complex and at times ambivalent views regarding the quality and effectiveness of online art and design education when compared to traditional in-person learning methods. This ambivalence is reflected in the empirical data, which was meticulously gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and surveys, highlighting the dual nature of online education as both an opportunity and a challenge in this specialized field.

Stakeholders recognize and appreciate the flexibility that online education provides, especially within the context of global partnerships where participants are distributed across various time zones and geographical regions. This flexibility significantly enhances access to educational resources and allows for broader participation in learning activities, which is a notable advantage in the increasingly globalized landscape of higher education. Part of the research findings derived from participant observation and follow-up interviews conducted within an online digital media arts module, vividly demonstrate how students and educators alike navigate the inherent challenges of online learning environments. While the research found that online platforms offer a broad array of digital tools and resources capable of enhancing the learning

experience, there remain persistent concerns about whether these platforms can truly replicate the depth of engagement and immediacy of feedback that are intrinsic to traditional in-person education.

Moreover, the research highlights that the lack of face-to-face interaction is a significant drawback, particularly in disciplines like art and design, which rely heavily on hands-on experiences and the immediacy of direct feedback. The semi-structured interviews conducted in the research, which served as a crucial platform for both students and educators to express their experiences, revealed that the absence of physical presence often impedes the collaborative and interactive processes that are vital to the educational success of these disciplines. However, the research also indicates that stakeholders recognize the potential to mitigate some of these challenges through the strategic integration of advanced digital tools. For instance, the incorporation of virtual studios and real-time collaborative platforms was identified as a promising approach to overcoming some of the limitations inherent in online learning.

The research ultimately concludes that while online art and design education may never fully replicate the traditional in-person experience, it nonetheless holds significant potential when supported by appropriate technological tools and pedagogical strategies. The nuanced perceptions of stakeholders highlighted in this study underscore the critical importance of continuous innovation and the ongoing adaptation of online education practices to meet the high standards and expectations traditionally associated with in-person educational methods. This adaptability is essential for ensuring that online education can evolve to provide a robust and effective alternative in the context of transnational educational partnerships.

II. What are the primary barriers and challenges to effective implementation in online art and design education?

The study has established several significant barriers and challenges to the effective implementation of online art and design education within Sino-UK transnational partnerships. These challenges are multi-dimensional, encompassing technological, cultural, and pedagogical aspects, which have been unearthed and explored through the research methodologies employed in this study, supported by the research reviewed.

One of the most prominent challenges identified is the difficulty in replicating the physical interaction that is fundamental to art and design education. The tactile and spatial aspects of creating and critiquing art, which are central to the learning process, are challenging to reproduce in an online setting. Despite advances in digital technology, current tools still fall short in capturing the nuances of physical art forms and the immediacy of in-person feedback. As highlighted in the research background, the need for hands-on experiences is critical in art and design education, where students benefit from direct engagement with materials and real-time feedback from instructors. The participant observation conducted in an online digital media arts module revealed that while digital platforms can support creative processes, they often lack the capacity to fully engage students in the same way that traditional methods do. This aligns with existing research, which stresses the importance of physical presence and direct interaction, especially in disciplines like art and design where the physicality of materials and immediate feedback are essential. For example, the development of art and design education in China continues to prioritize practical engagement, with significant emphasis on experiential and interactive learning, a challenge that persists in online models (Zhao et al., 2020; Xu & Chen, 2024, p. 39). Similarly, the UK's art education landscape underscores the necessity of interdisciplinary, in-person interaction to foster creativity and critical thinking (Banks & Oakley, 2016).

Cultural and linguistic differences between Chinese and UK students and educators also present significant barriers. The research, supported by the research background, which discussed the complexities of cross-cultural communication and the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy, highlights how these differences can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications, hindering the collaborative process. The study suggests that addressing these cultural and linguistic barriers is crucial for fostering a more cohesive and effective online learning environment, particularly in transnational settings where diverse cultural expectations and educational practices converge.

Technological disparities among students, particularly in terms of access to high-quality digital tools and reliable internet connections, are another critical challenge. The research found that these disparities can exacerbate existing inequalities and limit the effectiveness of online learning. This issue was particularly evident in the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires, which revealed significant variations in students' access to technology. The research background corroborates these findings by discussing the impact of the digital divide on educational equity, especially in the context of online learning where access to technology is a fundamental requirement. For example, studies on the development of online art education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the growing concern over accessibility issues, with many students lacking adequate resources to fully participate in digital learning environments (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Similarly, challenges related to inadequate hardware, software, and internet access have been identified as significant obstacles that exacerbate the digital divide in education, further underscoring the need for better infrastructural support in online learning contexts (Farahmand et al., 2020, p. 345).

The lack of digital literacy among both students and faculty members is another significant challenge. The research indicates that many participants struggle with the technical aspects of online education, which can hinder their ability to fully engage with the learning materials. The study recommends that institutions invest in training and support to improve digital literacy, ensuring that all participants are equipped to navigate the online learning environment effectively. This recommendation is supported by the research background, which emphasizes the need for ongoing professional development and digital skills training to ensure that educators can effectively deliver and students can engage with online education.

Additionally, the research has identified the challenge of maintaining academic integrity in an online environment as a significant concern. The ability to monitor and enforce academic honesty is more challenging in a virtual setting, where assessments can be more easily compromised. The research background discusses various strategies to address these issues, including the use of plagiarism detection software and the development of assessment methods that are less susceptible to academic dishonesty. For instance, technologies like Examity and other identity verification systems have been deployed to tackle fraudulent activity during assessments by ensuring student identity verification and using machine learning to detect cheating attempts (Gamage et al., 2020). Furthermore, implementing hybrid assessment methods that encourage students to engage in project-based learning and authentic tasks, which are harder to compromise, can also support academic integrity in online settings (Ma et al., 2023). This research project concludes that developing robust frameworks for online assessments, which include measures to verify the authenticity of students' work, is essential for maintaining the integrity of online education.

Finally, the research reflects on the challenges posed by the rapid shift to online

learning. While this shift has accelerated the adoption of online education, it has also exposed the challenges for educational institutions in delivering high-quality online education in a sustainable way. The study emphasizes that for online education to be a viable long-term alternative to traditional methods, significant investments in technological infrastructure, training, and pedagogical innovation are required. The research background echoes these concerns, noting that the pandemic has highlighted both the potential and the limitations of online education, particularly in terms of preparedness and resilience in the face of global disruptions. For instance, the rapid transition to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, including the need for greater technological capacity and equitable access (Pepper, 2021). Similarly, the difficulties related to infrastructure and training have been discussed, emphasizing that although online education presents opportunities, it also requires strategic planning and sustainable investment for long-term success (Lockee, 2021, p. 6).

III. How can online education resources be optimized to better support the needs of stakeholders in Sino-UK transnational partnerships?

Optimizing online education resources for Sino-UK transnational partnerships is a central focus of this study. The research findings indicate that several critical areas need concentrated efforts to ensure that these resources effectively meet the diverse needs of stakeholders. The key conceptual contribution of the research is the development of the TOER Model, which offers a structured approach to evaluating and enhancing online educational resources.

The empirical work highlighted the importance of integrating interactive and engaging digital tools that can replicate the collaborative and hands-on experiences essential to art and design education. The study found that tools facilitating real-time collaboration, critique, and feedback are crucial for maintaining the learning process's integrity in an online environment. The

TOER Model specifically addresses these needs by incorporating elements that enhance cognitive, social, and teaching presence, all of which are vital for effective online education.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes the need to create a robust online learning community that fosters strong social and emotional connections among participants. This involves more than just integrating technical platforms; it requires cultivating a supportive environment where students and educators feel connected despite physical distances. The study recommends strategies such as regular virtual meetings, collaborative projects, and interactive forums to build this sense of community, a finding strongly supported by the semi-structured interview data, where participants consistently stressed the importance of social presence in online learning.

Moreover, the research underscores the importance of accessibility and user-friendliness in digital platforms. Given the diverse technological proficiencies of students and educators, platforms must be easy to navigate and use. The study also highlights the necessity for culturally sensitive resources that consider the different educational backgrounds and learning styles of Chinese and UK students. This includes providing bilingual materials and designing learning activities that are inclusive and respectful of cultural differences. The TOER Model integrates these considerations, ensuring that online educational resources are not only effective but also equitable.

Continuous feedback and iterative improvements are identified as essential components for optimizing online education resources. The research suggests that regular input from students and educators is vital for making timely adjustments to the curriculum, teaching methods, and digital tools. This iterative approach emphasized in the TOER Model, ensures that online education remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of all stakeholders in

Sino-UK transnational partnerships.

8.3 Original Contributions

This research offers substantial original contributions to the field of transnational online education within the specialized context of Sino-UK partnerships in art and design higher education. The contribution lies in the following areas:

- Conceptual contribution, including a new framework, the TOER Model;
- Empirical contribution, offering new data on Sino-UK transnational online education in art and design, through a mixed-methods approach;
- Practical contribution, providing targeted recommendations for stakeholders on how Sino-UK transnational online education in art and design may be developed in the future.

Collectively, these contributions not only deepen our understanding of cross-cultural online education but also offer concrete strategies to enhance the practice of online education in diverse international settings.

The TOER Model presented in the research is derived from analysis of the evidence gathered and shows the complex and multifaceted nature of online education within transnational settings, where cultural, pedagogical, and technological differences intersect in unique and challenging ways. As shown in chapter 7 of the thesis, the TOER Model builds upon and extends the established frameworks of the Community of Inquiry and the Blending with Pedagogical Purpose models, and introduces a novel element termed "Iterative Presence." This new concept reflects the continuous and evolving nature of teaching and learning processes in transnational contexts. It emphasizes the necessity for constant reflection, adaptation, and responsiveness to the unique challenges posed by cross-cultural educational environments.

The introduction of Iterative Presence represents a significant conceptual advancement, acknowledging that educational practices in such settings cannot be static but must evolve dynamically in response to ongoing feedback and changing conditions. This aspect of the TOER Model is particularly relevant in the context of Sino-UK educational partnerships, where the integration of different cultural and educational traditions requires a fluid and adaptive approach. By formalizing Iterative Presence within the TOER Model, this research provides a framework that not only guides current practice but also lays the groundwork for future conceptual developments in the field of online education.

In addition to introducing Iterative Presence, the TOER Model also reinterprets and expands upon the three core elements of the Community of Inquiry Model—Cognitive Presence, Social Presence, and Teaching Presence—to better align with the specific demands of Sino-UK art and design educational partnerships.

Cognitive Presence is redefined to emphasize the importance of sustained reflection and mastery of content, ensuring that students engage deeply with learning materials in ways that are both intellectually rigorous and contextually relevant. This redefinition acknowledges the unique challenges of maintaining cognitive engagement in a cross-cultural online environment, where differences in educational backgrounds and learning styles can impact how students process and internalize new information.

Social Presence is also reinterpreted within the TOER Model to highlight the critical importance of building strong, supportive, and collaborative relationships among students and faculty. This aspect is crucial in overcoming cultural and linguistic divides that can hinder effective communication and collaboration in transnational settings. The model emphasizes the need for intentional

strategies to foster social presence, such as structured group activities, peer feedback mechanisms, and the use of culturally sensitive communication practices.

Teaching Presence is enhanced in the TOER Model by incorporating elements of pedagogical reflection and critical inquiry, positioning educators not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as active participants in the learning journey. This perspective encourages educators to guide students through complex cross-cultural interactions and creative processes, actively engaging with the challenges and opportunities that arise in a transnational online education context. The TOER Model thus offers a more nuanced and comprehensive framework for understanding and improving educational practices in this domain, making a significant contribution to the theoretical landscape of online education.

This study also provides significant conceptual contributions by synthesizing diverse strands of research to explore the nuances of transnational online art and design education within Sino-UK partnerships. One of the main contributions lies in the identification and critical analysis of the existing body of knowledge, which addresses the complexities of cross-cultural educational exchanges, online learning environments, and the challenges posed by technological and cultural differences.

The research background highlights the evolving educational frameworks, offering insights into pedagogical strategies that facilitate online learning in a creative discipline. It presents a comprehensive evaluation of the Sino-UK partnership teaching projects, emphasizing the importance of cultural integration and academic collaboration across national boundaries. This review unpacks the different pedagogical approaches in China and the UK, revealing how these influence the effectiveness of online education in creative fields such

as art and design.

Moreover, the review emphasizes the need for an inclusive, culturally sensitive educational framework that considers language barriers, digital literacy, and the specific needs of art and design students. This synthesis of research deepens the understanding of how educational models must adapt to the challenges of transnational online education, further underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption of digital platforms and exposed significant gaps in access and equity.

This study also conceptualizes the role of digital tools in transforming both teaching methodologies and creative outputs in online environments. It offers a nuanced exploration of the integration of technologies like AI and VR, which are becoming essential in enhancing interactivity and engagement in online art and design education. By reviewing and critiquing these technological advancements, the research provides a roadmap for future innovations that can further bridge the gap between traditional hands-on education and online learning.

Methodologically, this research contributes to the empirical field by applying a thoughtfully mixed-methods approach. The strategic combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques—namely participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and large-scale questionnaires. This tailored integration allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved, particularly by capturing the dynamic interactions between students, educators, and digital platforms in both individual and institutional contexts.

The use of participant observation provides a unique insider perspective on the dynamics of online interactions and educational practices, allowing the researcher to capture the spontaneous and natural flow of activities within the

educational environment. This immersion in the educational setting enables the collection of detailed, contextually grounded insights. The findings derived from participant observation are instrumental in understanding how students and educators navigate the challenges of online learning in a cross-cultural context, offering valuable insights.

The semi-structured interviews conducted with students and faculty members from both Chinese and UK institutions further enrich the qualitative data by offering a platform for participants to express their insights, challenges, and successes within the online learning environment. These interviews provide a nuanced understanding of how cultural expectations, pedagogical approaches, and technological tools intersect to shape the educational experience in these transnational partnerships.

The large-scale questionnaires complement the qualitative data by providing a broad overview of trends and patterns. This not only ensures that the findings are rich in detail, reflecting the nuanced experiences of participants in both Chinese and UK contexts, but also makes the results statistically robust, enabling the identification of general trends in transnational online education. By integrating this quantitative data with qualitative insights, the study captures both the specificities of individual experiences and broader educational patterns, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and potential of transnational online art and design education.

The practical contributions of this study offer important implications for students, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders involved in transnational Sino-UK partnerships, particularly in the field of art and design. The insights drawn from the research highlight several key areas that can directly inform practice across these different groups, enhancing the effectiveness of these educational partnerships and improving learning experiences for students.

Students form a critical group that benefits directly from these practical contributions. The study highlights the specific challenges faced by Chinese students, such as adapting to more self-directed learning environments and navigating the technical demands of online education in art and design. Practical support, such as tailored onboarding programs and virtual mentoring, can help students better acclimatize to the UK's educational style while ensuring they remain engaged and motivated. Moreover, the research stresses the need to provide students with more interactive and culturally sensitive online platforms where they can collaborate with peers, both in China and the UK, fostering a sense of community and cross-cultural exchange. By enhancing the students' experience through better communication tools and support structures, these transnational partnerships can significantly improve educational outcomes and student satisfaction.

For educators, the research highlights the need to adapt teaching strategies that better accommodate the specific learning preferences and challenges faced by Chinese students within an online, cross-border context. Chinese educators involved in transnational partnerships are encouraged to integrate more interactive and participatory teaching methods that are characteristic of UK-based pedagogy. The TOER Model, developed as part of this study, provides a valuable framework for implementing such strategies. It emphasizes the importance of blending cognitive, social, and teaching presence in online learning, which can help Chinese educators design more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students. Additionally, educators need to focus on developing stronger digital competencies to deliver high-quality online art and design education, leveraging tools that support creativity and student collaboration across borders.

For administrators and managers, the findings underscore the importance of

creating robust support systems that enable smoother operation of these partnerships. This includes investing in the necessary infrastructure for online education, and ensuring both students and faculty have access to the technological resources required for successful participation. Administrators should also focus on facilitating better communication and collaboration between partner institutions in China and the UK, addressing any logistical challenges that may arise from cultural differences or differing educational standards. The TOER Model offers guidance on how to implement iterative feedback loops in managing online education, ensuring that both institutions continuously improve their joint offerings based on real-time data and feedback from students and educators.

For those responsible for setting up and managing transnational educational partnerships, the research suggests that collaboration models need to be refined to ensure long-term success and sustainability. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering strong institutional ties and creating clear governance structures that can withstand the complexities of cross-border partnerships. Leaders in these partnerships should prioritize developing shared educational goals that reflect both the academic rigour expected in the UK and the cultural and pedagogical strengths found in China. By using the TOER Model, partnership managers can also ensure that online education platforms are continuously updated and improved, adapting to the changing needs of students and faculty over time.

In conclusion, this research makes significant contributions to the understanding and improvement of transnational online education within Sino-UK art and design partnerships. By developing the TOER Model and introducing the concept of Iterative Presence, the study provides both theoretical and practical insights that address the unique challenges of cross-cultural online learning. The findings offer a comprehensive framework that can

inform future pedagogical strategies, institutional policies, and collaborative practices, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of transnational education in creative disciplines.

8.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study provides a comprehensive and detailed examination of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education, offering insights into the unique challenges and dynamics within this specialized context. However, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that accompany these findings. These limitations also present opportunities for future research to build upon the foundation established by this study, extending its applicability to a broader range of educational settings and deepening our understanding of the complexities of transnational online education.

One of the primary limitations of this study lies in its specific focus on Sino-UK educational partnerships within the discipline of art and design. This particular focus allowed for a nuanced and in-depth understanding of the challenges and dynamics specific to this context, such as the integration of creativity, visual communication, and hands-on practice in an online environment. However, this focus also inherently limits the applicability of the findings to other disciplines or forms of transnational educational collaboration. Art and design education presents distinct challenges in an online format, given its reliance on tactile engagement, spatial awareness, and the creative process, all of which are difficult to replicate in a digital setting. These challenges may not be as pronounced in other academic fields, such as the sciences or humanities, which may not require the same level of physical interaction or creative output. Consequently, it is unclear the extent to which the insights gained from this study may apply to these other disciplines, limiting the generalizability of the findings.

