# The Instructional Patterns of Chinese Online Educators in China

Victor WANG
California State University Long Beach, USA
cwang@csulb.edu

ABSTRACT :

This article reports the results of a study designed to investigate the instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors in terms of Western (i.e., United States) constructivist approaches and problem-based learning models (PBL) as reflected also in the humanistic, progressive, analytic and radical approaches of teaching. Online instructors from major universities in Beijing and Shanghai, China, volunteered to respond to a survey comprised of nineteen statements about their teaching patterns. The survey was complemented and supplemented by seven open-ended questions. The study results indicated that, while Chinese online instructors clung to their traditional liberal and behavioral methods of instruction, they had an inclination to employ Western democratic approaches of teaching.

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

### 1.1 Background of the Study :

It is well-known to the outside world that China delivered its educational programs to its vast number of learners through correspondence, radio or TV prior to 1998. Even to this day, China still uses these forms of media to educate and train learners to raise human productive capabilities in order to catch up with the rest of the world in a timely manner. The teaching methods are prescribed by higher authorities. These higher authorities carefully root out any Western influences in terms of how Chinese learners are educated and trained (Kaplan, Sobin & Andors, 1979). In 1983, Deng, launched an anti-Western spiritual pollution campaign. This movement was meant to eradicate Western influences, including Western methods of instruction. The argument then was whatever works for the people in the West may not be useful for the Chinese people. Scholars viewed the anti-Western spiritual pollution movement as promoting Chinese nationalism among Chinese youth. Further, this movement was viewed positively by Chinese cadres at all levels to instigate teaching by Chinese teachers to their learners the 'Chinese Way' in order to create 'tame' followers. These followers are taught to conform to higher authorities. Confucius teaches that "a learner's job is to learn whatever a teacher teaches; a teacher's job is to transmit knowledge to learners, to serve as a role model" (Zhu, 1992).

As China opened its door to the outside world in the early 1980's, Western educators and trainers have gained a foothold on Chinese campuses. Although they are allowed to teach in their own way, in some cases their teaching is scrutinized by Chinese officials. China's economic success has caused two major changes in Chinese higher education. One is that Chinese universities began charging tuition fees in 1994. The other is that due to the increasing number of students, it is now necessary for Chinese universities and governmental agencies to use the Internet to deliver education and training. Starting in

1998, China's higher authorities began officially to allow the use of the Internet to teach English and vocational courses to students. To some extent, some universities even offer degree programs to adult learners who are not in a position to attend universities in the daytime.

Although China has quickly adopted the use of educational media to educate and train its students, the question of how their students are taught remains unexamined. To Westerners, teaching on the Internet requires a totally different pedagogy, teaching philosophies etc. The question is, as more and more Chinese students access Western student-centered approach to teaching, constructivist approaches (Morphew, 2000) and problem-based learning models (PBL) via the Internet (Duch, 2005), will these Western methods pose a challenge to the Chinese traditional mode of teaching? This is definitely an under-researched area. Most scholarly interest still focuses on Chinese correspondence studies, radio and TV universities. Because of the synchronous and asynchronous nature of teaching the Internet can offer, the Internet has changed the way students learn. The Internet has also changed the way teachers teach. Both teachers and students require different methods of delivery rather than traditional lecture-based instruction as routinely used by Chinese instructors. Westerners speculate that Chinese instructors have been clinging to the traditional methods of instruction for well over two thousand years. Strong influences of Confucius' knowledge transmission methods are apparent in Chinese instructional practices. Confucius' indoctrination is to keep the status quo in society (Chai & Chai, 1965). In teaching, this translates into 'teachers teach pedagogically and students assume a submissive role of following their instructors'. Teachers are the authority figures and need to be respected, whereas students are supposed to learn from books and learn from their role models - their teachers.

As the Internet provides free information to Chinese students, as more and more Western educators use Western methods of instruction to teach Chinese students on Chinese campuses, it is imperative that instructional patterns via the Internet in China be studied so that learners' needs can be better met. Without grasping the patterns of instruction, neither Western educators nor Chinese educators are able to help students maximize learning via the Internet. As China's economy enables Chinese students to pay out of state tuition to American universities, some universities in the United States of America have taken the opportunity to offer Western educational programs to Chinese students via the Internet. For example, California State University, Long Beach, in collaboration with University of California, Irvine and Online University of America recently demonstrated their teaching methods via the Internet to leading universities in China. Their hope is that these novel Western methods of delivery would attract some Chinese students to take American graduate courses via technology. Although it looks promising, the patterns of instruction in China need to be researched so that Western educators can work better with their Chinese counterparts. Without any knowledge of the current methods of delivery in China, Western methods are bound to face difficulty in a different social setting.

To research the instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors, the following question was formulated : What are the teaching patterns of Chinese online instructors relative to liberal approaches, behaviorist approaches, progressive approaches, humanistic approaches, analytic approaches, and radical approaches?

Such a study can help those involved in delivering effective instruction to Chinese students adapt to the current instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors in order that there is 'buy in' on the part of the Chinese learners. The study can also help Chinese instructors analyze their instruction so that they can make adjustments in order to maximize student learning. If the Internet is misused, students will be frustrated. Eventually, instructors will become frustrated.

## 1.2 Overview of Online Teaching :

Knowles in the 1970's predicted that most education in the 21st century would be delivered by electronic media to learners at their convenience rather than at the provider's (Wang, 2006). Today's adult learners make up an increasing population in education. As they return to school, many find it difficult to attend classes on campus because of multiple family and work responsibilities. Educational providers have seized this grand opportunity to take educational programs to these adult learners' homes and offices via the use of distance learning technologies, especially online distance learning. Teaching on the Internet has become popular. For example, when recruiting faculty to teach for universities, one of the preferred requirements is that faculty should be able to facilitate learning by the use of technology. Further, faculty are required to utilize popular teaching approaches such as Western constructivist approaches, and problem-based learning (PBL) models so that learners can achieve deeper levels of knowledge creation (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

The traditional mode of teaching, such as knowledge transmission, is no longer appropriate since today's adult learners possess a vast amount of prior experience and are capable of self-direction in learning. They are internally motivated learners and are most ready to learn when educators can demonstrate relevancy in learning. To most adults, online learning like traditional classroom learning, must lead them to solving real world problems in addition to cognitive learning (Berry, 2000 ; Wolfe, 2001). On the basis of adult learners' pragmatism in learning, it seems a collaborative approach to learning is one of the best approaches preferred by today's adults.

## 1.3 Theoretical Framework :

Online teaching methods like traditional classroom teaching methods are predetermined by one's teaching philosophies. One's practice and action are logically derived from theory and philosophy ( Elias & Merriam, 1995 ).

Therefore, patterns of instruction are reflected by one's dearly-held philosophies. For example, Wang & Sarbo (2004, p.207) have specified the following philosophical approaches ;

o Instructors with liberal perspectives aim to help learners become literate in the broadest sense—intellectually, morally, and spiritually,

o Instructors with behaviorist perspectives aim to bring about behavior that will ensure survival of the human species, societies, and individuals,

o Instructors with progressive perspectives aim to give learners the practical knowledge and problem-solving skills necessary to reform society,

o Instructors with humanistic perspectives aim to enhance personal growth and development, facilitate self-actualization, and reform society,

o Instructors with analytic perspectives aim to build a solid philosophical foundation through careful analysis and argumentation of educational concepts, slogans, and policy statements by eliminating language confusion, and

o Instructors with radical perspectives aim to bring about fundamental social, political, and economic changes in society.

## 1.4 Review of the Literature :

The Internet and web-based instruction (WBI) were invented in the West and their related teaching methods are directly derived from Western democratic culture, ideology etc. (Lee, 2004). Based on the synchronous and asynchronous nature of online teaching, Western educators have developed different teaching methods than traditional teaching methods to suit student online learning. A constructivist approach and problem-based learning (PBL) both take into consideration principles of adult learning. Adult learners are self-directed learners and are capable of learning on their own. Adults have a rich reservoir of prior experience that can serve as resources for learning (Lindeman, 1926 ; Knowles, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1986). Because of these two learning principles, learners need to connect the new learning experience with

previous ones, and they need to be given specific problems to solve when it comes to online learning. Because WBI is capable of using audio and video conferencing, chat rooms and instant messaging, the traditional lecture-based mode of instruction is frowned upon in online teaching.