To address this limitation, future research could expand the scope to include a broader range of academic disciplines, such as the sciences, humanities, or social sciences, to explore whether the dynamics observed in this study hold true across different educational contexts. For instance, investigating how online education is implemented in fields like engineering, medicine, or literature could provide a more comprehensive framework for understanding the effectiveness and challenges of online transnational education across various disciplines. Such research could reveal commonalities and differences in how different fields adapt to the online environment, offering insights into best practices that are applicable across a wider range of educational settings. This broader approach would not only enhance the generalizability of the findings but also contribute to the development of a more holistic understanding of online education in transnational contexts.

Another significant limitation of this study is the sample size and the representativeness of the participants. While the study included eight weeks of participant observation, along with 37 interviewees and 274 questionnaire respondents, this sample may not fully capture the wide range of experiences and perspectives within the broader population of students and faculty involved in Sino-UK educational partnerships. In cross-cultural research, where diversity of experiences and backgrounds can significantly influence the findings, the limited sample size inevitably poses a challenge to the robustness and generalizability of the results. It is possible that the experiences of certain demographic groups or individuals from different institutional backgrounds were not adequately represented, potentially leading to a skewed understanding of the challenges and opportunities in transnational online education.

To enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings, future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples. Expanding the

participant pool to include a wider range of students and faculty from different institutions, both in terms of size and geographic location, could provide a more comprehensive picture of the transnational educational landscape. Additionally, incorporating participants from a broader range of cultural backgrounds could help uncover differences in how online education is perceived and implemented across different cultural contexts, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the success of transnational educational partnerships. This approach would ensure that the findings are more representative of the broader population, thereby enhancing the validity and applicability of the research.

The study's reliance on self-reported data through interviews and questionnaires also presents a significant limitation. While self-reported data can provide valuable insights into participants' perceptions and experiences, they are inherently subject to various biases. Social desirability bias, for instance, may lead respondents to provide answers that they believe are expected or socially acceptable, rather than their true feelings or experiences. Similarly, recall bias can affect the accuracy of responses, particularly when participants are asked to reflect on past experiences or events. These limitations highlight the challenges of obtaining fully objective data in studies that rely heavily on participant self-reporting. As a result, the findings of this study may not fully reflect the true experiences and perspectives of the participants, potentially limiting the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions drawn.

To mitigate these biases, future research could incorporate more objective data sources to complement the self-reported data. For example, direct observations of online classes could provide insights into the actual dynamics of online learning environments, offering a more accurate depiction of student engagement and interaction. Additionally, analysis of student performance

metrics, such as grades, completion rates, and participation levels, could offer quantifiable data that can be used to assess the effectiveness of different teaching methods and online platforms. Automated tracking of engagement within digital platforms, such as logging activity, time spent on tasks, and interaction patterns, could also provide valuable data on how students engage with online content. These objective measures could complement the subjective data, providing a more holistic understanding of the educational processes and outcomes in transnational online education. This approach would help to address some of the limitations associated with self-reported data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of this study, which captures data at a single point in time, may not fully account for the evolving nature of online education. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and pedagogical practices means that the experiences and challenges identified in this study may change over time. This limitation is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing development of online education, where new technologies, methodologies, and educational models are continuously emerging. The static nature of cross-sectional research limits its ability to capture these dynamic changes, potentially leading to findings that are quickly outdated as new technologies and practices are adopted.

To address this limitation, future research could employ longitudinal designs that track changes in teaching practices, student engagement, and educational outcomes over extended periods. Longitudinal studies would allow researchers to observe how the implementation of online education evolves over time, providing insights into the long-term effectiveness of different teaching methods and technological tools. Such studies could also examine how institutions adapt to emerging technologies and changing student needs, offering a dynamic view of the educational landscape that a cross-sectional design cannot capture. This

approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sustainability and adaptability of online transnational education, helping institutions to plan and implement strategies that are responsive to ongoing developments in the field.

Finally, the study's findings highlight the importance of continuous feedback and adaptation in online education. However, the mechanisms by which feedback is gathered, interpreted, and applied in an educational context, especially in transnational partnerships, warrant further investigation. Future research could explore the effectiveness of different feedback loops in online education, such as real-time feedback mechanisms or iterative course design processes, and how these can be optimized to support both student learning and instructional effectiveness. Additionally, studies could investigate the role of faculty development and support in enabling educators to effectively respond to feedback and adapt their teaching practices in the rapidly changing online educational environment. This research could provide valuable insights into how to create more responsive and adaptive educational systems that are capable of meeting the evolving needs of students and educators in transnational settings.

In conclusion, while this study makes significant contributions to our understanding of Sino-UK transnational online art and design education, the limitations identified suggest numerous avenues for future research. Expanding the scope to other disciplines, increasing sample diversity, incorporating longitudinal and objective data, exploring cultural and technological dimensions, and addressing ethical considerations are all critical areas that could further enrich the field of transnational online education. By addressing these limitations, future research can build on the insights of this study and contribute to the ongoing evolution of effective, inclusive, and adaptive online education practices in a global context. This ongoing research will be essential for

ensuring that online education continues to evolve in ways that meet the needs of diverse learners and educators, supporting the development of a more equitable and inclusive global educational landscape.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form	
I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	Choose an item.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time withoutgiving any reason.	Choose an item.
I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	Choose an item.
I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.	Choose an item.
I agree to my activities being audio-recorded.	Choose an item.
I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.	Choose an item.
I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.	Choose an item.
I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.	Choose an item.

---------- ----------

Signature of participant Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheets

Title of study:

The Application of Online Education Resources in Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Teaching Projects

Name of researcher:

Yuhong Song, PhD student at the University of Salford

Invitation:

You are being invited to take part in a research project: The Application of Online Education Resources in Sino-UK Partnership Art and Design Teaching Projects. Before you decide on whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether you wish to take part. You are welcome to discuss this project with others before you make your decision. Please contact me: Y.Song5@edu.salford.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the study?

The project will contribute to our understanding of transnational online art education through an investigation of a series of Sino-UK collaborations. The transnational online art education experience can deliver significant benefits to educators and students alike. The contribution to knowledge from this research lies in three areas. First, it aims to present a model of Sino-UK transnational online art education. Second, it provides new empirical evidence of the kind of educator provision and student experiences of transnational online art education. Third, the empirical evidence of the project can be used to broaden practical awareness of effective methods of online art education to enhance future Sino-British cooperative teaching projects.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you have the experience of Sino-UK partnership online art education.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep, be asked to sign a consent form and you may still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawal from the study.

If you do withdraw you should, however, note that the University may continue to process the information or samples you have already provided. It will only do this for research purposes and in an anonymized way and in a way that you cannot not be identified.

What do I have to do? / What will happen to me if I take part?

You will provide empirical evidence on online transnational art and design education.

Expenses and payments?

You will not have any expenses for travel, meals, etc.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the

project, it is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on Sino-UK partnership online teaching arts projects. Results will be shared with participants in order to inform their professional work.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher by email: Y.Song5@edu.salford.ac.uk, Yuhong Song will do her best to answer your questions.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential? / What will happen to the results of the research project?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. Your institution will also not be identified or identifiable. Any data collected about you in the online questionnaire will be stored online in a form protected by passwords and other relevant security processes and technologies.

What will happen if I want to stop being part of the study?

If you withdraw from the study, please let me know. In this event, please note that I would like to use the data collected up to your withdrawal.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Results of the research will be published. You will not be identified in any report or publication. Your institution will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to be given a copy of any reports resulting from the research, please contact me.

Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

You will not be recorded in any way other than your input to the observation

without separate permission being gained from you.

Who is organising or sponsoring the research?

The project is organised by Yuhong Song of the University of Salford.

Further information and contact details:

Yuhong Song, School of Art Media and creative technology, University of Salford.

Tel: +44 (0)784 625 5862

Email: Y.Song5@edu.salford.ac.uk

My supervisors are:

Professor Seamus Simpson, School of Art Media and creative technology, University of Salford.

Email: s.simpson@salford.ac.uk

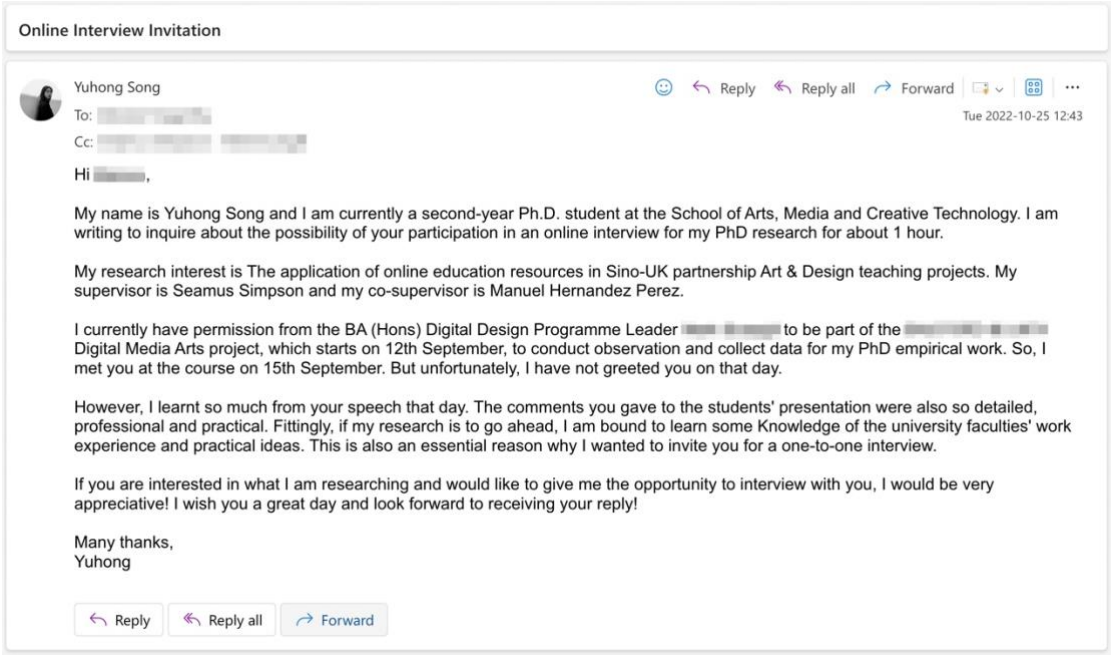
Dr. Manuel Hernández, School of Art Media and creative technology, University of Salford.

Email: m.hernandez-perez@salford.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this research.

Yuhong Song

Appendix 3: Sample Invitation Email for Empirical Works



Online Interview Invitation

Yuhong Song

Reply Reply all Forward

To: [redacted]

Tue 2022-10-25 12:43

Cc: [redacted]

Hi [redacted],

My name is Yuhong Song and I am currently a second-year Ph.D. student at the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology. I am writing to inquire about the possibility of your participation in an online interview for my PhD research for about 1 hour.

My research interest is The application of online education resources in Sino-UK partnership Art & Design teaching projects. My supervisor is Seamus Simpson and my co-supervisor is Manuel Hernandez Perez.

I currently have permission from the BA (Hons) Digital Design Programme Leader [redacted] to be part of the [redacted] Digital Media Arts project, which starts on 12th September, to conduct observation and collect data for my PhD empirical work. So, I met you at the course on 15th September. But unfortunately, I have not greeted you on that day.

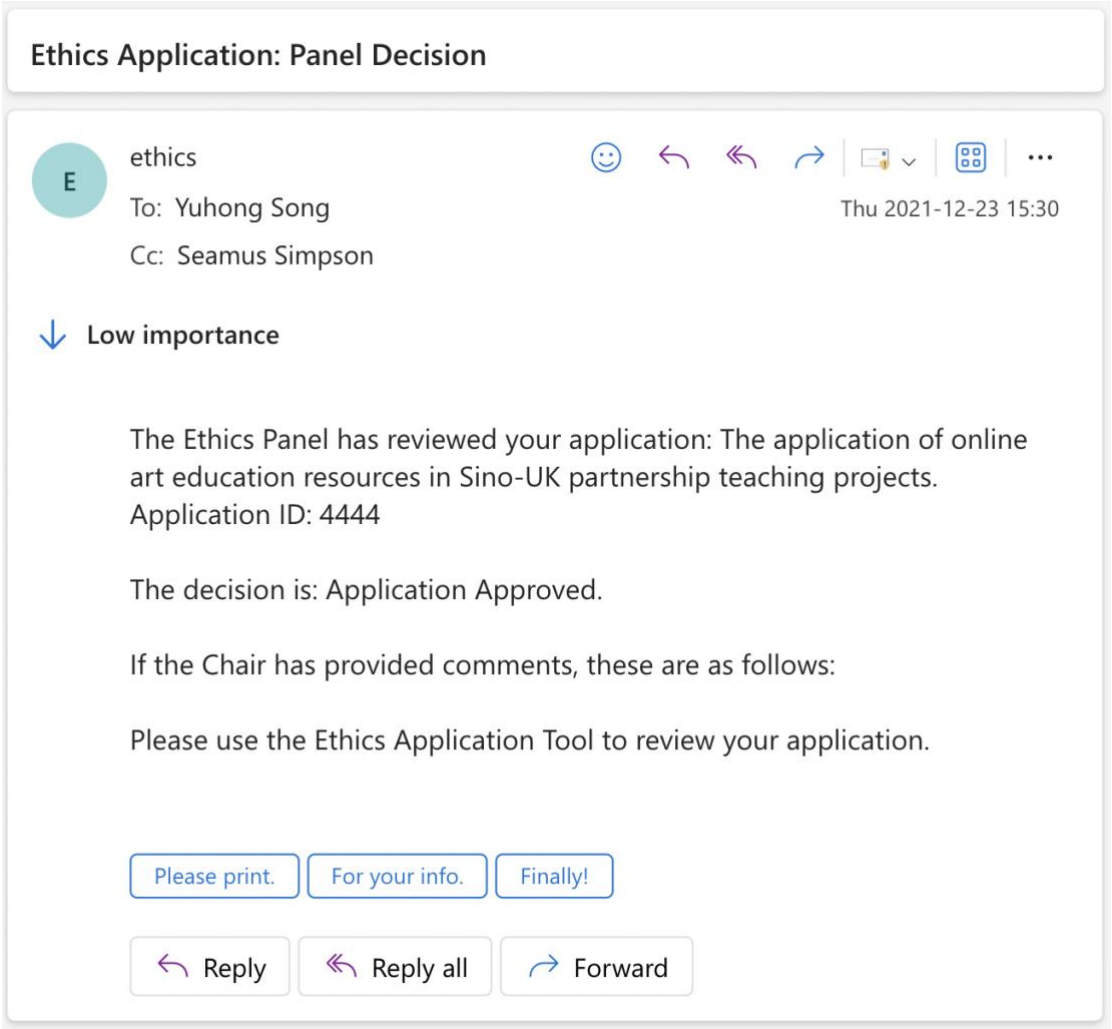
However, I learnt so much from your speech that day. The comments you gave to the students' presentation were also so detailed, professional and practical. Fittingly, if my research is to go ahead, I am bound to learn some Knowledge of the university faculties' work experience and practical ideas. This is also an essential reason why I wanted to invite you for a one-to-one interview.

If you are interested in what I am researching and would like to give me the opportunity to interview with you, I would be very appreciative! I wish you a great day and look forward to receiving your reply!

Many thanks,
Yuhong

Reply Reply all Forward

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval



Ethics Application: Panel Decision

E

ethics

To: Yuhong Song

Cc: Seamus Simpson

Thu 2021-12-23 15:30

Low importance

The Ethics Panel has reviewed your application: The application of online art education resources in Sino-UK partnership teaching projects.
Application ID: 4444

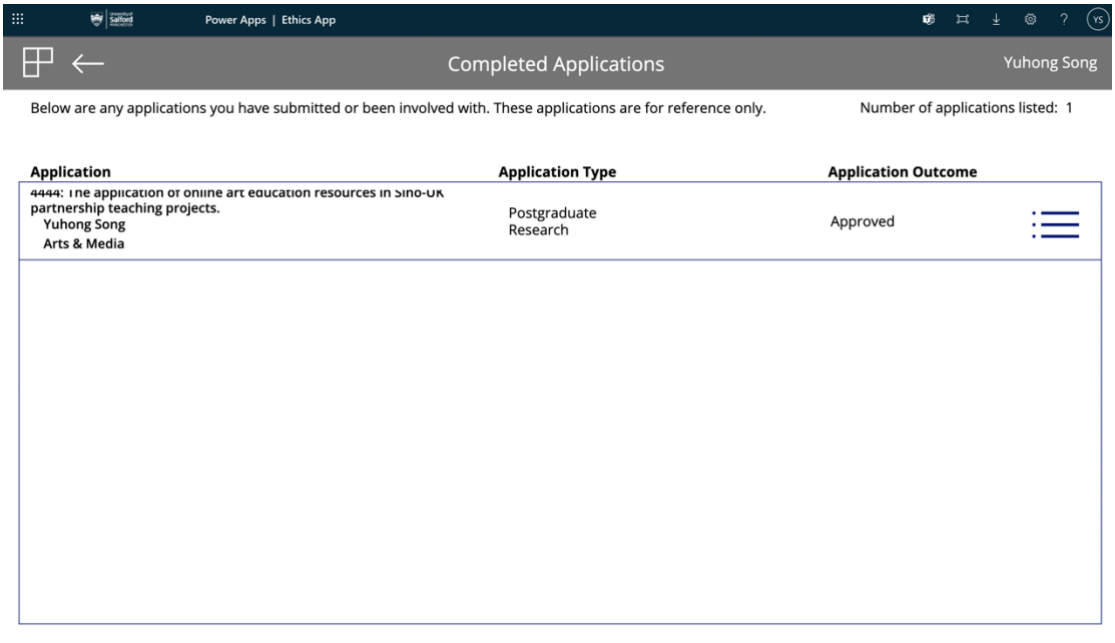
The decision is: Application Approved.