WBI is characterized by a truly democratic approach to teaching. Another principle of adult learning is 'The Need to Know' (Lindeman, 1926 ; Knowles, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1986). Adults have a deep psychological need to know what is to be learned, why to learn, when to learn, how to learn and if anything has been learned. To satisfy this need, Western educators widely use a student-centered approach to teaching. In this mode of WBI, students are involved in the planning process. Students are invited to negotiate with their instructors at the beginning of each semester regarding what should be covered in their courses. Students are asked to sign a learning contract regarding what grade they desire for a particular course. Further, if adult learners are determined to be mature learners, Western educators may implement self-evaluation among the learners.

To ensure a democratic WBI, Western educators are required to be flexible in assuming their roles as instructors (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). When their learners have little experience with the subject matter and have no independent learning skills, educators become directors or coaches. When their learners have a low need for support and a low need for direction, in other words, when their learners are self-directed, educators become learning facilitators or consultants, linking students to learning resources (Wang, 2005). Regardless of WBI or traditional classroom setting learning, Western educators prescribe one learning goal for learners : growth, development, problem-solving skills, and critical reflection skills (Merriam, 2004 ; Mezirow, 1991, 2000 ; King, 2005).

China with one-fifth (1.3 billion) of the world's population is still a Confucian Heritage society (Biggs, 1996). In this kind of society, compliance with authority is highly valued (Pratt, 1988, 1993), meaning Chinese society is highly hierarchical and centralized. Decisions are made in a top-down manner. On the basis of these societal differences, it is not surprising that the Chinese government supervises all of the Internet activities between instructors and students. To date, there are basically four major networks in China. They are the China Network, the China Golden Bridge Network, the China Education and Research Network, and the China Science and Technology Network (Tang, 2000). These networks were established by Chinese returning from abroad. These networks – which translate into network education in English - shoulder the responsibility of providing educational programs to approximately 10 million students at all educational levels (Mau, 2003). As a measure to strengthen education in rural areas in China, the State Council in 2003 (Yang, 2005), issued decisions to implement distance education programs. According to Yang (2005), some colleges and universities have used a campus network to carry out online education.

Although online education plays a positive role in China, it is not without problems. For example, online education still features an exam-centered education system. Yang (2005, p. 18) pointed out in his annual education report, "online education is still immature and limited in number. Distance-learning equipment is relatively old and merely 'putting classroom teaching on computer screens failed to bring out the interactive and diversified features of online education'". Evidently, Chinese educators are aware of these problems, yet, they still feature a teacher-centered, information-based and test-driven instructional format (Lee, 2004). According to Paine (1992), to teach in China is to teach books. Teachers focus on detailed analysis of textbook materials. Students are expected to digest textbook materials and reinterpret them for exams.

In academic circles in China, scholars and educators still use buzz-words in distance education. The words 'knowledge-based economy', 'a learning society', and 'diversified education needs' have entered

their vocabulary. For example, they constantly talk about Marx's 'comprehensive and free development of human beings' and push the belief that education should center on the person and encourage free development of individuality. The question that remains is how long they have to wait before they say goodbye to the Chinese mode of teaching and embrace the Western democratic mode of teaching.

Many researchers are looking into the patterns of instruction in China. As China receives more and more Western influences, it needs to be determined whether WBI has been serving the needs of the vast number of Chinese learners. Further, this kind of investigation will help Western educators as they try to deliver Western educational programs to China.

## 2. METHODOLOGY :

California State University, Long Beach, University of California, Irvine and Online University of America demonstrated Western instructional methods to deliver their graduate programs to leading Chinese universities via Internet technologies in 2004. Consequently, both faculty and administrators felt a strong need to uncover and determine instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors. What American faculty perceive may not represent the true instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors. It is imperative that an empirical study be undertaken to help determine the changing teaching patterns of Chinese online instructors. The author launched such an undertaking by conducting survey research to address these American faculty and administrators' keenly felt needs.

The purpose of survey research is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population (Babbie, 1990). Given China's vast number of online instructors, it seems appropriate that survey research would result in the rapid turnaround in data collection (Creswell, 2003). Further, survey research design is economical. As more and

more researchers use the Internet technologies, Internet survey and administering it online have become popular (Nesbary, 2000). In the fall of 2005, a random sample of 50 online instructors from the leading universities in Beijing and Shanghai, China, were targeted. Thirty-eight (76%) of the fifty instructors volunteered to return the survey via a helper who made certain that the researcher could not access the participants' identity information. The survey was completed online during a period of three weeks.

## 2.1 The Survey Instrument :

The study employed a quantitative design supplemented with a qualitative element. The researcher made a survey instrument entitled 'Teaching Modes of Online Instructors (TMOI)' directly related to instructors' liberal approaches, behavioral approaches, humanistic approaches, progressive approaches, analytic approaches, and radical approaches of teaching. The survey instrument was designed based on Elias & Merriam's (1995) and Knowles, Holton & Swanson's (1998) models to determine the instructors' teaching patterns in the realm of electronic information exchange, or what is known as a 'cyberspace' learning situation.

The survey utilizes a Likert scale from five to zero with five being the highest (support for the teaching approaches implied in the statements) and zero the lowest (disapproval for the teaching approaches implied in the statements). For this study, the survey responses were used to determine and describe the online instructors' patterns of instruction in cyberspace in order to develop a database. The instructors' mean scores were calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-13.0 for Windows). The mean score of 2.5 represents the midpoint between 0 and 5.

In addition, the study, while primarily quantitative in design, included qualitative data regarding why these online educators chose certain teaching approaches in preference to others. The participants surveyed answered the open-ended questions online. The quantitative design by

the researcher together with the qualitative element ensures the comprehensiveness of the study.

A group of three online instructors in the Department of Professional Studies, California State University, Long Beach, California, who were not included in the sample, were used in a pilot study to validate the instrument. Data gathered from the validation study were not included in the study but were used to determine whether revisions to the instrument were needed. The validation study was also used to test the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items. The validation study results indicated revisions to the instrument were not needed since the online instructors in the validation study understood the questions in the survey instrument. In sum, the questions used could be considered content valid. Further, the alpha reliability coefficient for the instrument was .92. (n of cases = 38, n of items = 19).

## 2.2 The Participants :

Participants in the study were core faculty among the leading universities in Beijing and Shanghai, China. The same faculty used to teach distance education courses via correspondence, radio, or TV. Since China

education is relatively new in China, very few faculty have received training in terms of these novel teaching approaches. Basically, they 'put classroom teaching on computer screens' (Yang, 2005).

## 3. RESULTS :

The purpose of the study was to determine and describe online instructors' instructional patterns directly related to liberal approaches, behavioral approaches, humanistic approaches, progressive approaches, analytic approaches and radical approaches of teaching. The research question revolved around Elias & Merriam's (1995) six philosophical foundations. Thirty-eight online instructors answered survey questions via the Internet, using the researcher-made survey instruments.

Table 1 indicates that online instructors had high scores in the two variables. The results suggest that these instructors favored the liberal teaching approaches. When conducting teaching, they tended to use the lecture method as an efficient instructional strategy and supported the notion of developing students' intellect through reading, reflection, and production.

Table 1 : Mean Responses : Liberal Teaching Approaches

| Mode One : Liberal Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 1. 'I use the lecture method as an efficient instructional strategy' | 3.51 | 1.21 |
| 19. 'I develop students' intellect through reading, reflection, and production' | 4.00 | 1.00 |

began to implement online teaching in the early 21st century, most faculty have turned to online teaching. Although traditional students on campus may choose to take a course or two via the Internet, most of their students are nontraditional learners who cannot come to campus to attend classes. These students are working adults who need credentials, degrees or diplomas for their own professional development. Since online

Table 2 shows that the online instructors had high scores on two variables. These results indicate that these online instructors did not support the experiential learning principle in teaching as they were not co-learners or learning facilitators. However, they provided the setting that is conducive to learning and they organized, stimulated, instigated, and evaluated the highly complex process of education.