If the Chair has provided comments, these are as follows:

Please use the Ethics Application Tool to review your application.

Please print. For your info. Finally!

Reply Reply all Forward



Power Apps | Ethics App

Completed Applications

Yuhong Song

Below are any applications you have submitted or been involved with. These applications are for reference only.

Number of applications listed: 1

Application	Application Type	Application Outcome
4444: The application of online art education resources in Sino-UK partnership teaching projects. Yuhong Song Arts & Media	Postgraduate Research	Approved

Amendment Notification Form

Title of Project:		
The application of online education resources in Sino-UK partnership Art and Design teaching projects		
Name of Lead Applicant:	**School:**	
Yuhong Song	Arts & Media	
Are you the original Principal Investigator (PI) for this study?		Yes
If you have selected 'NO', please explain why you are applying for the amendment:		
Date original approval obtained:	**Reference No:**	**Externally funded project?**
23/12/2021	4444	No
Please outline the proposed changes to the project. *NB. If the changes require any amendments to the PIS, Consent Form(s) or recruitment material, then please submit these with this form highlighting where the changes have been made:*		
I have already applied and received ethical approval for my interview and observation work at the end of 2021. In the light of the evidence produced from this work and in consultation with my supervisor, I would like to carry out a programme of survey work, which involves engagement with human subjects.		
Please say whether the proposed changes present any new ethical issues or changes to ethical issues that were identified in the original ethics review, and provide details of how these will be addressed:		
The ethical issues covered in the original application related to observation and interview work are the same as those related to the proposed survey research. Regarding the latter, the researcher needs to design a bespoke Participant Consent form and Participant information sheet to be sent to potential informants to allow them to provide their informed consent to take part in the survey.		

Amendment Approved:	**YES**	***Date of Approval:***	**03/04/2023**

Chair's Signature:

Once completed you should submit this form and any additional documentation to the RKE Ethics Team at ethics@salford.ac.uk

Version 3.1 – July 2020

Appendix 5: Observation Notes Sample

In this session, students were expected to begin the academic year with a 'fun brief' by completing some initial work. The task assigned was to ‘illustrate’ British idioms or phrases. Students were given 5 minutes to introduce themselves, covering the following aspects:

I. Display both their Chinese and English names.

II. Share their interests in Design/Arts.

III. List five things that intrigue them about the UK—this could include anything related to people, food, travel, fashion, weather, history, etc.

IV. Provide a short presentation and explanation of their ‘5 idioms’.

Participation in the self-introduction was optional, allowing students to decide whether or not to present. In the end, six students chose to introduce themselves. The following are observation notes based on this session.

Date
15-Sep-2022

Time
10:00am to 1:23pm BST

Online Platform
☐ Teams ☐ Zoom ☑ VooV ☐ Others

Environments

☐ 'Keynote' Lecture ☑ Presentation session ☐ Online chat context

This class takes place online, utilizing screen sharing and video conferencing tools. Students and the instructor engage through platforms where participants share their screens, present slides, and discuss their design work.

The participants mention aspects of their work that involve visual clarity, such as the use of PowerPoint presentations, visual aids, and illustrations. The instructor and students often discuss visual design elements (like 3D models and paintings).

The atmosphere appears to be open and interactive, where students feel comfortable presenting their work and discussing their interests in a relaxed environment. The class encourages sharing personal interests and receiving feedback.

People

Number of teaching staff: 2

Number of students: 6

The instructors play a central role, guiding the conversation, providing feedback, and managing the flow of the class. They encourage interaction and presentations among the students.

Students actively participate by presenting their work, such as idioms or personal introductions, and by engaging in discussions about their interests in design, technology, and other cultural aspects.

Students take turns leading segments and responding to questions posed directly by the instructors.

Objects

Phone: A participant refers to getting their phone, indicating that it is frequently used for communication or accessing information during the session.

Camera: During the interaction, a student mentions turning on their camera. This demonstrates the use of video technology, specifically webcams or built-in laptop cameras, as essential tools in virtual classrooms.

Screen Sharing Equipment: There are multiple instances of participants sharing their screens, either for PowerPoint presentations or to showcase sketches and idioms, highlighting the use of screen-sharing tools to interact with digital content.

iPad or Tablets: One participant shows their work on an iPad, a common tool for digital sketching or presenting ideas in creative and design fields.

Digital Sketching Tools: Sketching is mentioned, potentially using digital tools like styluses, sketching tablets, or apps to create rough ideas or visual concepts in the classroom.

Pen: One person mentioned a pen, commonly used for writing or drawing, and the need to modify it slightly for functionality.

Glue: There is a reference to using glue as a tool for securing or modifying objects, demonstrating the use of simple, manual tools in certain interactions.

Messages

Language and Tone:
The overall tone of the conversation is encouraging and supportive, especially from the Programme Leader. For instance, when students express nervousness or hesitation, the Programme Leader reassures them with phrases like "That was wonderfully done" or "That is really, really appreciated" to build confidence. The conversations feature a mix of formal and casual language, with moments of humor, as seen when participants joke about nicknames or movie references like Pirates of the Caribbean.

Common Phrases:
Common phrases include expressions of affirmation such as "Well done" and "That's brilliant," highlighting a culture of positive reinforcement. Idiomatic expressions also arise during discussions about language, such as "bite the bullet" and "a dime a dozen." This emphasizes the role of idioms in learning English and connecting cultural references.

Interactions:
Interactions are collaborative and inclusive, with the instructor often facilitating student discussions and inviting them to share insights about their personal experiences and creative work. Students seem to have a collegial relationship with one another, occasionally sharing details about their projects, hobbies, or asking questions about cultural differences. The teacher nurtures this by often linking conversations back to learning objectives (e.g., cultural differences, idioms, and creative thinking).

Cultural Context:
Much of the communication revolves around cultural exchange, including discussions of British and Chinese architecture, cuisine, and festivals. This demonstrates the importance of cultural exploration in the course and how it helps students develop broader perspectives.

Services

Cognitive presence

Video Conferencing Software:
The online platform for this class is Voov (Tencent Conference). This tool allows students and the teacher to engage in real-time discussions, facilitating the triggering event and exploration phases where questions are raised, and knowledge is shared and explored through live interaction.

Screen Sharing Functionality:
Students use screen sharing to present their work, such as PowerPoint presentations, sketches, 3D models, and idiom drawings. This tool supports the integration phase, during which learners combine ideas and reflect on feedback, enhancing their understanding through visual representation.

WeChat:
Students and instructors communicate using WeChat outside of class to share content such as screenshots, feedback, and design sketches. This asynchronous communication supports sustained reflection and helps maintain the alignment of learning content by allowing for deeper discourse over time.

Digital Design Tools:
Several students mention using iPads and digital drawing tools to showcase sketches or design ideas. These tools foster higher-order thinking by enabling students to experiment and iterate on their work, contributing to the integration and resolution phases where ideas are refined and applied.

Practical Applications of Technology:
One student mentions using Adobe Audition to create music, highlighting the integration of technology with artistic expression. This allows learners to explore and apply new skills creatively.

Social presence

Online Communication:
The class enables emotional expression by allowing students to share their thoughts verbally and visually through facial expressions and gestures. For example, Student 1 expresses nervousness when presenting, but receives encouragement from the Programme Leader, who admits to still feeling nervous sometimes even at 55 years old. The ability to see one another, as the teacher emphasizes, helps build trust and comfort, which is essential for social presence. Students and teachers use WeChat to stay in touch and share work, such as sketches and feedback. This encourages open communication and fosters group cohesion, as learners can engage outside of class time, creating a more connected learning environment.

Screen Sharing Functionality:
Students use screen sharing to present their work and personal interests, which facilitates open communication and group cohesion. They share creative projects like PowerPoint slides and digital sketches, allowing peers to comment and engage with one another's work, promoting a collaborative atmosphere.

Cultural Sharing and Humor:
Throughout the session, students and teachers share personal experiences, cultural references, and humor (e.g., discussing British architecture, movies, and idioms like "bite the bullet" and "break a leg"). These exchanges help reduce the sense of isolation and build a sense of community by fostering interpersonal connections.

Interactive Assignments:
The session includes interactive tasks, such as presenting idioms and design work. These tasks encourage students to actively engage, ask questions, and provide feedback, all of which help develop group cohesion and create a collaborative learning experience.

Teaching presence

Facilitation of Feedback:
The teacher consistently guided the feedback process, ensuring that students not only presented their work but also reflected on their learning and received constructive input from their peers. This structured facilitation of discussion kept students focused on the learning objectives, promoting a collaborative environment that deepened their understanding.

Adaptation to Diverse Educational Backgrounds:
The instructor was mindful of the students' diverse backgrounds, particularly in the Sino-UK context. By encouraging discussions that included cultural comparisons, personal experiences, and design preferences, the teacher bridged potential gaps in cultural and linguistic understanding. This inclusive approach is a hallmark of strong teaching presence, as it ensures that all students feel supported and engaged, regardless of their background.

Interactive Assignments and Tasks: The teacher designed specific tasks, such as the presentation of i dioms and design ideas, which were carefully structured to promote engagement. These tasks were not just about showcasing work but also about facilitating deeper understanding through peer interaction and guided feedback. By directing these activities, the teacher promoted an inclusive learning experience where each student's input was valued and explored.

Individualised expression of participants

Student 1 expresses a strong interest in advertising design, game visual design, and interaction design. She shares her love for movies, specifically Pirates of the Caribbean, and her admiration for Captain Jack Sparrow. She also discusses her curiosity about UK history, expressing sadness over the former Queen's passing, and excitement about experiencing British culture, particularly its food and tea.

Student 2 introduces themselves by explaining the significance of their Chinese name, which is tied to being born on the last day of 1999. They express a deep interest in interactive design, including UI/UX, and share their experience attending a Dua Lipa concert in Shanghai. Student 2 also shows a fascination with British history, especially World War II and Winston Churchill, while comparing British urban planning with China's, admiring the blend of modern and historical elements.

Student 3 emphasizes their preference for simple design and their dislike for overly complex designs. They express a passion for football, particularly Manchester United, and discuss their interest in British architecture and history. Student 3 is also a fan of the TV series Peaky Blinders, linking this interest to their appreciation of British cultural and architectural styles.

Student 4 discusses their love for animation and game design, drawing inspiration from the Netflix series Love, Death & Robots. They explore how technology intersects with art, using software like Adobe Audition to create music. They also express a passion for Coldplay and the industrial revolution, influenced by video games such as Assassin's Creed.

Student 5 showcases their admiration for visual art, especially how nature influences their creative process. They talk about their love for cycling and spending time outdoors, exploring cities and the seaside. Additionally, they express a strong connection to Dream Pop and City Pop, illustrating how their artistic vision is shaped by both visual and auditory experiences.

Student 6 shares their interest in architecture, highlighting their admiration for architect Tadao Ando. They discuss how British movies, such as Downton Abbey and Marvel films, have helped them improve their English and understand British culture. Their curiosity extends to British food and everyday life, along with a desire to experience British customs in person.

Appendix 6: Interview Questions

Students - Interview for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education

跨国在线艺术与设计教育研究访谈（学生版）

Q1: What is your major of study in the Sino-UK partnership teaching project?

问题 1: 您在中英联合办项目中的学习的专业是什么?

Q2: What is your current grade level?

问题 2: 您目前学习的年级是?

Q3: How long have you been doing online learning?

问题 3: 您进行在线学习的时间持续了多久?

Q4: In the context of Chinese and British cultures, what do you think are the differences in the ways of learning art and design? How have these differences affected your learning process?

问题 4: 在中英文化背景下，您觉得学习艺术与设计的方式有什么差异?这些差异对您的学习过程有何影响?

Q5: Have you tried any specific methods to help you understand the course content more quickly?

问题 5: 在学习中，您有没有尝试过一些特定的方法来帮助您更快地理解课程内容?

Q6: During your learning process, have you had the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the course content through reflection and discussion?

问题 6: 在您的学习过程中，您是否有机会通过思考和讨论对学习内容有更全面的了解？

Q7: Do you think online learning affects your understanding of the course content? If so, in what specific ways?

问题 7: 您认为在线学习的方式是否会影响您对课程内容的理解？如果有影响，具体表现在哪些方面？

Q8: How has online education impacted your knowledge growth and its application both inside and outside the learning environment?

问题 8: 在线教育对您在课堂内外的知识增长和应用方面产生了哪些影响？

Q9: Which online communication tools do you usually use to stay in touch with your teachers and classmates? How do you feel about using these tools?

问题 9: 您通常通过哪些在线沟通工具与老师和同学保持联系？您对这些工具的使用感受如何？

Q10: During online classes, how do you interact with your teachers and classmates? How do you think this interaction differs from face-to-face learning?

问题 10: 线上授课期间，您和老师及同学的互动方式如何？您认为这种互动方式和线下相比有哪些不同？

Q11: What do you think are the most attractive aspects of British social and cultural environments for Chinese students? How have these aspects influenced you personally?

问题 11: 您认为英国的社会文化环境最吸引中国学生的地方是什么？这些方面

对您个人有什么影响？

Q12: What efforts have you made to adapt to the British cultural environment? Have these efforts produced noticeable results?

问题 12: 为了适应英国的文化环境，您做了哪些努力？这些努力是否带来了显著的效果？

Q13: When interacting with Chinese and British teachers, have you noticed any differences in their interaction styles?

问题 13: 您在与中方老师和英方老师接触时，有没有感觉到他们在相处方式上的差异？

Q14: Have your teachers taken any specific measures to improve your understanding and satisfaction with the course? How effective were these measures?

问题 14: 您的老师们是否采取过一些特定的措施来提高您们对课程的理解和满意度？这些措施的效果如何？

Q15: What online teaching tools did you use during your studies? What role did each of these tools play in your learning?

问题 15: 您在学习期间使用过哪些在线教学工具？这些工具分别在您的学习中起到了什么作用？

Q16: Compared to face-to-face teaching, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of online education?

问题 16: 相比面对面的教学方式，您觉得在线教育有什么优势和劣势？

Q17: Specific to your field of study, what are the particular advantages and disadvantages of online learning resources?

问题 17: 具体到您学习的学科领域，在线学习资源有哪些特定的优势和劣势？

Q18: After switching to online teaching, did the content and methods of your learning change? How did these changes affect your learning outcomes?

问题 18: 转为在线教学后，您的学习内容和方式有发生变化吗？这些变化对您的学习效果产生了什么影响？

Faculty Members - Interview for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education

跨国在线艺术与设计教育研究访谈（教师版）

Q1: What is the major you teach in the Sino-UK partnership teaching project?

问题 1：您在中英联合办学项目中教授的专业是什么？

Q2: What grade levels are you currently responsible for?

问题 2：您目前主要负责哪些年级的课程？

Q3: How long have you been teaching online learning?

问题 3：您教授在线课程的时间持续多久了？

Q4: In the context of Chinese and British cultures, what do you think are the differences in the ways of teaching art and design? How have these differences affected your teaching approach?

问题 4：在中英文化背景下，您觉得教授艺术与设计的方式有什么差异？这些差异对您的教学方式有何影响？

Q5: Have you used any specific methods in your teaching to help students understand the course content more quickly?

问题 5：在教学中，您有没有采用一些特定的方法来帮助学生更快地理解课程内容？

Q6: During your teaching process, have you provided opportunities for students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the course content through reflection and discussion?

问题 6：在您的教学过程中，您是否提供机会让学生通过思考和讨论来全面理解

学习内容？

Q7: Do you think online teaching affects students' understanding of the course content? If so, in what specific ways?

问题 7：您认为在线教学的方式是否会影响学生对课程内容的理解？如果有影响，具体表现在哪些方面？

Q8: How has online education impacted students' knowledge growth and their ability to apply it both inside and outside the learning environment?

问题 8：在线教育对学生的课堂内外知识增长和应用能力产生了哪些影响？

Q9: Which online communication tools do you usually use to stay in touch with students? How do you feel about using these tools?

问题 9：您通常通过哪些在线沟通工具与学生保持联系？您对这些工具的使用感受如何？

Q10: During online classes, how do you interact with your students? How do you think this interaction differs from face-to-face learning?

问题 10：线上授课期间，您与学生的的互动方式如何？您认为这种互动方式和线下相比有哪些不同？

Q11: What do you think are the most attractive aspects of British social and cultural environments for Chinese students? Have these factors influenced your teaching approach?

问题 11：您认为英国的社会文化环境对中国学生有何吸引力？这些因素是否对您教学方式产生了影响？

Q12: Have you taken any specific measures to help students adapt to the British cultural environment? How have these measures impacted their learning outcomes?

问题 12：为了让学生适应英国的文化环境，您是否采取了特别的措施？这些措施对学生的学习效果有何影响？

Q13: When interacting with Chinese students, have you noticed any unique characteristics about them?

问题 13：您在与中国学生接触时，有没有感觉到他们的一些独特特点？

Q14: In terms of improving students' understanding and satisfaction with the course, have you taken any specific measures? How effective were these measures?

问题 14：在提高学生对课程理解和满意度方面，您是否采取过特定的措施？这些措施的效果如何？

Q15: What online teaching tools did you use during your teaching? What role did each of these tools play in your teaching?

问题 15：您在授课期间使用过哪些在线教学工具？这些工具分别在您的教学中起到了什么作用？

Q16: Compared to face-to-face teaching, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of online education?

问题 16：相比面对面的教学方式，您觉得在线教育有什么优势和劣势？

Q17: Specific to your field of teaching, what do you think are the particular

advantages and disadvantages of online learning resources?

问题 17：具体到您教授的学科领域，您认为在线学习资源有哪些特定的优势和劣势？

Q18: After switching to online teaching, did the content and methods of your teaching change? How did these changes affect the students' learning outcomes?