Table 2 : Mean Responses : Progressive Teaching Approaches

| Mode Two : Progressive Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 3.  'I organize, stimulate, instigate, and evaluate the highly complex process of education' | 3.45 | 1.18 |
| 6.  'I am a helper, guide, encourager, consultantm, and resource instead of a transmitter, disciplinarian, judge and authority' | 2.22 | 1.18 |
| 7.  'I provide the setting that is conducive to learning' | 3.30 | 1.08 |
| 8.  'I become a learner in the learning process' | 2.30 | 1.08 |

Table 3 indicates that these online instructors had high scores on the variables in behavioral teaching approaches. The results show that these instructors designed an environment that elicited desired behavior toward meeting educational goals and to extinguish behavior that was not desirable. They were contingency managers, environmental controllers or behavior engineers who planned in detail the conditions necessary to bring about desired behavior. These results indicate that these online instructors favored behavioral teaching.

Table 4 indicates that online instructors had high scores in two of the five variables that make up humanistic teaching approaches. These results suggest that these instructors basically did not favor humanistic teaching except that they provided information to their students, which is something humanistic instructors do not do. They created the conditions within which learning can take place.

Table 3 : Mean Responses : Behavioral Teaching Approaches

| Mode Three : Behavioral Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 4.  'I design an environment that elicits desired behavior toward meeting educational goals and to extinguish behavior that is not desirable' | 3.79 | 1.13 |
| 5.  'I am a contingency manager, an environmental controller, or behavioral engineer who plans in detail the conditions necessary to bring about desired behavior' | 4.97 | 1.24 |

Table 4 : Mean Responses : Humanistic Teaching Approaches

| Mode Four : Progressive Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 11.  'I trust students to assume responsibility for their learning' | 1.97 | 1.17 |
| 12.  'I respect and utilize the experiences and potentialities of students' | 2.26 | 1.27 |
| 13.  'I provide information to my students' | 4.49 | 0.77 |
| 14.  'I am a facilitator, helper, and partner in the learning process' | 1.49 | 0.69 |
| 15.  'I create the conditions within which learning can take place' | 4.30 | 0.91 |

Table 5 shows that these online instructors had high scores in two of the four variables that comprise radical teaching approaches. These results indicate that these instructors did not favor the radical teaching approaches except that they employed the Western problem-posing education.

Table 7 shows that online instructors had high scores on Mode One, Mode Three, and Mode Six Approaches. These findings suggest that these instructors applied liberal teaching approaches, behavioral approaches, but not analytic approaches. They opposed analytic approaches of teaching since the items in the survey were

Table 5 : Mean Responses : Radical Teaching Approaches

| Mode Five : Radical Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 9. 'I offer a libertarian, dialogic, and problem-posing education' | 3.27 | 1.07 |
| 10. 'I emphasize the importance of dialogue and equality between teacher and learners' | 2.08 | 0.95 |
| 16. 'I am open to clarifications and modifications' | 2.15 | 0.63 |
| 17. 'I determine the themes that serve to organize the content of the dialogues' | 4.35 | 0.79 |

Table 6 indicates that these online instructors did not favor analytic teaching approaches. Since the two items in the survey were negative, high mean scores on these two items indicate just the opposite of their teaching approaches. For example, analytic instructors do not construct explanations about reality.

negative. High mean scores in Table 6 indicated that Chinese online instructors did not support analytic approaches of teaching.

Their overall mean scores were slightly higher on Mode Two, Mode Four and Mode Five Approaches. These findings indicate that these online instructors somewhat employed desirable progressive approaches,

Table 6 : Mean Responses : Analytic Teaching Approaches

| Mode Six : Analytic Teaching | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| 2. 'I eliminate language confusions' | 3.95 | 1.38 |
| 18. 'I construct explanations about reality' | 4.54 | 1.27 |

Table 7 : Mean Responses : Summary of the Findings of the Six Teaching Approaches

| Teaching Approach | mean | s.d. |
|---|---|---|
| Mode 1.   Liberal Teaching | 3.76 | 1.10 |
| Mode 2.   Progressive Teaching | 2.82 | 1.13 |
| Mode 3.   Behavioral Teaching | 4.38 | 1.19 |
| Mode 4.   Humanistic Teaching | 2.90 | 0.96 |
| Mode 5.   Radical Teaching | 2.96 | 0.86 |
| Mode 6.   Analytic Teaching | 4.20 | 1.32 |

humanistic approaches and radical approaches of teaching which are widely used by Western online instructors.

## 4. DISCUSSION :

As shown in the above Table 7, Chinese online instructors favored liberal approaches, and behavioral approaches of teaching. They opposed analytic approaches of teaching since the items in the survey were negative. High mean scores indicated that Chinese online instructors did not support analytic approaches of teaching. Chinese online instructors scored slightly higher on progressive approaches, humanistic approaches and radical approaches of teaching. This may mean that this group of Chinese online instructors began to employ the teaching approaches preferred by Western online instructors.

It is not surprising to Western educators that Chinese online instructors supported liberal and behavioral teaching approaches because these two approaches support a teacher-centered mode of teaching. Further, these two approaches are deeply rooted in Confucian Heritage societies. These results do not run contrary to the literature review that Chinese online instructors teach books, teach to tests and that students assume a submissive role of following their instructors. Students are not expected to challenge instructors' teaching. Teachers are considered to be authority figures. These results confirmed previous research conducted by Biggs (1996) and Wang & Bott (2004).

What is surprising is that a changing pattern of instruction of Chinese online instructors has emerged from this research. Based on the literature review and even in-depth observation, Confucian heritage societies do not embrace Western teaching approaches such as progressive, humanistic and radical teaching approaches that feature learners' prior experience (or experiential learning), self-directed learning and critical thinking skills. These three approaches including analytic teaching approaches, all support Western constructivist approaches, and problem-based learning models (PBL)

in that these approaches oppose the lecture-based instruction as preferred by Chinese online instructors. However, this study reveals the Chinese online instructors started to employ the Western approaches of teaching, perhaps on a trial and error basis. This changing pattern is not easily accomplished for Chinese instructors as they have been clinging to the liberal and behavioral approaches of teaching for well over two thousand years. Moreover, higher authorities do not grant instructors the freedom to teach the way they want to. All online teaching materials are supervised by the central government at all levels. This has presented great difficulty to Chinese online instructors. Chinese online instructors face dual responsibilities or burdens. One is that they must obey their higher authorities; the other is that they need to accommodate the needs of their students. As a result, these instructors are in the difficult situation. They must attempt to fulfill the requirements of two equally important responsibilities while aspiring to accomplish their newfound goals.

Table 8 gives the open-responses to seven questions given at the end of the survey questionnaire to elicit qualitative data.

A close examination of these qualitative findings shows that these findings corroborated the quantitative findings. On the one hand, Chinese online instructors supported lecture-based instruction; on the other hand, these Chinese online instructors began to experiment with Western teaching approaches. This indicates that Chinese online instructors recognize the benefits of Western online instruction. Again, this illustrates a changing pattern of instruction of Chinese online instructors. As to what has caused this changing pattern of instruction, of course the Internet itself is a huge factor. Although Chinese higher authorities scrutinize online teaching materials and teaching methods, there is no way that they can prevent Chinese instructors or students from accessing Western websites that may offer some Western ideas on teaching. For example, almost all universities in the United States claim on their websites that they are student – centered universities. This runs directly

Table 8 : Responses to Open-Response-Type Questions

| Question | Ratio Yes : No | Most Frequent Response |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you negotiate curricular priorities with your adult students at the beginning of each course you teach? Why or why not? | 0 : 100 | If I do it, how can I maintain my authority as a teacher? I am afraid to lose my authority. I had better not do it for fear that students will require more from me… |
| 2. Do you take into account your adult learners' prior experience when planning your lessons? | 68 : 32 | By incorporating their experience, I want them to feel that they are respected too. Some of their experience can help less experienced students learn from rich experience of others. Experience is the best teacher… |
| 3. Do you believe that the lecture method is superior to facilitating learning? Why or why not? | 76 : 24 | Yes, lectures can give students foundational information for them to achieve a higher level of learning. Without first teachers' transmitting knowledge to students, students are still a blank slates waiting to be filled. Further, a lecture can inspire the students. Great teachers are great lecturers… |
| 4. Do you use a learning contract when assessing adult students' learning? Why or why not? | 0 : 100 | This is absolutely unnecessary. I am the general in my class. Students do what I tell them to do. I would like to think about using it, but I have no time… |
| 5. Do you think it should be a goal of adult educators to help all adult learners become self-directed? | 79 : 21 | What a teacher can teach to students is limited. Eventually, students need to move from dependence to independence. Self-direction is not a bad idea if students are able teach themselves. To me, if they become self-directed, what am I going to do as their teacher? |
| 6. Do you design activities that build students' self-esteem and sense of accomplishment while delivering course content? Why or why not? | 71 : 29 | I try to do that, but I don't want them to become too proud. I want them to be humble as our great teacher, Confucius has taught us. Sometimes, I don't have the time for these activities… |
| 7. Do you encourage a search for real-life examples, develop assignments related to real-life situations and embed the content of your course in everyday life? Why or why not? | 66 : 34 | Yes, this may help with their problem-solving skills, but I just don't have the time to develop real examples or assignments for my students. If I do more in this regard, I will make my superiors angry. Sometimes, I just do this between me and my students. My students must promise that they do not tell… |