问题 18：转为在线教学后，您的教学内容和方式有发生变化吗？这些变化对学生的学习效果产生了什么影响？

Appendix 7: Interview Transcripts

Sample 1: Student 1 (Alberto)

Date: 5th November 2022

Online tool: VooV

Duration: 47 minutes 23 seconds

Language of interview: Chinese

[00:00:01] Yuhong Song (YS):您好，非常感谢您能接受这次访谈。我们先从基本的问题开始吧，您在中英联合办项目中学习的专业是什么？

Hello, thank you so much for accepting this interview. Let's start with a basic question. What is your subject in the Sino-UK partnership teaching project?

[00:00:15] Student 1 (S1): 我学的是数字媒体艺术。这个专业挺跨学科的，学习内容包括动画、图像处理、交互设计等。我们还需要掌握各种数字工具，比如 Adobe 系列软件、3D 建模和视频剪辑。

I am studying Digital Media Art. It’s a pretty interdisciplinary subject, covering areas like animation, image processing, and interactive design. We also need to master various digital tools, like the Adobe software suite, 3D modeling, and video editing.

[00:01:20] YS: 确实是一个比较复杂的专业，那么您提到的这些工具和技术的学习对您来说是不是有一定的挑战？有没有特别让您印象深刻的部分？

It does sound like a complex field. Are there any particular challenges you’ve faced while learning these tools and technologies? Anything that left a strong impression on you?

[00:02:25] S1:挑战的部分……比如 3D 建模和视频剪辑的学习就挺耗时的，需

要我们非常熟悉软件的操作。不过通过不断练习，掌握这些技能后也能感受到自己的进步。

The challenging part... For instance, learning 3D modeling and video editing takes a lot of time, and we need to become very familiar with the software. But through continuous practice, I can really feel my progress.

[00:03:40] YS：那您现在是大几了？

So, what year are you in now?

[00:03:42] S1：我现在是大四。现在我们学习的重点更多放在个人项目的创作上，特别是和英国老师合作时，更强调项目的创意思维和设计表现。

I'm in my fourth-year of BA. The focus of our studies is now more on personal project creation, especially when working with British teachers. They emphasize creative thinking and design presentation in projects.

[00:04:52] YS：跟英国老师的合作感觉怎么样？相比之前的学习，您觉得这种创意思维的培养对您影响大吗？

How does working with British teachers feel? Compared to your previous studies, do you think this focus on creative thinking has had a significant impact on you?

[00:05:57] S1：是的，影响很大。英国老师很注重让我们表达自己的想法，而不是追求某种固定的标准。这种方式让我更自由地发挥自己的创意，而不是单纯地追求技术上的完美。

Yes, it has had a huge impact. British teachers emphasize expressing our own ideas rather than sticking to a fixed standard. This approach gives me more

freedom to express my creativity instead of just pursuing technical perfection.

[00:08:10] YS:那您在线学习的时间有多久了呢?

How long have you been learning online?

[00:08:14] S1: 我是从 2019 年下半年开始在线学习的，因为疫情，我们的课程都转为了线上模式。直到现在，我们基本上都还是在进行线上学习。

I started online learning in the second half of 2019. Due to the pandemic, all our courses shifted online. And up until now, we are still learning online.

[00:09:05] YS: 从线下到线上学习，这段时间对您的学习体验有什么特别的影响吗?

From in-person to online learning, has this period brought any specific changes to your learning experience?

[00:09:29] S1: 一开始确实挺不习惯的，尤其是在语言方面，跟外教沟通有时候会有些困难。线上缺少面对面的交流，有时候理解课程内容的效率会低一些。

At first, it was quite difficult to get used to, especially with the language. Communicating with foreign teachers can sometimes be challenging. The lack of face-to-face interaction means that understanding course content can be less efficient at times.

[00:11:47] YS: 那在中英文化背景下，您觉得艺术和设计的学习方式有什么差异?这些差异对您的学习过程有什么影响?

So, in the context of both Chinese and British cultures, how do you find the differences in learning art and design? How have these differences impacted your learning process?

[00:12:53] S1：我觉得差异还是挺大的。中国的艺术教育更注重基础技能，像素描、色彩、构图这些要求很严格，尤其是在艺考时，这些基本功要求非常高。相比之下，英国的艺术教育更鼓励个人创意，不会强迫我们按照某种标准来做，更多是希望我们展示自己的风格和想法。英国的教育让我在创造力和个人表达方面备受重视,这种开放的教育方式鼓励学生探索这种差异让我开始更注重思考，而不是一味地追求技术上的完美。

I think the differences are quite significant. Chinese art education focuses more on foundational skills like sketching, color, and composition, with very strict standards, especially during art entrance exams. In contrast, British art education encourages personal creativity. They don't force us to follow a standard; they want us to showcase our own style and ideas. The education in the UK has allowed me to be highly valued for my creativity and personal expression, with an open-minded approach to education that encourages students to explore. This difference has made me focus more on thinking rather than just perfecting my technical skills.

[00:13:40] YS：您提到的这种自由度确实在艺术创作中很重要。那在学习过程中，您有没有自己尝试一些方法来更快理解课程内容？

The creative freedom you mentioned is indeed important in art. Have you tried any specific methods to help you understand the course material more quickly during your studies?

[00:14:27] S1：我经常利用在线课程的录屏功能，课后反复查看老师的讲解。另外，为了提高听力和理解外教的课程，我经常看英文原字幕的电影、听播客。我还付费加入了一个英语口语练习平台，可以每天有半小时和英国人在线聊天，这

些都帮助我更快适应课程。

I often use the online course's recording feature to review the teachers' explanations after class. Additionally, to improve my listening and understanding of foreign teachers' courses, I frequently watch movies with English subtitles and listen to podcasts. I also paid for a platform to practice spoken English, where I can chat with British people online for 30 minutes a day. All of these have helped me adapt to the courses more quickly.

[00:15:50] YS:您提到的这种外教口语平台我也有尝试过，确实很有帮助。那您在学习的过程中是否有和同学及老师们一同思考和讨论的机会呢？您有没有觉得这些互动让您对课程理解得更透彻？

I've also tried platforms like the one you mentioned, and they are really helpful. So, during your studies, have you had opportunities to reflect and discuss with classmates and teachers? Do you think these interactions have helped you understand the course better?

[00:16:58] S1：是的，通过讨论和交流确实能帮助我更好地理解课程内容。在英国的课程中，老师很鼓励我们发表自己的看法，还经常有小组项目，大家互相分享观点，提供反馈。这让我能从不同角度看待问题，并且更深入地理解课程。而在国内的课堂上，讨论机会相对较少，更多是老师讲我们听。

Yes, discussions and exchanges really help me better understand the course material. In British courses, teachers encourage us to express our views, and there are often group projects where everyone shares their perspectives and provides feedback. This allows me to look at problems from different angles and better understand the course. In contrast, in Chinese classes, there are fewer opportunities for discussion, and it's more about teachers lecturing while we listen.

[00:18:25] YS:那您觉得在线学习对您理解课程内容有没有影响呢？具体表现在哪些方面？

So, do you think online learning has impacted your understanding of the course content? In what ways?

[00:18:34] S1:确实有影响，尤其是在语言方面。在线下课堂，我如果不明白可以立刻举手问老师，眼神交流也会帮助理解。但在线上，我不太好意思随时打断老师，只能等到老师问有没有问题的时候再发言。而且，线上少了面对面的互动，有时老师使用英语表达，我需要更多时间去理解。不过，好的一面是可以回看录屏，尤其在课后复习时很方便。

Yes, it has, especially when it comes to language. In face-to-face classes, I can raise my hand immediately if I don't understand something, and eye contact helps with comprehension. But online, I feel shy about interrupting the teacher, so I wait until they ask if we have any questions. Also, there's less face-to-face interaction, and when the teacher uses English expressions, I need more time to process it. On the plus side, though, I can rewatch the recordings, which is really convenient for reviewing after class.

[00:20:25] YS:那在线教育对您在课堂内外的知识增长和应用方面产生了哪些影响？

So, how has online education impacted your knowledge growth and application both inside and outside the class?

[00:20:34] S1:我在线上课中使用在线翻译软件时，经常会发现无法准确表达某些专业术语或找到本土化的表达方式。这种情况下，与同学交流往往比直接向老

师寻求帮助更为快速有效。但是缺乏对老师教授的课程内容的直接理解，有时候会领会错了老师要传达的内容。但另一方面，线上教育的灵活性让我能够更多地自主安排学习时间，尤其是通过自学拓展课堂外的知识。我可以利用课余时间观看相关的在线教程、查阅设计案例等资源，从而丰富和巩固课堂内容。

When I use online translation software during classes, I often find it hard to accurately express some technical terms or find localized phrases. In such cases, communicating with classmates is usually quicker and more effective than asking the teacher directly. However, lacking direct understanding from the teacher can sometimes lead to misinterpreting their message. On the other hand, the flexibility of online education allows me to arrange my study time more freely. I can spend time outside of class learning through tutorials, reviewing design case studies, and expanding on what was covered in class.

[00:21:23] YS：您提到和同学的交流，那您主要通过什么在线沟通工具保持联系呢？对这些工具的使用有什么感受？

You mentioned communication with your classmates. So, what online tools do you mainly use to stay in touch, and how do you feel about using them?

[00:22:01] S1：我们主要用微信和老师、同学保持联系。特别是项目讨论和作业布置，微信群是主要的沟通渠道。虽然微信是中国的应用，但英方老师的回复很及时，时差问题也没有太大影响。

We mainly use WeChat to stay in touch with both teachers and classmates. Especially for project discussions and assignment arrangements, group chats on WeChat are the primary means of communication. Even though WeChat is a Chinese APP, British teachers reply promptly, and the time difference hasn’t been a major issue.

[00:23:10] YS：那在线上授课期间，您觉得这种互动方式和线下相比有哪些不同？

So, during online classes, how do you feel these interactions compare with face-to-face learning?

[00:23:20] S1：主要是通过语音、文字和视频来互动。不过和线下比，还是有一些不同。线下课堂上，面对面的交流更自然，可以通过眼神和肢体语言传递更多的信息。线上则少了这些互动，有时候讨论的深度也会受限，特别是网络不稳定或者翻译软件不够准确时，理解上容易产生误差。

The interactions are mainly through voice, text, and video. However, compared to face-to-face, there are still differences. In a physical classroom, communication is more natural, with eye contact and body language conveying more information. Online, there's less of this interaction, and sometimes the depth of discussions is limited. Especially when the internet connection is unstable or translation software is inaccurate, it can lead to misunderstandings.

[00:24:28] YS：您认为英国的社会文化环境对中国学生有什么特别的吸引力呢？这些方面对您有什么影响？

What do you think is particularly attractive about the British social and cultural environment for Chinese students? How has this impacted you?

[00:24:55] S1：我觉得英国最吸引中国学生的地方是它在艺术和设计领域的自由度和包容性。学生可以根据自己的想法自由创作，老师不会强制您按照某种标准去设计。这种开放的氛围让我感到很有动力，因为我可以根据自己的理解去创作，而不是为了考试或者评分去做作品。而且，英国的多元文化和浓厚的艺术氛围也让我从不同角度看待艺术。

I think the most attractive aspect of the UK for Chinese students is the freedom

and inclusiveness in the fields of art and design. Students can create freely based on their own ideas, and teachers don't force you to follow any specific standards. This open environment gives me a lot of motivation because I can create based on my understanding rather than working just for exams or grades. Moreover, the UK's multiculturalism and rich artistic atmosphere have helped me view art from different perspectives.

[00:25:27] YS: 那为了适应英国的文化环境，您有没有做过一些特别的努力？这些努力带来了显著的效果吗？

So, have you made any particular efforts to adapt to the British cultural environment? Have these efforts had noticeable results?

[00:25:34] S1: 我会观看英国的线上设计展览和艺术讲座，慢慢融入英国的文化。这些活动让我更好地理解英国的艺术氛围，也帮助我在设计中扩展思路。

I watch online design exhibitions and art lectures from the UK to gradually immerse myself in the culture. These activities have helped me better understand the British art scene and have expanded my thinking in my design work.

[00:26:50] YS: 在与中方老师和英方老师的相处过程中，您有感觉到他们在教学方式上的差异吗？

Have you noticed any differences in teaching styles between Chinese and British teachers?

[00:26:57] S1:中方老师的教学方式更传统，他们通常会直接告诉你怎么做，更注重结果。而英方老师更关注过程，他们不会直接给出答案，而是通过提问引导我们去思考和发现自己的想法。这种方式让我感到更轻松，也更容易激发创意。

Chinese teachers tend to have a more traditional teaching style. They usually tell you directly what to do and focus more on the result. British teachers, on the other hand, focus more on the process. They don't give direct answers but guide us to think and discover our own ideas through questions. This approach makes me feel more relaxed and sparks more creativity.

[00:28:20] YS: 老师们有没有采取过一些特别的措施，帮助您们提高对课程的理解和满意度？

Have the teachers taken any special measures to help you better understand and feel satisfied with the course?

[00:28:27] S1: 是的,我的老师们使用各种方法来提高学习体验的吸引力,例如鼓励创造性头脑风暴和举办基于作品集的项目。这些活动确实有助于我们相互合作和交流想法。他们还设计了实践作业,让我们能够运用所学概念,使整个过程更加身临其境,并培养强烈的团队合作意识。老师还会定期进行一对一的项目辅导，每次辅导大约 30 分钟。他们会详细分析我们的项目进展，给出个性化建议。这种辅导方式非常有效，因为它帮助我们发现问题并加深对项目的理解。

Yes, my teachers used a variety of methods to make the learning experience more engaging, such as encouraging creative brainstorming sessions and organising portfolio-based projects. These activities really helped us collaborate and exchange ideas with each other. They also designed hands-on assignments where we could apply the concepts we learned, which made the whole process more immersive and fostered a strong sense of teamwork. The teachers also provide one-on-one project tutoring sessions on a regular basis, each lasting about 30 minutes. They give detailed analysis of our project progress and offer personalized advice. This method is very effective as it helps us identify problems and deepens our understanding of the projects.

[00:30:00] YS：在学习过程中，你应该用过一些在线教学工具吧？你通常用哪些工具来辅助学习呢？这些工具在你的学习中分别起到了什么作用？

During your studies, you must have used some online learning tools, right? What tools do you usually use to assist your learning? How do these tools help you in your studies?

[00:31:10] S1：我们主要用的是 Teams，它是我们主要的课堂工具。通过它，我们可以进行线上授课、提交作业，还能进行讨论和小组合作。

We mainly use Teams, which is our primary classroom tool. Through it, we can attend online classes, submit assignments, and also have discussions and group collaborations.

[00:31:22] YS:那你觉得使用 Teams 这样的工具有没有给你带来一些特别的便利？

Do you think using a tool like Teams has brought you any particular conveniences?

[00:31:35] S1:还是在老师上课的录屏功能上吧，这对我帮助特别大。如果有时候课堂上没跟上进度，我就会回看录屏，反复学习不懂的地方。

Mostly in the recorded lecture feature. It’s been really helpful for me. If I fall behind during the class, I can rewatch the recording and review the parts I didn’t understand.

[00:32:55] YS：那如果我们把线上和面对面的教学做个对比，你觉得在线教育有什么优势和劣势呢？

So, if we compare online and face-to-face teaching, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of online education?

[00:33:06] S1：在线教育的优势主要在于灵活性和便利性。像我刚才提到的录屏功能，在我听不懂的时候，真的帮了大忙。而且线上学习可以节省很多时间，比如不用赶路、通勤。不过，面对面交流还是比线上更自然和有效。在线上，有时讨论的深度会差一些，特别是一些即时反馈和互动会慢很多，可能会影响到学习的效果。

The main advantages of online education are its flexibility and convenience. As I mentioned, the recording feature really helps when I don't understand something. Also, online learning saves a lot of time, like commuting. However, face-to-face interaction is still more natural and effective. Online, discussions are sometimes less in-depth, and real-time feedback and interaction can be slower, which might affect the learning experience.

[00:35:56] YS：那确实，特别是互动上可能会有一些滞后。那在你学习的这个专业领域——数字媒体艺术，在线学习的资源对你有哪些特别的帮助和挑战呢？

That's true, especially in terms of interaction. In your specific field—Digital Media Art—what are the particular benefits and challenges of online learning resources?

[00:37:49] S1：首先,我认为在线学习资源能够为我们提供大量学习资料和资源。众所周知,数字媒体艺术在很大程度上依赖于各种技术和创意的结合,而在线学习平台上有各种教学视频、实践项目、软件工具教程等,这使我们的学习选择更加多样化,也更容易找到适合自己的学习路径。其次,在线学习还使我们的学习更加灵活。有时学习会受到时间和地点的限制,但通过在线学习,我可以随时随地学习,

根据自己的节奏和兴趣安排学习时间,学习不再受时间和地点的限制,更加方便。因为是线上课，学校还会给我们权限访问一些本来应该收费的互联网资源，对我们这个专业帮助挺大的。我们随时可以查阅各种教程、设计案例和最新的设计趋势，这些都是在线上轻松获取的。但是，也有一些局限，尤其是在需要实时操作的时候。很多设计软件的操作,需要老师的当场指导,像网络延迟或者设备问题,有时候就会影响效率，线上教学不如线下那么顺畅。

First of all, I think online learning resources can provide us with a huge amount of learning materials and resources. As you know, digital media art relies a lot on the combination of various technologies and creativity, and online learning platforms have a variety of teaching videos, hands-on projects, tutorials on software tools and so on, which makes our learning choices more diversified and makes it easier for us to find a suitable learning path for ourselves. Secondly, online learning also makes our learning more flexible. Sometimes learning may be limited by time and place, but through online learning, I can study anytime and anywhere, and arrange my study time according to my own pace and interest, so that learning is no longer limited by time and place, which is more convenient. Since it’s online, the school also gives us access to resources that would normally be paid for, which is very helpful for our field. We can easily access tutorials, design cases, and the latest design trends online. However, there are limitations, especially when real-time operations are needed. Many design software tasks require live guidance from teachers, and issues like internet delays or equipment problems can sometimes impact efficiency. Online teaching isn't as smooth as face-to-face for these tasks.

[00:40:19] YS：好的，最后一个问题，那在这种教学模式的转变中，你觉得你的学习内容和方式发生了什么变化吗？这些变化对你的学习效果有没有带来明显的影响？

Okay, the last question. With this transition in teaching mode, have you noticed any changes in your course content or methods? Have these changes had a noticeable impact on your learning outcomes?

[00:42:36] S1：学习内容其实没有太大变化，课程大纲和任务设置都和线下类似。但学习方式变了很多，尤其是在交流和合作上。以前在教室里有更多的面对面讨论，而现在我们依赖在线工具进行沟通，像团队合作和项目讨论，线上方式虽然方便，但效果还是不如面对面的交流那样直接。尤其是在需要动手实践和创意表达的时候，面对面的沟通确实更有效。

The course content hasn't changed much—the syllabus and assignments are similar to the offline classes. But the learning methods have changed a lot, especially in terms of communication and collaboration. We used to have more face-to-face discussions in the classroom, but now we rely on online tools for communication, like team collaborations and project discussions. While online methods are convenient, they aren't as direct or effective as face-to-face interaction. This is especially true when it comes to hands-on practice and creative expression, where in-person communication is much more effective.

[00:45:07] YS：好的，今天的访谈就到这里，非常感谢你分享了这么多宝贵的感受，这对我的研究非常有帮助。感谢你抽出时间来参加。

Alright, that concludes today's interview. Thank you so much for sharing all these valuable insights, they've been very helpful for my research. I really appreciate you taking the time to participate.

[00:47:20] S1：不客气，也很高兴能和你分享这些。

You're welcome, I'm also happy to share this with you.

Sample 2: Faculty Member 1 (Karen)

Date: 7th November 2022

Online tool: Microsoft Teams

Duration: 1 hour 06 minutes 08 seconds

Language of interview: English

[00:00:01] Yuhong Song (YS): Thank you so much for taking the time to join me today for this interview. I'm really interested in hearing more about your experiences. Let's start with your role in the Sino-UK partnership teaching project. Could you share what major you teach in this program?

[00:00:37] Faculty member 1 (FM1): Sure, the primary area I focus on is digital media arts. It's about aligning the required modules with both the Chinese and British Teaching Standards, so we make sure the curriculum fits within the expectations of both educational systems.

[00:00:52] YS: That sounds like an interesting balance to strike between the two systems. Could you expand a little more on how you go about aligning both standards in your teaching?

[00:01:25] FM1: Yeah, absolutely. It's a bit of a challenge, honestly. You have to consider the academic expectations from both sides and figure out how to make them work together. For example, certain technical skills are emphasized more in one system, while the creative process might be given more weight in the other. Finding that balance is key to meeting both sets of standards.

[00:02:19] YS: I see. That makes sense. Now, what grade levels are you currently responsible for?

[00:02:28] FM1: Right now, I'm mostly teaching final-year undergraduate

students. These are the students who typically transfer to the UK-based university to complete their studies. But, because of the pandemic, all the courses this year are being delivered online.

[00:03:01] YS: That must have been a big transition for both you and the students. Can you tell me how long you've been teaching online and what that process has been like for you?

[00:03:27] FM1: Well, I actually started teaching online back in 2015 or 2016 as part of a program in Malaysia. So, I had some experience going into it, but the pandemic definitely accelerated things. It's been a learning curve for everyone. Adapting to different modes of communication has been key, and that experience from Malaysia helped when I started teaching fully online during the pandemic.

[00:04:10] YS: That's great that you had some prior experience. You mentioned different modes of communication—could you give a specific example of what you mean by that and how you apply it in your current teaching?

[00:04:41] FM1: Sure, for example, when teaching in person, you rely on body language and visual cues to engage students. Online, you need to adapt that to written communication, or even voice tone, to make sure the message comes across. Platforms like Microsoft Teams have been helpful, but there's still that adjustment in how you present and explain material without being physically present.

[00:05:11] YS: That's an interesting challenge. Now, shifting gears a little, in the context of Chinese and British cultures, what do you think are the key differences in how art and design are taught? How have these differences affected your teaching approach?

[00:05:45] FM1: Ah, that's a good question. In China, the focus seems to be more on perfecting techniques and achieving very specific outcomes. There's a lot of emphasis on mastering high-level technologies and producing aesthetically refined work. It’s very structured and academically driven—students often aim for perfection quickly. In contrast, in the UK, we emphasize the process of creation more than the final outcome. It’s more about exploration, reflection, and trial-and-error learning. There's a strong focus on developing individual expression and creativity.

[00:06:35] YS: That’s fascinating. So, with that difference in focus—on perfection in China and experimentation in the UK—how do you adapt your teaching to meet the expectations of both?

[00:06:55] FM1: It’s about finding a balance, really. I try to introduce the idea that learning is a process, not just about reaching an outcome. In China, students are used to working quickly towards perfection, but I encourage them to slow down, reflect, and experiment. Peer feedback, for instance, becomes an important part of that process. They learn that it’s okay if their work isn’t perfect right away, and that the journey of discovery is just as valuable. In the context of the Sino-British joint programme, we try to combine the strengths of these two educational models. By fusing the UK's creativity-driven educational approach with China's technology application orientation, we have designed a curriculum system that aims to develop students' technological proficiency as well as their creative vision. For example, students are encouraged to utilise technology to create works of personal expression, while their feasibility and effectiveness in practical application must also be considered. Such teaching strategies not only enhance students' employability, but also stimulate their interest and ability to explore new areas of digital media arts.

[00:08:22] YS: I see, so it's really about shifting the focus to the learning journey rather than just the final product. Have you used any specific methods to help students adapt to this approach and understand the course content more deeply?

[00:08:51] FM1: Yes, absolutely. One of the main strategies I use is creating a strong sense of community and shared objectives within the classroom. This helps students feel more comfortable engaging with the material and each other. The UK system, for example, places a lot of emphasis on reflection and discussion. So, I make sure that these elements are part of the learning experience. It helps students not just understand the content better, but also to see value in the process of learning itself. It's definitely a challenge, but I try to bridge that gap by emphasizing the value of both approaches. For example, I encourage Chinese students to slow down and reflect more on their creative process, while also helping UK students refine their technical skills. Peer feedback is a big part of that—it helps them learn from each other's strengths.

[00:10:02] YS: That sounds like a great way to balance the two. You mentioned reflection—have you found that providing opportunities for reflection and discussion helps students gain a deeper understanding of the course material?

[00:10:20] FM1: Yes, absolutely. Reflection doesn't come naturally to all students, especially those accustomed to more structured systems. Exactly. I think it's one of those things that requires patience. It also ties back to cultural differences in the expectations of what a teacher does and how things are delivered. It can only happen gradually, over time, as you build a sense of trust and students become, how should I put it, more talkative rather than just typing responses. What we do is develop this new expectation of skill over time. As you're likely aware, one of the main aspects of what we focus on is reflection—on what students have learned. The written element requires them to complete

a written analysis at the end of each module, reflecting on what went well, what didn’t, and what they plan to do differently in the future.

[00:13:00] YS: I imagine it takes some time for students to feel comfortable with that. Do you find that online teaching affects how students understand the course content compared to in-person teaching?

[00:13:17] FM1: I think that online teaching does affect students' understanding of the course content. One key factor is how communication takes place. When we first transitioned to online delivery, the university explored various approaches to deliver content effectively. The main challenge is ensuring that both teachers and students have accessible communication channels. In an online setting, the lack of face-to-face interaction can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, as non-verbal cues are missing. However, if these communication channels are used well, they can still support students' understanding by providing platforms for questions and discussions.

[00:15:00] YS: Has online education impacted students' knowledge growth or their ability to apply it both inside and outside the learning environment?

[00:16:14] FM1: I think what has had the most impact on students is the ability to engage in learning both in the classroom and outside of it, thanks to the flexibility and accessibility of remote teaching tools. For example, the use of Microsoft Teams as the main platform has allowed students not only to access lectures but also to use other university facilities like the library. This has enhanced their learning experience significantly by integrating both academic resources and practical learning tools. Moreover, the orientation and exploration modules, which initially involved physical visits and workshops, have been adapted into research-driven briefs for online learning. This change has made it possible for students to engage deeply with the content, despite

the absence of in-person sessions. Additionally, students have become more reflective and have developed the ability to articulate their learning processes, especially through written analyses that they submit at the end of each module, detailing what went well, what didn't, and how they plan to improve.

[00:19:21] YS: That's a great observation. Speaking of online tools, which platforms do you usually use to stay in touch with students, and how do you find using them?

[00:20:30] FM1: I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to communicate. Initially, I was not comfortable using WeChat, but over time, I have found it to be not only popular, but also exceptionally powerful and perfect for quick, informal communication. I often use it to answer students' immediate questions or send some course-related notifications and reminders. We used WeChat because we know students are very familiar with it, especially at a low level of study. And we used VooV because they felt confident with it. And then over time we grafted in all kinds of Blackboard-based elements to it. What seems to work best at the moment, even though it's got some restrictions, is Teams. The restrictions with Teams include occasional limitations with bandwidth during video calls, which can cause lag or connection drops, particularly for students or colleagues in regions with weaker internet infrastructure. Another constraint is that while Teams works well for meetings and collaboration, it doesn't always integrate seamlessly with all external apps, which can make sharing certain types of content or collaborating on external platforms more difficult. There are also user interface challenges, where participants may find it harder to navigate compared to simpler communication apps like WeChat, especially for non-technical users.

[00:26:22] YS: It sounds like there are pros and cons to each tool. How do you find the interaction with students in an online setting compared to face-to-face

learning?

[00:26:30] FM1: In terms of online teaching and the dynamics with both colleagues and students, there has definitely been a lot of adaptation. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, we had to respond quickly. Teaching online did make me feel really a bit detached from my students and colleagues. After all, the lack of face-to-face interaction meant that many non-verbal communication signals, such as body language and facial expressions, could not be conveyed through the screen. However, over time, we are all adapting to this new way of communicating. I try my best to bridge the gap created by this physical distance through regular video conferencing and online socialising. One of the main challenges, particularly with Chinese students, is their hesitancy to engage in face-to-face communication online. Many students prefer not to use their cameras, which makes it harder to read body language and facial expressions—something that is very important in communication. There's also a cultural element to this; students are often concerned about how they present themselves on camera and are hesitant to embarrass themselves in front of others. Despite these challenges, online teaching has also allowed for more interaction in some cases. For instance, in the first year of online teaching, students were highly dedicated and engaged because everyone was grounded by the pandemic, so we all felt a shared sense of responsibility and commitment. The transition to online education has also had its benefits, such as eliminating travel time, which gives me more time to prepare and engage with students. Online teaching has required both students and staff to adjust, but it has also brought certain advantages, like increased flexibility and the ability to include guest speakers more easily.

[00:31:40] YS: That makes sense—online platforms do open up new possibilities, like bringing in guest speakers. Moving beyond the classroom, what do you think are the most attractive aspects of the British social and

cultural environment for Chinese students?

[00:32:09] FM1: I think there are several factors. Students are curious, and they want to experience the UK's approach to teaching and learning. Honestly, there's also a sense of excitement and curiosity about going to a different place. What we try to do when students are with us is recognize this and combine academic learning with a social aspect as well. I want students to experience different facets of the UK, and, in fact, in the first year, students even had a trip to Paris or Florence—if it hadn't been for the pandemic, believe it or not. We're highly aware of the academic side, but we also value that sense of curiosity, which, in many cases, provides a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

[00:34:28] YS: That must have been such an enriching experience for them. Have you taken any specific measures to help students adapt to the British cultural environment, and have you noticed any impact on their learning outcomes?

[00:35:01] FM1: Okay, I believe one of the main barriers for students adapting to the British cultural environment is still language. There's often hesitancy around it. While tools like IELTS are used to measure English ability in speaking, writing, and reading, they can feel a bit mechanical. However, they do provide a baseline for language skills. I've noticed that when students gain confidence in their language abilities, they become much more engaged in discussions and debates, which are essential aspects of UK education. To help students adapt, I encourage them to test their ideas through open discussions and debates. This approach not only helps them become more comfortable with the language but also aligns with the British educational focus on critical thinking and dialogue. As a result, their confidence grows, and their overall learning outcomes improve as they actively participate in the learning process. I also have a strong focus on individual tutoring to help students with specific

problems in their learning through regular one-to-one meetings.

[00:37:10] YS: That's a great approach, encouraging students to build confidence through discussion. When interacting with Chinese students online, have you noticed any unique characteristics or challenges?

[00:37:22] FM1: Yeah, one of the unique characteristics I've noticed when interacting with Chinese students is their hesitancy to turn on their cameras during online classes, as I mentioned before. This might be due to cultural factors, as personal presentation is considered very important in China, and students may fear embarrassing themselves. Interestingly, during the first year of online classes, they were more willing to appear on camera, but over time, there has been a growing reluctance. The lack of visual communication can create challenges because body language and facial expressions play a key role in breaking down barriers in understanding formal language. This cautiousness in presenting themselves is something I've particularly observed. I'd like to say that, in China, personal presentation is considered very important.

[00:39:02] YS: I see, that's an important cultural consideration. In terms of improving students' understanding and satisfaction with the course, have you implemented any specific measures? And how effective have these been?

[00:40:11] FM1: Yes, we have. From the early stages, once we got settled with the students, the main thing was to establish a clear mode of communication and a structured routine. That was really important. We also started looking at different tools that could enhance the learning experience. At one point, I was really keen on developing a custom online platform. But creating something bespoke like that requires a lot of time and investment, so instead, we focused on giving students as much variety in the tools as we possibly could.
Even so, I've noticed that in some of our more technical-based undergraduate

courses, students don’t always engage with the tools we use. It’s not that they aren’t useful, but it seems like the students aren’t as interested as we’d expect them to be.

[00:43:32] YS: That’s really interesting. Can you elaborate on why you think students might not be engaging with those tools as much? Do you think it’s the tools themselves, or something else at play?

[00:44:00] FM1: I think part of it is that some of these tools are very technical, and not all students are comfortable with that level of complexity. They may feel a bit overwhelmed, or maybe the tools just don’t align well with their learning styles. We’ve tried to address that by offering variety—some tools are more interactive, others are straightforward—but even with the options, it can still be hard to capture everyone's interest.

[00:45:43] YS: It sounds like finding the right tools is a balancing act. What tools have you found to be the most effective in terms of your teaching?

[00:46:00] FM1: Well, initially we started with WeChat, because it’s something students are very familiar with. VooV was also introduced quite quickly in China for online face-to-face communication. But over time, we realized that Microsoft Teams worked best for us. Teams offers students access to university resources, like the library and research databases, and it integrates smoothly with our system. It’s also easier for the staff to use, especially those who regularly interact with students, since many of them are already familiar with Teams.

[00:47:32] YS: It seems like Teams offers a lot of advantages for both students and staff. Are there any challenges you’ve faced when using it?

[00:47:44] FM1: Yes, definitely. One challenge we’ve had with Teams is the

occasional bandwidth issue. Some students, particularly those in areas with weaker internet connections, have trouble with video calls—they experience lag or connection drops. It's also not always the most intuitive platform for students who aren't very tech-savvy, but overall, it's been our most reliable option.

[00:48:18] YS: It's good to hear that Teams has mostly worked well for you. Now, thinking more broadly, compared to face-to-face teaching, what do you see as the key advantages and disadvantages of online education?

[00:48:30] FM1: That's an interesting question. Honestly, now that we're moving out of the pandemic, there's a tendency for people to think we'll just go back to the way things were before. But I believe there have been a lot of lessons learned from online teaching, and I don't think we'll fully return to traditional in-classroom teaching. One advantage of online education is how much more accessible guest speakers are. It's so much easier to have someone appear online than to get them to travel to a physical location. And personally, it saves me about two hours a day, which I can spend preparing and engaging with students more effectively. On the downside, though, for hands-on subjects like fine arts, it's really hard to recreate the studio environment online. There's something about being in a studio, physically making things, working alongside other students—it's an experience that can't be fully replicated virtually.

[00:51:49] YS: That's a good point. Do you feel like the lack of that physical space has affected students' learning outcomes, particularly for more practical subjects?

[00:52:01] FM1: Yes, I think it has. For subjects like fine arts, the studio environment plays a big role in developing a sense of community and collaboration among students. It's not just about having access to materials, but

also about being in that creative space where ideas are exchanged and developed. Online, we miss out on some of that dynamic. There's also the issue of students hesitating to turn on their cameras, which means we lose the non-verbal communication—body language, facial expressions—that helps in breaking down barriers and fostering interaction.

[00:54:30] YS: That makes a lot of sense. Building that studio culture seems crucial. Speaking of challenges, specific to your field of teaching, what would you say are the biggest advantages and disadvantages of using online learning resources?

[00:56:23] FM1: The biggest advantage is the time saved—since neither the students nor the teachers need to travel, we end up spending more time focused on learning. Another advantage is that we can bring in guest speakers much more easily, as I mentioned earlier. However, when it comes to more practical or hands-on subjects like fine arts, it's hard to replicate the studio experience online. Students lose that sense of community, and working in isolation can be quite different from collaborating in a shared physical space. As I mentioned, the lack of body language and visual cues in online environments can also hinder communication, making it harder to build that collaborative spirit.

[00:59:05] YS: Right, that collaboration and community really seem to be key in subjects like fine arts. After switching to online teaching, did you find that your teaching content or methods needed to change? How did these changes impact the students' learning outcomes?

[01:02:02] FM1: Yes, we've definitely made adjustments. In some modules, we've actually developed more ambitious content. For example, students working with programming and coding—those types of subjects can be chaotic

in a physical classroom. But online, we've found ways to organize the process better. One of the significant changes was with the Orientation Exploration and Documentary module. Instead of students physically visiting locations, we encouraged them to use their imagination to envision the experience. That change sparked some really creative work, and I'd say it has positively impacted the students' learning outcomes.

[01:05:00] YS: That's really inspiring to hear. It sounds like despite the challenges, there have been some valuable benefits as well. Thank you so much for sharing these insights—it's been fascinating to hear how you've adapted to these changes.

[01:06:02] FM1: You're welcome, I'm glad I could share. It's been an interesting journey, and we've learned a lot along the way.