contrary to Chinese ideologies on teaching.

As China began to implement economic reform in the early 1980's, a large number of Western educators have been invited to teach on China's university campuses. This number is on the increase since China is establishing more and more universities and colleges to accommodate the needs of its vast number of student population. Another huge factor is that well recognized Western educators help spread Western ideas on teaching in China. Dewey lectured in China between 1919 and 1921 to familiarize Chinese students and instructors with the Western experiential teaching approaches (Kaplan et al., 1979). Currently, Merriam from the University of Georgia speaks about Western approaches on teaching at the International Conferences held in China. Even institutions of higher learning in the United States have recognized the online education potential in China as more and more Chinese students can afford to pay tuition like their American counterparts. All these factors contribute to a changing teaching pattern of Chinese online instructors.

As China receives more and more Western influence, will China abandon their liberal and behavioral approaches of teaching ? Definitely further research may address this question. Western business such as Wal-Mart, McDonald's and Goodyear Tire, have achieved unprecedented success in China. Western education can be next.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS :

While Chinese online instructors still stick to their dearly held liberal and behavioral approaches of teaching that are deeply rooted in their culture, they do have an inclination to employ Western teaching approaches, such as constructivist approaches, PBL models as supported by humanistic, progressive, radical and analytic approaches of teaching. This changing instructional pattern of Chinese online instructors would not be possible without Western influences. As Westerners invented the Internet, they also shoulder the responsibility of spreading Western effective modes of teaching so that student online learning can be maximized. A lesson drawn from this study is that Eastern and Western teaching approaches are so often in disagreement that online instructors must be socially and culturally attentive. Thinking only in universal terms of teaching methods makes it difficult for online instructors to adapt to local social contexts in which particular situations may contradict our beautifully well-reasoned Western constructivist approaches and PBL models (Brookfield, 1995). The Chinese people like McDonald's because American food has been modified to suit Chinese peoples' taste. Wal-Mart in China would not be so profitable if it sold only American goods.

It is a good thing that American institutions of higher learning such as California State University, Long Beach, University of California, Irvine and Online University of America have seized the opportunity to deliver American graduate programs to China's leading universities via the Internet technologies. However, patterns of instruction actually used by instructors may present great difficulty in terms of how Chinese online students can better cooperate with Western online instructors. Based on the result of this study, Western instructional patterns and instructional patterns of Chinese online instructors need to be compatible to some extent in order to maximize student learning. After all, the old cliché may not be a bad idea, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." Moreover, Cheng (1998, p. 8) maintains that "students in Asian cultures are… not used to expressing themselves and exchanging views. They are more used to listening, keeping analyses in their minds, and express themselves only when it is very necessary… it remains to be seen whether the extension of the physical classroom to the cyber-space would further discourage or encourage interaction among students". Likewise, it remains to be discovered whether Chinese or Western teaching would better facilitate learning given the characteristics of Chinese learners. More of this kind of research is needed and it should remain open-ended.

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Dr Victor C.X. Wang is Assistant Professor at the Department of Professional Studies, California State University, Long Beach. Address : 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90840-5601, USA. Tel : 1- 562 985 1981. Fax : 1- 562 985 8815. URL : http://www.csulb.edu . Email : cwang@csulb.edu