Appendix 8: Interview Coding Process

Open Coding Themes

Interview Transcript Text	Initial Category	Frequency
I feel that compared to the UK, Chinese education focuses on teaching students how to master the techniques of art and design software and how to apply these techniques in real business or competition cases, which is very result-orientated.	Education in China focuses on the mastery and application of technology	38
Education in China may be more focused on passing on traditional Chinese aesthetics, and the specific content of the curriculum focuses more on training in traditional Chinese art skills.	Education in China focuses on traditional aesthetic heritage and skill training	17
In contrast, Chinese curricula focus more on the development of practical skills and the teaching of industry standards. Courses tend to be centred around specific technical implementations.	Education in China focuses on practical functions	7
When I was in China, the education I received may have emphasised more on technique and tradition, and there may	Education in China lacks a sense of innovation	6

have been relatively less support for students' creativity and individual expression.		
Art resources in China may be relatively insufficient, for example, the number and quality of art colleges and museums may not be as abundant as in the UK. It feels like it will limit my exposure to a rich and diverse range of artworks and cultural activities.	Artistic resources in China are relatively insufficient	4
In China, because education may place more emphasis on technique and cultural heritage, there may be relatively little support for students' creativity and individual expression.	Education in China does not place enough emphasis on free expression	5
Art and design education in the UK is extremely focused on exploring creativity and encourages students to explore and experiment.	Education in the UK focuses on exploring creativity	8
Art and design education in the UK encourages creative thinking and personal expression, and as a result, British-educated students tend to be eclectic in their creations,	Education in the UK values personal expression	7

favouring the use of symbols, metaphors and abstract expressions to convey complex emotions and ideas.		
Art and design education in the UK encourages creative thinking and personal expression, and as a result, British-educated students tend to be eclectic in their creations, favouring the use of symbols, metaphors and abstract expressions to convey complex emotions and ideas.	Education in the UK encourages creative thinking	35
In the UK, students are educated with a greater emphasis on free innovation and practice, and they are more likely to solve problems through their own thinking and practice.	Education in the UK focuses on the development of autonomous practical skills	10
When studying online, the teachers from the UK would often introduce some international cases for discussion, whereas the Chinese teachers were less likely to give us some international design cases.	Education in the UK is excellent at making internationalised case introductions	7

Curriculums in the UK often have a strong focus on interdisciplinary integration, with design disciplines combining not only art history and theory, but also often intersecting with fields such as technology, architecture and even the social sciences.	The curriculum in the UK focuses on interdisciplinary integration	7
Cultural differences between the UK and China significantly affect the way students learn and create. Understanding and respecting these differences can help us to better communicate and co-operate in facilitating international collaborative projects.	Cultural differences between the UK and China affect the way students learn and create	7
I have to blend both Chinese and British thinking in my work, being creative but not losing the technical basis.	Creative awareness and technology base	5
There are real differences in students' perceptions of art subjects in different cultural contexts. China and the UK have different histories, traditions and aesthetic concepts in the field of fashion	Cultural differences between Chinese and English influence the understanding of expertise	3

design, which directly affects students' perceptions and understanding of what they are learning.		
I feel that online education focuses more on the transfer of basic knowledge and skills and the curriculum is more systematic and structured. Students are required to complete their work within a defined scope, with more emphasis on the practice and application of technology. There is also more focus on standardised teaching and assessment.	Application of expertise skills	5
The biggest impact has been that I have had more time to study independently and have been able to choose what to study based on my interests and needs.	Autonomy of learning	28
Initially I wasn't comfortable using WeChat, but over time I realised that not only is WeChat popular, but it's also exceptionally powerful and perfect for quick, informal	This online tool has a high penetration rate	4

communication		
When choosing these tools, I consider mainly functionality followed by user-friendliness and security.	This online tool is versatile	12
I often use it to answer immediate questions from students or to send some course-related notifications and tips.	This online tool is instantaneous	6
WeChat's group chat feature also makes it easy to communicate with the entire class, enabling instant sharing of information and resources.	The online tool is convenient	10
E-mail is the primary means of transmitting official documents and important notices, maintaining professionalism and the official nature of the record.	This online tool is well specialised	6
E-mail is the primary means of transmitting official documents and important notices, maintaining professionalism and the official nature of the record.	This online tool is suitable for formal occasions	4

Initially I wasn't comfortable using WeChat, but over time I realised that not only is WeChat popular, but it's also exceptionally powerful and perfect for quick, informal communication.	The online tool is suitable for informal settings	7
From a teacher's perspective, I chose to use these online tools mainly because of their functionality and stability, as well as students' habits and ease of use.	This online tool is ease of use	8
I think the Zoom excels in video and audio quality and stability and is perfect for large scale lectures and seminars.	This online tool is stable	10
The security of Teams is relatively good as it can be linked with Microsoft and can store my study materials well through the cloud.	This online tool is well secured	5
I enjoy getting to know the attitudes and needs of students towards learning in the daily communication and interactions, which motivates me to continuously improve my teaching methods.	Optimising teaching in social interaction	5

I have noticed that some Chinese students may be slightly hesitant and lack confidence in expressing their ideas. Therefore, I will actively encourage them to participate in class discussions and provide support and guidance to help them build up their self-confidence and show their full potential.	Students lack self-confidence	6
Chinese students in the Sino-UK Partnership Project are particularly interested in being able to gain an international perspective. This is evident in their active participation in discussions and their curiosity about different cultural perspectives. For example, these students are always particularly active when it comes to comparing design practices in different countries during lectures. They not only ask questions, but also try to analyse issues from different cultural perspectives, trying to understand the cultural logic	Stimulate cultural curiosity	5

behind each design choice.		
I feel like when I interact with the British teacher, I feel like there is a direct disconnect between me only because we don't speak the same language.	There is a language barrier between students and British teachers	5
Differences in cultural and educational environments have caused me to encounter many limitations and challenges in making LGBTQ-related art in China.	There is a cultural difference barrier between China and the UK	4
I have noticed that some students may have a personality shyness. This shyness leads to differences in their learning abilities and directly affects their performance and participation in the classroom. This shyness may be more pronounced in an English-medium environment, especially when interacting with foreign peers and teachers. These students may be less willing to express themselves or ask questions, and may even choose to remain silent and	Personality leads to differences in learning ability	3

unwilling to interact with others.		
With the online format, I feel like I actually became closer to my teachers and classmates because I was bored at home by myself.	The online format brings teachers and students closer together	13
Over time, I have gradually adapted to the online way of working and have maintained close contact through various communication tools. Although it can't replace the intimacy of offline, online we are still able to share experiences, solve problems, and even explore new teaching methods and resources together, and this feeling of being together is similar to offline to some extent.	The feeling of learning online is similar to offline	7
Especially with new students that I had not directly taught before, the lack of physical interaction really made our relationship feel more distant.	The online format alienates teachers and students even more	22
I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to communicate.	WeChat	32
I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to	Email	26

communicate.		
I mainly use WeChat, email and Microsoft Teams to communicate.	Microsoft Teams	26
I mainly use Voov and Microsoft Teams for online teaching.	Voov or Tencent Conference	22
I've used a variety of online tools, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Tencent Meetings.	Zoom	18
The software I use most often include WeChat, Dingtalk, Feishu, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Tencent Meeting and so on. These software are not only convenient, but also feature-rich to meet our different communication needs.	Feishu	3
The software I use most often include WeChat, Dingtalk, Feishu, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Tencent Meeting and so on. These softwares are not only convenient, but also feature-rich to meet our different communication needs.	Dingtalk	3
I have used a variety of online software including WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet.	WhatsApp	5

I have used a variety of online software including WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet.	Google Meet	4
In order to help students better grasp what they are learning, I have tried a variety of teaching methods. One of them is the case-based teaching, which allows students to understand the whole process from the beginning to the completion of a project by analysing a specific digital media project.	Case-based teaching	8
I have been exploring and practising a variety of teaching methods in order to help students better grasp the content. One method that has proven to be very effective online is Flipped Classroom, where students can learn before class by watching video lectures, listening to podcasts, reading feature-enhanced e-books, or discussing with other students on the web. This flexible learning approach allows students to access the	Flipped Classroom	6

materials they need at any time, and the pace of mastery is up to them. And in the online classroom, the teacher is no longer just a transmitter of information, but plays a supervisory and facilitating role. Once students have learnt the basics before class, they can engage in more in-depth discussion, practice and project collaboration within the limited online lecture time.		
I also encourage students to participate in group work s to apply their technical and theoretical knowledge through practice.	Group work	10
I've tried a lot of things to get a quicker grasp of what I'm learning. For example, I often go through online tutorials and videos and then try to do it myself.	Self-directed learning	3
In addition, I regularly organise study tutorials and practical activities to help students consolidate and apply what they have learnt, and to	Tutorial learning	3

improve their academic performance and ability.		
Reflection or discussion is one of the key aspects of my classroom. I encourage students to ask questions, share ideas, and engage in in-depth discussions with them. Through this interaction, students can not only think about issues from different perspectives, but also draw on the insights of others to refine their understanding. Such exchanges not only promote students' in-depth understanding of the content, but also develop their critical thinking and expression skills.	Critical Thinking	5
This cross-cultural co-operation experience not only improved my teamwork skills, but also taught me how to communicate effectively in a diverse work environment.	Communication skills	3
I will encourage students to participate in class discussions and group projects to increase their engagement and co-	Teamwork	8

operation.		
I encourage students to be involved in the design and evaluation of the course to increase their sense of participation and responsibility.	A sense of participation and responsibility	3
My teachers tried to make up for the lack of hands-on practice through virtual simulations and video demonstrations, but there is still a gap between this approach and actual practice. In addition, our teachers have paid more attention to developing our comprehensive learning abilities, including improving our self-learning ability and research and design skills.	Comprehensive learning competencies	3
I organise regular seminars and workshops in which not only the course content is discussed, but also current topical issues and latest trends in the field of digital media art are covered.	Seminar and workshop	7
I also have a strong focus on individual tutoring, helping students with specific problems in their studies through regular	Individual tutorial	3

one-on-one meetings.		
I use interactive learning tools and gamified teaching techniques to increase classroom interaction and student engagement.	Interactive learning session	8
I frequently conduct course feedback surveys to gather student input on teaching methods and content, and then make adjustments based on that feedback.	Course Feedback Survey	8
In the teaching process, I pay special attention to practice and feedback sessions.	Practical project	7
These attempts not only increase the interactivity of the course, but also improve the students' ability to understand and apply complex concepts.	Course interactivity	3
These attempts not only increase the interactivity of the course, but also improve the students' ability to understand and apply complex concepts.	Knowledge comprehension and application skills	8
Students were encouraged to put forward their own ideas and critically analyse the work of others, an interaction that not	Presentation and debating skills	3

only enhanced their understanding of professional knowledge but also honed their presentation and debating skills.		
I will also continue to improve the curriculum and teaching resources to enrich the teaching content and enhance the quality of teaching.	Curriculum and teaching resources	3
Digital platforms allow teachers to enhance teaching and learning with rich multimedia resources, such as videos, interactive simulations and online collaboration tools, which can increase engagement and efficiency in learning.	Student Engagement	4
Online learning has given me more freedom to organise my study time. But it has also made me more dependent on online resources.	Internet Resources	7
Distance learning drives students to rely more on digital tools and software, which is a double-edged sword in the discipline of digital media art	Digital tools and software	3

and design.		
Distance learning relies heavily on students' self-discipline and active learning attitudes. In the field of digital media arts, this means that students need to be not only independent in their technical endeavours, but also consistently self-motivated in the creative generation process. Due to the lack of physical interaction, students must create a working environment at home that is conducive to creativity and production, which can be a major challenge for students who are accustomed to being inspired in a studio environment through teamwork and direct instructor guidance.	Self-discipline of students	8
In the distance learning method, I believe that the greatest impact on my intellectual growth and development has been the increase in self-learning and the strengthening of my time management skills.	Time management skills	4

The online approach sometimes reduces the opportunity for impromptu interaction with professors and classmates, and therefore relies heavily on the educator's ability to interact and coordinate online.	Interaction and coordination skills	6
I have noticed an increased student demand for visual stimulation and interactivity. As a result, I have focused more of my course content on multimedia materials, including video presentations, online games, and virtual exhibitions. These visually rich materials not only capture students' attention, but also better help them understand the process and techniques of art making.	Increased demand for visual stimulation and interactivity	3
I have emphasised practical and project-driven learning. In an online environment, students often need more hands-on opportunities to consolidate what they have learnt and place a greater emphasis on projects that can	Emphasis is placed on hands-on and project-driven learning	4

be directly applied to real-world situations. I have therefore added more practical projects and provided detailed online guidance and support to ensure that students are able to successfully complete their work and make progress.		
I have spent a lot of time optimising the use of online resources and tools. Through active exploration and experimentation, I have found many online software, virtual gallery platforms and other tools suitable for teaching digital media art, which can not only enrich classroom teaching content, but also stimulate students' creativity and imagination.	Optimise the use of online resources and tools	11
I have strengthened the supervision and guidance of students' learning process, and kept abreast of students' learning through online quizzes and homework assignments, so that I can make timely adjustments to my teaching	Enhance student learning supervision and mentoring	4

strategies and methods in order to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning experience. Overall, although online teaching methods are different from traditional teaching methods, I will try my best to maintain the richness and quality of the teaching content to provide students with a better learning experience and room for growth.		
I have added content and activities that are compatible with online teaching, such as designing online group discussions and online practical projects to enrich the content and improve the effectiveness of teaching.	Guarantee the richness and quality of teaching and learning	5
Online resources can make use of massive multimedia technology, such as pictures, video and audio, to vividly display works of art and historical documents, making learning more vivid and interesting, and thus allowing students to have an	Exposure to massive art resources and technology	53

understanding of cross-cultural art to generate diversity.		
Online resources can make use of massive multimedia technology, such as pictures, video and audio, to vividly display works of art and historical documents, making learning more vivid and interesting, and thus allowing students to have an understanding of cross-cultural art to generate diversity.	Deepen students' understanding of cross-cultural artistic diversity	3
Distance learning has also inspired students to dig deeper into independent learning resources. They began to actively search for and utilise online tutorials, free courses and open-source software to enhance their skills.	Strengthening capacity to apply digital tools	10
The online approach to teaching and learning has had a number of impacts on students' perceptions, perhaps the most obvious of which is for increased autonomy and independence in learning.	Improvement of student's independent learning skills	34

One of the unique advantages I see in online education over face-to-face instruction is flexibility and convenience.	Instructional flexibility and accessibility	51
Online teaching also emphasises interaction and collaboration between students and teachers, which helps to develop students' teamwork and communication skills.	Develop co-operation and communication skills	8
In addition, online education can promote cross-cultural communication and co-operation among students. By communicating and co-operating with classmates from different countries and regions, students can broaden their horizons and increase their understanding of and respect for different cultures.	Promote intercultural exchange and cooperation	3
In the distance learning approach, I think the biggest impact is in the development of students' independent learning skills and critical thinking.	Develop critical thinking and creative skills	3
This approach can also lead to difficulties in applying knowledge as there is a lack of	Lack of practical application and technical experience	61

hands-on practice and direct interaction between peers, so I often organise online practical activities and virtual team projects to enhance students' hands-on skills and teamwork experience.		
The lack of face-to-face critique and feedback sessions may also affect the refinement and development of students' skills.	Lack of face-to-face technical guidance	11
Due to the flexibility and convenience of online teaching, students may be more susceptible to external distractions, resulting in less effective learning.	Reduced learning efficiency	13
In addition, due to the flexibility and convenience of online teaching, students may be more susceptible to external distractions, resulting in less effective learning.	Susceptible to outside interference	55
Limitations of technical equipment and network environment may affect teaching effectiveness and learning experience.	Limited and unstable network environment	18

Both China and the UK have a long history of art and a rich cultural heritage, which provides students with a wide range of learning spaces and sources of inspiration.	Rich in cultural heritage and resources	18
The UK's open and inclusive educational climate and diverse teaching methods allow students to express and explore their artistic talents and interests more freely.	Innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the UK	12
The UK is ideally located and easily accessible, making it easy for students to travel around the world to explore inspirations and cultures that many Chinese students can only dream of.	The UK is strategically located	6
Art education in the UK focuses a lot on developing students' creative skills and critical thinking, which is very appealing to me.	The UK focuses on developing critical thinking	8
The UK has a well-developed art industry and there is a high demand for art professionals in China. This feature enables students who have been	Wide range of employment opportunities and development platforms	29

educated in the Sino- UK partnership teaching project to have broader employment opportunities and development platforms.		
The UK's education system emphasises the development of students' personalities and creativity, which is different from China's education philosophy and gives Chinese students more freedom and space for development.	Focus on personality development and fostering creativity	12
Art and design education in the UK is very popular among Chinese students, mainly because of its long history and quality of education.	The quality of education in the UK is high	4
The social and cultural openness and diversity of the UK gives me a high degree of creative freedom.	Socio-cultural openness and pluralism	9
My main area of responsibility for teaching Art and Design covers a huge breadth of areas including digital image manipulation, interaction design, user experience design, animation production,	Wide range of areas of pathways	11

video game design and virtual reality. Students can choose from a variety of pathways to design, such as: graphic design, animation, photography and pure art.		
Our programme gives students the opportunity for interdisciplinary learning such as many electives. The aim is to teach students how to use a wide range of techniques to create innovative works of art, which includes the whole process from concept development to technical realisation.	Interdisciplinary education	10
My subject explores the development of human artistic creation, the artistic styles of different periods, and the cultural, historical and social contexts behind works of art.	Explore different artistic styles	3
My specialisation focuses on how space, light and materials can be used to create aesthetic values in environments that transcend international and cultural boundaries.	Aesthetic values across international and cultural boundaries	6

Our main concern is to develop our students' international cutting-edge artistic skills through space, light and materials.	Developing international cutting-edge artistic skills	4
This major focuses on learning the skills to convey messages and emotions through different cultures and languages.	Techniques for conveying information and emotions across cultural constraints	4
In the course, I often introduce some real-life project examples so that students can really feel the close connection between design and cross-cultural life.	Experience design and intercultural life connectivity	3
I will use more visual aids such as diagrams, videos and animations in my course design, these can help students to better understand the lectures.	Visual assistive material support	8
I also encourage students to participate in language tutoring classes and one-on-one interactions with native English-speaking classmates, all of which can help them improve their listening and speaking skills in English.	International Exchange and Interaction	10

I will provide additional language support such as after-school tutoring and online resources to help students improve their English.	Additional language tutoring	10
I will use plain and simple English in my lessons and avoid complex terms or slang as much as possible until they have reached the next level of language proficiency.	Simplicity of language use	6
Teachers have tried increasing the time for online Q&A, providing links to additional resources and something else.	Additional academic support	7
Engaging with Chinese students has been very enjoyable and fulfilling. Often passionate and curious about learning, these students bring different perspectives and fresh ideas, which greatly enrich the depth of classroom discussions.	Different perspectives and unique ideas	6
I hope I can improve students' satisfaction with the teaching quality and mastery of learning content of online teaching in the future. Therefore, I need to	Improvement of teaching methods	6

continuously adjust and improve my teaching content and methods, and target and optimise them according to students' feedback and needs.		
I have also noticed that some Chinese students may be slightly hesitant and lack confidence in expressing their ideas. Therefore, I will actively encourage them to participate in class discussions and provide support and guidance to help them build up their self-confidence and show their full potential.	To stimulate the potential of students	3
I hope that teachers can add some contents and activities compatible with online teaching, such as designing online group discussions and online practical projects, in order to enrich the contents and improve the effectiveness of teaching.	Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness	4
I hope that teachers can strengthen the supervision and guidance of students' learning process, for example, online	Enriching the learning experience	3

quizzes can be used to keep abreast of students' learning and adjust teaching strategies and methods in time to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning experience.		

Axial Coding Themes

Main Category	Subcategory	Meaning of Category
The cognition of education in China	➢ Education in China focuses on the mastery and application of technology ➢ Education in China focuses on traditional aesthetic heritage and skill training ➢ Education in China focuses on practical functions ➢ Education in China lacks a sense of innovation ➢ Artistic resources in China are relatively insufficient ➢ Education in China does not place enough	➢ China's education system emphasises the development of students' practical and technical application skills. ➢ Education in China attaches importance to the inheritance of traditional aesthetics, and students also need to master relevant art and design techniques through extensive training. ➢ Education in China tends to fulfil actual job requirements. ➢ Education in China favours traditional teaching methods and sometimes neglects to emphasise the importance of innovation. ➢ Arts resources in China may be relatively insufficient, e.g. the number and quality of art colleges and museums

	emphasis on free expression	are not as abundant as in the UK. ➢ As the Chinese education system is relatively centralised and standardised, it emphasises a uniform syllabus and examination standards. Under this system, students' learning and expression often need to follow established standards and norms, limiting the space for free expression.
The cognition of education in the UK	➢ Education in the UK focuses on exploring creativity ➢ Education in the UK values personal expression ➢ Education in the UK encourages creative thinking ➢ Education in the UK focuses on the	➢ Education in the UK focuses on exploring creativity and encourages students to explore and practise. ➢ Education in the UK is focussed on encouraging individual student expression and exploring ways of thinking that are constantly innovative. ➢ Education in the UK attaches importance to encouraging students to

	development of autonomous practical skills ➢ Education in the UK is excellent at making internationalised case introductions ➢ The curriculum in the UK focuses on interdisciplinary integration	think independently and innovate, and in the process of education not only the transmission of knowledge, but also emphasises the cultivation of problem-solving ability and innovative spirit. ➢ Education system in the UK emphasises the development of independent learning and practical skills, and education focuses on interaction and participation, encouraging students to learn through exploration and practice. ➢ The education system in the UK emphasises the development of a global outlook, with an educational philosophy that stresses international understanding and cross-cultural communication. ➢ Education philosophy in the UK emphasises the development of

		interdisciplinary thinking skills and encourages students to be able to combine knowledge and methods from different disciplines to solve complex real-life problems.
The cognition of Sino-UK partnership education	➢ Cultural differences between the UK and China affect the way students learn and create ➢ Creative awareness and technology base ➢ Cultural differences between Chinese and English influence the understanding of expertise ➢ Application of expertise skills ➢ Autonomy of	➢ Chinese students need to understand and respect the cultural differences between the UK and China, adapt to different learning styles, and adopt creative methods that meet the educational needs of both countries. ➢ Students need to integrate the two kinds of thinking in the process of Sino-British co-operative education, which is both innovative and does not neglect the development of basic skills. ➢ The history, culture and social values of China and the UK are relatively different, thus affecting

	learning	students' knowledge and understanding of the same subject in different contexts in China and the UK. ➢ Online education focuses more on the systematic transfer and standardised assessment of basic knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on students completing their work and applying their professional skills within the prescribed limits. ➢ Online education requires students to become more autonomous and independent, and need to be more proactive in managing and taking control of their learning process.
Reasons for choosing a certain online tool	➢ This online tool has a high penetration rate ➢ This online tool is versatile ➢ This online tool	➢ This online tool has a high penetration rate, which makes it an ideal online communication tool in Sino-British collaborative teaching programs.

	is instantaneous ➢ The online tool is convenient ➢ This online tool is well specialised ➢ This online tool is suitable for formal occasions ➢ The online tool is suitable for informal occasions ➢ This online tool is ease of use ➢ This online tool is stable ➢ This online tool is well secured	➢ This online tool is versatile and operable for a wide range of online education settings. ➢ This online tool is easy to use and very suitable for instant communication, users can send and receive messages anytime, anywhere. ➢ This online tool has excellent convenience and improves communication between students and teachers. ➢ This online tool has a strong specialisation and offers a range of features and services to meet the online educational needs of students and teachers. ➢ This online tool can be used in a wide range of formal situations due to its powerful features and high reliability. ➢ This online tool can be used in a wide range of informal situations due to

		its flexibility and ease of use. ➢ This online tool is simple, intuitive and easy to use, so even people who are new to online education can get started quickly. ➢ This online tool ensures that the user can enjoy a continuous, trouble-free operating experience during use. ➢ This online tool guarantees the security of the user during its use.
The social factor in education	➢ Optimising teaching in social interaction ➢ Students lack self-confidence ➢ Stimulate cultural curiosity ➢ There is a language barrier between students and British teachers ➢ There is a	➢ Improving teaching methods in contact with students can enhance the quality of education. ➢ Chinese students may be a little less confident in expressing their ideas. ➢ Encourage students to participate actively in discussions and stimulate their curiosity about different cultural perspectives. ➢ Language barriers can

	cultural difference barrier between China and the UK ➢ Personality leads to differences in learning ability	lead to poor communication between students and British teachers, which in turn affects teacher-student relationships and teaching effectiveness. ➢ The challenges of cultural differences in intercultural communication require participants to have intercultural communication sensitivity and adaptability in order to achieve effective and meaningful communication. ➢ There may be some differences in the academic performance of students with different personalities.
Intimate manifestations of online education	➢ The online format brings teachers and students closer together ➢ The feeling of learning online	➢ Online education has somehow enhanced the cohesion between teachers and students. ➢ In online education students and teachers are still able to maintain close

	is similar to offline ➢ The online format alienates teachers and students even more	contact. ➢ The lack of physical interaction in online education makes the relationship between students and teachers feel more distant.

The utilisation of online tools	➢ WeChat ➢ Email ➢ Microsoft Teams ➢ Voov or Tencent Conference ➢ Zoom ➢ Feishu ➢ Dingtalk ➢ WhatsApp ➢ Google Meet	➢ Online tools include WeChat. ➢ Online tools include Email. ➢ Online tools include Microsoft Teams. ➢ Online tools include Voov or Tencent Conference. ➢ Online tools include Zoom. ➢ Online tools include Feishu. ➢ Online tools include Dingtalk. ➢ Online tools include WhatsApp. ➢ Online tools include Google Meet.
Teaching methods	➢ Case-based teaching ➢ Flipped Classroom ➢ Group work	➢ To develop students' practical skills and intercultural

	➢ Self-directed learning ➢ Tutorial learning	understanding by analysing specific project examples. ➢ Students' active learning and creative thinking skills are strengthened by allowing them to learn the course content independently before discussing and practising it in the classroom. ➢ To develop students' collaborative skills and multiple perspectives in cross-cultural projects through team projects. ➢ To develop students' independent exploration and self-management skills through the provision of rich resources and flexible learning arrangements. ➢ Through personalised guidance and regular feedback, we help students to solve learning problems and enhance their professional skills.

Pedagogical focus	➢ Critical Thinking ➢ Communication skills ➢ Teamwork ➢ A sense of participation and responsibility ➢ Comprehensive learning competencies	➢ Students whose critical thinking needs to be systematically developed will be more likely to come up with unique insights and innovative solutions. ➢ Developing good presentation skills not only contributes to students' academic success, but also enhances their confidence and influence in social interactions. ➢ Students are expected to actively participate in teamwork to develop their collaboration, communication skills and problem-solving abilities. ➢ By enhancing students' sense of participation and responsibility, it can help students to develop positive learning attitudes, self-management skills and teamwork. ➢ The development of general competence is not only a reflection of the

		student's academic achievement but also contributes to the overall development of the student.
Teaching sessions	➢ Seminar and workshop ➢ Individual tutorial ➢ Interactive learning tools ➢ Course Feedback Survey ➢ Practical project	➢ Seminar and Workshop will be organised more often, which will provide students with rich and interactive learning opportunities. ➢ Help students with specific problems in their studies through one-on-one meetings. ➢ Interactive learning tools not only enhance the interest and attractiveness of the classroom, but also promote active participation, motivation and independent learning. ➢ Regular collection of students' views on teaching methods and content. ➢ Practical activities provide students with an opportunity for hands-on

		experience and action, helping them to better understand and grasp what they have learnt.
Educational effect	➢ Course interactivity ➢ Knowledge comprehension and application skills ➢ Presentation and debating skills ➢ Curriculum and teaching resources ➢ Student Engagement	➢ Communication and sharing not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also promote co-operation and mutual support among them, thus enhancing the learning experience and its effectiveness. ➢ Teachers can organise various practical activities, project studies and social surveys to enable students to apply what they have learnt in real situations. ➢ Encouraging students to present their own views will not only enhance their ability to express themselves, but will also sharpen their debating skills. ➢ Utilise diverse resources to support and enhance

		the effectiveness of teaching and learning, thereby enhancing the development of student competencies. ➢ Encourage students to participate in class discussions and group projects to increase their engagement.
Characteristics of online education	➢ Internet Resources ➢ Digital tools and software ➢ Self-discipline of students ➢ Time management skills. ➢ Interaction and coordination skills	➢ Online education is more dependent on online tutorials and instructional videos. ➢ Online education drives students to rely more on digital tools and software. ➢ Online education is more dependent on students' self-discipline and active learning attitude. ➢ Students receiving online education need to have the ability to organise their study time wisely. ➢ In online education, teachers need to be able to interact and co-ordinate online to ensure teaching

		effectiveness and student learning experience.
Variations in online teaching	➢ Increased demand for visual stimulation and interactivity ➢ Emphasis is placed on hands-on and project-driven learning ➢ Optimise the use of online resources and tools ➢ Enhance student learning supervision and mentoring ➢ Guarantee the richness and quality of teaching and learning	➢ Students need more visually appealing and interactive teaching methods to enhance the learning experience and understanding. ➢ Students need more practical exercises and engage in projects to apply theoretical knowledge to realistic contexts. ➢ Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the use of digital teaching resources and tools. ➢ To strengthen the supervision and mentoring of learning in order to enhance student's performance. ➢ Timely adjustments are made to the content and delivery of teaching to enhance the students' learning experience.
Positive	➢ Exposure to massive	➢ Exposure to art resources

aspects of online education	art resources and technology ➢ Deepen students' understanding of cross-cultural artistic diversity ➢ Strengthening capacity to apply digital tools ➢ Improvement of students' independent learning skills ➢ Instructional flexibility and accessibility ➢ Develop co-operation and communication skills ➢ Promote intercultural exchange and cooperation ➢ Develop critical thinking and creative skills	and the latest technology on a global scale. ➢ Deepen students' understanding of the diversity and cross-cultural nature of arts. ➢ Strengthen students' knowledge of various art and design related software. ➢ Enhance students' capacity for independent learning, independent thinking and problem solving. ➢ Students are able to learn according to their own schedule and pace of learning. ➢ Students were able to learn how to co-operate effectively with others, divide and conquer, as well as improve their multi-lingual communication skills. ➢ Intercultural communication and co-operation fosters open-

		mindedness and tolerance among students. ➢ Developing students' critical thinking and creative skills contributes to their academic success, as well as providing a strong foundation for their personal development.
Negative aspects of online education	➢ Lack of practical application and technical experience ➢ Lack of face-to-face technical guidance ➢ Reduced learning efficiency ➢ Susceptible to outside interference ➢ Limited and unstable network environment	➢ Online education limits the development of students' abilities in hands-on practice, skills application and real-world problem solving. ➢ When students learn in virtual environments, they often do not have direct access to live technical instruction and demonstrations from the instructor, as they do in physical instruction. ➢ As students study at home, they are easily disturbed by various environmental factors, which can affect their

		attention and concentration on learning and reduce their learning efficiency. ➢ Due to the lack of face-to-face supervision and real-time monitoring in online education, students are vulnerable to external interference in the learning process. ➢ Online education receives the limitations of technological devices and network environments.
The advantages of partnership education projects	➢ Rich in cultural heritage and resources ➢ Innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the UK ➢ The UK is strategically located ➢ The UK focuses on developing critical thinking ➢ Wide range of employment	➢ Both the UK and China are rich in cultural heritage and resources, displaying a long history, deep artistic traditions and diverse cultural heritage. ➢ The UK's innovative approach to teaching and learning favours the development of creativity, critical thinking and integrative skills. ➢ The UK is ideally located to provide art and design

	opportunities and development platforms ➢ Focus on personality development and fostering creativity ➢ The quality of education in the UK is high ➢ Socio-cultural openness and pluralism	students with great facilities and a wide range of opportunities to research and collect material throughout Europe. ➢ The UK focuses on fostering critical thinking and emphasises the development of students' personalities, encouraging them to develop holistically in terms of their academic and personal interests, and to pursue the enhancement of their independent thinking and creativity. ➢ Students of Sino-UK partnership in arts and design education enjoy the rich cultural resources and diverse career choices of the two countries, enhancing their competitiveness in the international arts field. ➢ The UK stimulates students' creative

		potential and independent thinking through a diverse range of teaching methods and a flexible education system. ➢ The UK has world-leading teaching standards and a wealth of educational resources. ➢ UK society is renowned for its openness and cultural diversity, embracing and respecting a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, providing a rich environment for the integration and exchange of different cultures.
The characteristics of partnership education projects	➢ Wide range of areas of pathways ➢ Interdisciplinary education ➢ Explore different artistic styles ➢ Aesthetic values across international and cultural boundaries	➢ Sino-UK partnership education in art and design covers a wide range of specialisations and promotes students' multi-faceted development. ➢ The British education system emphasises interdisciplinary

	➢ Developing international cutting-edge artistic skills ➢ Techniques for conveying information and emotions across cultural constraints ➢ Experience design and intercultural life connectivity	integration across a wide range of specialisations. ➢ Utilise different art and design techniques to create innovative works of art. ➢ Demonstrates commonality and inclusiveness on a global scale and promotes intercultural understanding and exchange. ➢ To prepare students to be competitive and innovative at the leading edge of the global arts scene. ➢ Be able to effectively convey information and emotions, so that people from different backgrounds can resonate and understand each other in artistic exchanges. ➢ To create resonant and inclusive artwork by understanding and

		incorporating different cultural backgrounds.
The optimisation measures of partnership education projects	➢ Visual assistive material support ➢ International Exchange and Interaction ➢ Additional language tutoring ➢ Simplicity of language use ➢ Additional academic support	➢ Use more visual aids such as charts, videos and animations. ➢ Enhance global competitiveness by broadening horizons and understanding through cultural exchanges. ➢ Provide additional language support and training. ➢ Use language that is accessible to students, avoiding complex terminology or slang. ➢ Provide additional academic support such as academic writing centres, online learning resources, academic seminars and workshops to enrich the student learning experience.
The future expectations of partnership education	➢ Different perspectives and unique ideas ➢ Improvement of	➢ Provide students with diverse perspectives and innovative ideas to stimulate their creativity

projects	teaching methods ➢ To stimulate the potential of students ➢ Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness ➢ Enriching the learning experience	and critical thinking. ➢ Teachers should continue to improve their teaching methods to better meet the learning needs of their students. ➢ Actively encourage students to participate in class discussions and provide support and guidance to help build their self-confidence. ➢ Combine the advantages of Chinese and English teaching to achieve better teaching results. ➢ Adapt teaching strategies and methods in a timely manner to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning experience.

Appendix 9: Questionnaire Questions

Students - Questionnaire for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education

跨国在线艺术与设计教育研究问卷调查（学生版）

Part A. Biographical Questions 个人信息问题

1. Gender 性别

- Male 男
- Female 女
- Other 其他
- Prefer not to say 不愿透露

2. First language 第一语言

- Chinese 中文
- English 英文
- Other 其他

3. Subject of study 学习专业

- Fine Art 纯艺术
- Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design) 视觉传达设计（平面设计及插画设计）
- Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design or Spatial Design) 环境设计（室内设计、建筑设计、景观设计及空间设计）
- Fashion Design 时尚设计
- Jewellery Design 珠宝设计
- Industrial Design or Product Design 工业设计及产品设计
- Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design 数字媒体艺术及交互设计
- Animation Design or Game Design 动画设计及游戏设计
- Film, Television or Photography 影视及摄影

- Arts Management or Fashion Management 艺术管理及时尚管理
- Art History 艺术史
- Other 其他

4. Level of study 年级

- First-year undergraduate 大一
- Second-year undergraduate 大二
- Third-year undergraduate 大三
- Fourth-year undergraduate 大四
- Bachelor's degree graduated 本科毕业
- Postgraduate 研究生在读
- Master's degree graduated 研究生毕业

Part B. Core Questionnaire 核心问卷

1. The course content has helped me identify previously unnoticed issues or problems, encouraging me to engage in more extensive research and thinking.

课程内容帮助我发现了之前未注意的问题,鼓励我进行更广泛的研究和思考。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

2. The course content encourages me to actively explore complex issues in the learning content by gathering and evaluating information from different sources.

课程内容鼓励我通过收集和评估不同信息来源，积极探索学习内容中的复杂问题。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)

- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

3. I am able to integrate diverse information and perspectives into meaningful work, deepening my understanding of theoretical knowledge in art and design.

我能够将多样化的信息和视角融入有意义的作品中，深化我对艺术与设计理论知识的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

4. The course has helped me effectively apply new knowledge and use it in practical art and design projects.

课程帮助我有效应用新知识，将其运用于实际的艺术与设计项目中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

5. I believe that the various online resources in the course help me develop critical thinking during the learning process.

我认为课程中的各种线上资源有助于我在学习过程中构建批判性思维。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

6. When faced with complex problems, the course curriculum encourages me to find new solutions through continuous reflection and apply them to my art and design practice.
在面对复杂问题时，课程设置鼓励我通过持续反思找到新的解决方案，并将其应用于我的艺术与设计实践中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

7. The diverse virtual learning materials provided by the course could help me deeply understand theoretical knowledge through various approaches.
课程提供的多样化的虚拟学习材料帮助我通过不同方式深入理解理论知识。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

8. The discussions and collaboration within the course have enabled me to exchange ideas with peers and helped me confirm and deepen my understanding of knowledge.
课程中的讨论和协作让我能够与其他同伴交换想法，并帮助我确认和深化对知识的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

9. The course content and format encourage me to think independently and explore new concepts, fostering my ability for self-directed learning.

课程内容和形式鼓励我独立思考和探索新概念，培养了我的自主学习的能力。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

10. Through repeated reflection and practice, I am able to effectively integrate theoretical knowledge with artistic creation, improving my art and design outcomes.
通过反复的反思和实践，我能够将理论知识与艺术创作有效融合，提升了我的艺术与设计成果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

11. In the online course, I feel connected to my teachers and peers, which enhances my learning experience and engagement.
在线上课程中，师生之间和学生之间能够互相联系，这有助于增强我的学习体验和参与感。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

12. The interactions and communication within the course enable me to authentically express my ideas and feel understood by others.
课程中的互动和交流使我感到我能够真实地表达自己并被他人理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)

- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

13. I feel comfortable in the online environment, allowing me to freely share my personal ideas, experiences, and creative processes.

我在线上环境中感到舒适，可以自由地分享我的个人想法、经历和创作过程。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

14. The online course fosters a relationship of mutual trust between me and my peers and teachers, promoting my active participation in the learning process.

线上课程使我能够与同学和老师建立相互信任的关系，促进我在学习过程中的积极参与。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

15. I feel that discussions within the course help my team achieve common goals, thereby enhancing learning outcomes.

我感到课程中的讨论有助于我在团队中达成共同的目标，提升我的学习效果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)

- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

16. The course interactions allow me to gain new insights and improve my creative work through peer feedback.

通过课程中的互动，我能够从其他同学的反馈中获得新的见解，并改进我的创作。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

17. The course content encourages me to engage with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, helping me understand the diversity within art and design.

课程互动鼓励我与来自不同文化背景的同学进行交流，这有助于我更好地理解艺术与设计中的多样性。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

18. I find the online communication methods in the course effective in promoting collaboration and the sharing of creative ideas among students.

我认为课程中的线上交流方式能够有效促进同学之间的合作和创意分享。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

19. The feedback mechanisms within the course make me feel supported and valued by the teachers, enhancing my confidence in learning.

课程中的反馈机制让我感受到老师的支持和关注，提升了我的学习自信心。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

20. I feel that the course design facilitates cross-cultural collaboration, helping me overcome the challenges posed by language and cultural differences.

我感到课程的设计让跨文化的合作变得更容易，这帮助我克服语言和文化差异带来的挑战。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

21. Teachers help me better understand the overall direction and expected outcomes of the course through clear objectives and planning.

老师通过清晰的课程目标和规划，帮助我更好地理解课程的总体方向和预期成果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

22. The structure and organisation of the course content allow me to systematically follow the learning progress and maintain an efficient learning pace.

课程内容的结构和安排让我能够系统地跟随学习进度，保持高效的学习节奏。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

23. Teachers actively provide online guidance to assist me in deepening my thinking and understanding of complex concepts.

老师积极通过在线指导，帮助我深入思考并理解复杂的概念。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

24. In a cross-cultural context, the teaching strategies employed by teachers help me overcome language and cultural barriers, thereby enhancing my learning experience.

在跨文化背景下，老师的教学策略能够帮助我克服语言和文化差异，提升我的学习体验。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

25. Teachers provide timely and detailed feedback in online courses, enabling me to continuously improve my art and design works and learning methods.

老师在线上课程中提供的反馈及时且详细，使我能够不断改进我的设计和学习方法。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)

- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

26. Teachers, through flexible course organisation and task design, help me better adapt to diverse learning needs and the cultural contexts of both China and the UK.
老师通过灵活的课程安排和任务设计，帮助我更好地适应多元化的学习需求和中英文化背景。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

27. Teachers enhance my confidence through guidance and support, encouraging more active participation in the learning and creative processes.
课程中老师的引导和支持能够增强我的自信心，使我更积极地参与到学习和创作过程中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

28. Teachers, through carefully designed questions and discussion activities, encourage me to deeply analyze and explore the core concepts of the course.
老师通过精心设计的问题和讨论活动，促使我深入分析和探讨课程中的核心概念。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)

- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

29. Course tasks enable me to regularly reflect on and summarise my learning process, helping me integrate new theoretical knowledge with practical creative experience.
课程任务要求我定期回顾和总结学习过程，帮助我将新的理论知识与实际创作经验相结合。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

30. The course offers diverse assessment methods, enabling me to demonstrate my learning progress and design capabilities in various forms while also receiving effective feedback.
课程提供的评估方式多样化，使我能够通过不同的形式展示我的学习进展和设计能力，并获得有效反馈。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

31. Despite the time zone differences in the online course, I am still able to communicate effectively with teachers and peers.
在在线课程中，虽然有时差的存在，但我依旧能与老师和同学进行良好的沟通。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

32. Even in the absence of facial expressions and body language, I am able to accurately comprehend the information and feedback provided in the course.

在没有面部表情和肢体语言的情况下，我依旧可以准确理解课程中的信息和反馈。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

33. Teachers are able to effectively manage both teaching and administrative tasks, ensuring the smooth delivery of online courses while providing me with sufficient support.

老师能够有效管理教学与行政任务，确保在线课程的顺利进行，并让我感受到了足够的支持。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

34. I perceive that the course design in the Sino-UKpartnership programme integrates the cultural and pedagogical strengths of both countries, enhancing my learning experience.

我感受到中英合作项目的课程设计融合了两国的文化和教学优势，能够提升我的学习体验。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

35. The course design takes into account the needs of international students, helping me overcome language barriers in online learning.

课程设计充分考虑了国际学生的需求，可以帮助我克服在线学习中的语言障碍。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

36. Cross-cultural activities within the course could help me deepen my understanding of global art trends and cultural diversity.

课程中的跨文化活动可以帮助我加深对全球艺术趋势和文化多样性的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

37. In cross-cultural exchanges, the guidance of teachers allows me to draw inspiration from different cultural backgrounds, enhancing my global perspective.

在跨文化交流中，老师的引导让我能够从不同的文化背景中汲取灵感，增强了我的全球视野。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

38. The technical support available in the online course enables me to freely explore interdisciplinary fields within art and design, fostering innovative thinking.

在线课程的技术支持使我能够自由探索艺术与设计中的跨学科领域，促进了我的创新思维。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)

- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

39. The online course facilitates connections with global artists and designers, thereby broadening my creative perspectives.

在线课程帮助我与全球艺术家和设计师联系，拓展了我的创作视野。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

40. Through the connection with international art communities via online resources, I am able to participate in global exhibitions and discussions, enhancing my competitiveness in the industry.

通过在线资源与国际艺术社区的连接，我能够参与全球性的艺术展览和讨论，能够提高我的行业竞争力。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

Faculty Members - Questionnaire for Understanding Online Transnational Art and Design Education

跨国在线艺术与设计教育研究问卷调查（教师版）

Part A. Biographical Questions 个人信息问题

1. Gender 性别

- Male 男
- Female 女
- Other 其他
- Prefer not to say 不愿透露

2. First language 第一语言

- Chinese 中文
- English 英文
- Other 其他

3. Subject of teaching 教授专业

- Fine Art 纯艺术
- Visual Communication Design (Graphic Design or Illustration Design) 视觉传达设计（平面设计及插画设计）
- Environmental Design (Interior Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design or Spatial Design) 环境设计（室内设计、建筑设计、景观设计及空间设计）
- Fashion Design 时尚设计
- Jewellery Design 珠宝设计
- Industrial Design or Product Design 工业设计及产品设计
- Digital Media Arts or Interactive Design 数字媒体艺术及交互设计
- Animation Design or Game Design 动画设计及游戏设计
- Film, Television or Photography 影视及摄影
- Arts Management or Fashion Management 艺术管理及时尚管理

- Art History 艺术史
- Other 其他

4. Level of teaching 教学年级

- First-year undergraduate 大一
- Second-year undergraduate 大二
- Third-year undergraduate 大三
- Fourth-year undergraduate 大四
- Postgraduate 研究生

Part B. Core Questionnaire 核心问卷

1. The course content has helped students identify previously unnoticed issues or problems, encouraging them to engage in more extensive research and thinking.
课程内容帮助学生们发现了之前未注意的问题，鼓励他们进行更广泛的研究和思考。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

2. The course content encourages students to actively explore complex issues in the learning content by gathering and evaluating information from different sources.
课程内容鼓励学生们通过收集和评估不同信息来源，积极探索学习内容中的复杂问题。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

3. Students are able to integrate diverse information and perspectives into meaningful work, deepening their understanding of theoretical knowledge in art and design.
学生们能够将多样化的信息和视角融入有意义的作品中，深化对艺术与设计理论知识的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

4. The course has helped students effectively apply new knowledge and use it in practical art and design projects.
课程帮助学生们有效应用新知识，将其运用于实际的艺术与设计项目中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

5. I believe that the various online resources in the course help students develop critical thinking during the learning process.
我认为课程中的各种线上资源有助于学生们在学习过程中构建批判性思维。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

6. When faced with complex problems, the course curriculum encourages students to find new solutions through continuous reflection and apply them to their art and design practice.

在面对复杂问题时，课程设置鼓励学生们通过持续反思找到新的解决方案，并将其应用于学生们的艺术与设计实践中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

7. The diverse virtual learning materials provided by the course could help students deeply understand theoretical knowledge through various approaches.
课程提供的多样化的虚拟学习材料帮助能够学生们通过不同方式深入理解理论知识。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

8. The discussions and collaboration within the course have enabled students to exchange ideas with peers and helped them confirm and deepen their understanding of knowledge.
课程中的讨论和协作让学生们能够与其他同伴交换想法，并帮助他们确认和深化对知识的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

9. The course content and format encourage students to think independently and explore new concepts, fostering their ability for self-directed learning.
课程内容和形式鼓励学生们独立思考和探索新概念，培养了学生们的自主学习的能力。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

10. Through repeated reflection and practice, students are able to effectively integrate theoretical knowledge with artistic creation, improving their art and design outcomes.
通过反复的反思和实践，学生们能够将理论知识与艺术创作有效融合，提升了他们的艺术与设计成果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

11. In the online course, I feel connected to my students, which enhances their learning experience and engagement.
在线上课程中，我和学生之间能够互相联系，这有助于增强他们的学习体验和参与感。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

12. The interactions and communication within the course enable students to authentically express themselves and feel understood by others.
课程中的互动和交流使学生们能够真实地表达自己并被他人理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)

- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

13. Students feel comfortable in the online environment, allowing them to freely share their ideas, experiences, and creative processes.

学生们在线上环境中感到舒适，可以自由地分享他们的想法、经历和创作过程。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

14. The online course fosters a relationship of mutual trust between students and teachers, promoting active student participation in the learning process.

线上课程使师生建立相互信任的关系，促进学生们在学习过程中的积极参与。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

15. Discussions within the course help students achieve common goals within their teams, thereby enhancing their learning outcomes.

课程中的讨论有助于学生们在团队中达成共同的目标，提升他们的学习效果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

16. Through course interactions, students are able to gain new insights from peer feedback and improve their creative work.

通过课程中的互动，学生们能够从同伴的反馈中获得新的见解，并改进他们的创作。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

17. The course content encourages students to engage with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, helping them better understand the diversity within art and design.

课程互动鼓励学生们与来自不同文化背景的同学进行交流，这有助于他们更好地理解艺术与设计中的多样性。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

18. I find the online communication methods in the course effective in promoting collaboration and the sharing of creative ideas among students.

我认为课程中的线上交流方式能够有效促进学生们之间的合作和创意分享。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

19. The feedback mechanisms within the course enable me to provide students with

support and attention, helping them enhance their confidence in learning.

课程中的反馈机制使我能够给予学生们支持和关注，帮助他们提升学习自信心。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

20. I feel that the course design facilitates cross-cultural collaboration, helping students overcome the challenges posed by language and cultural differences.

课程的设计让学生们的跨文化的合作变得更容易，帮助他们克服语言和文化差异带来的挑战。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

21. I can help students better understand the overall direction and expected outcomes of the course through clear objectives and planning.

我可以通过清晰的课程目标和规划，帮助学生们更好地理解课程的总体方向和预期成果。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

22. The structure and organisation of the course content allow students to systematically follow the learning progress and maintain an efficient learning pace.

课程内容的结构和安排让学生们能够系统地跟随学习进度，保持高效的学习节奏。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

23. I can actively provide online guidance to assist students in deepening their thinking and understanding of complex concepts.

我可以积极通过在线指导，帮助学生们深入思考并理解复杂的概念。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

24. In a cross-cultural context, my teaching strategies help students overcome language and cultural barriers, thereby enhancing their learning experience.

在跨文化背景下，我的教学策略能够帮助学生们克服语言和文化差异，提升他们的学习体验。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

25. I can provide timely and detailed feedback in online courses, enabling students to continuously improve their art and design works and learning methods.

我在线上课程中可以提供及时且详细的反馈，使学生们能够不断改进艺术与设计作品和学习方法。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)

- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

26. I can help students better adapt to diverse learning needs and the cultural contexts of both China and the UK through flexible course organisation and task design.
我可以通过灵活的课程安排和任务设计，帮助学生们更好地适应多元化的学习需求

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

27. Through my guidance and support in the course, I can enhance students' confidence, encouraging them to participate more actively in the learning and creative processes.
我在课程中的引导和支持能够增强学生们的自信心, 使他们更积极地参与到学习和创作过程中。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

28. I can encourage students to deeply analyze and explore the core concepts of the course through carefully designed questions and discussion activities.
我可以通过精心设计的问题和讨论活动，促使学生们深入分析和探讨课程中的核心概念。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)

- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

29. Course tasks require students to regularly reflect on and summarise their learning process, helping them integrate new theoretical knowledge with practical creative experience.

课程任务要求学生们定期回顾和总结学习过程，帮助他们将新的理论知识与实际创作经验相结合。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

30. The course offers diverse assessment methods, enabling students to demonstrate their learning progress and design capabilities in various forms while also receiving effective feedback.

课程提供的评估方式多样化，使学生们能够通过不同的形式展示他们的学习进展和设计能力，并获得有效反馈。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

31. Despite the time zone differences in the online course, teachers and students are still able to communicate effectively.

在在线课程中，虽然有时差的存在，但师生们依旧能进行良好的沟通。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)

- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

32. Even in the absence of facial expressions and body language, students are still able to accurately comprehend the information and feedback provided in the course.
在没有面部表情和肢体语言的情况下，学生们依旧可以准确理解课程中的信息和反馈。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

33. I am able to effectively manage both teaching and administrative tasks, ensuring the smooth delivery of online courses while providing students with sufficient support.
我能够有效管理教学与行政任务，确保在线课程的顺利进行，并让学生们感受到了足够的支持。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

34. The course design in the Sino-UK partnership programme integrates the cultural and pedagogical strengths of both countries, enhancing students' learning experience.
中英合作项目的课程设计融合了两国的文化和教学优势，能够提升学生们的学习体验。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

35. The course design takes into account the needs of international students, helping them overcome language barriers in online learning.

课程设计充分考虑了国际学生的需求，可以帮助他们克服在线学习中的语言障碍。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

36. Cross-cultural activities within the course could help students deepen their understanding of global art trends and cultural diversity.

课程中的跨文化活动可以帮助学生们加深对全球艺术趋势和文化多样性的理解。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

37. In cross-cultural exchanges, I am able to guide students to draw inspiration from different cultural backgrounds, enhancing their global perspective.

在跨文化交流中，我能够引导学生们从不同的文化背景中汲取灵感，增强了他们的全球视野。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

38. The technical support available in the online course enables students to freely explore interdisciplinary fields within art and design, fostering their innovative thinking.

在线课程的技术支持使学生们能够自由探索艺术与设计中的跨学科领域，促进了他们的创新思维。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

39. The online course helps students connect with global artists and designers, thereby broadening their creative perspectives.

在线课程帮助学生们与全球艺术家和设计师联系，拓展了他们的创作视野。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)

40. Through the connection with international art communities via online resources, students are able to participate in global exhibitions and discussions, enhancing their competitiveness in the industry.

通过在线资源与国际艺术社区的连接，学生们能够参与全球性的艺术展览和讨论，能够提高他们的行业竞争力。

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (非常不同意)
- 2 = Disagree (不同意)
- 3 = Neutral (中立)
- 4 = Agree (同意)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (非常同意)