Reading Respect in Australian Schooling
- a Chinese perspective

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Declaration

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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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List of Abbreviations

DET: Department of Education and Training
NMEB: Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau
NSW: New South Wales
UWS: University of Western Sydney
VTR: Volunteer Teacher Researcher
WSR: Western Sydney Region
The study is based on my dual identity- a Chinese background researcher and a NSW volunteer teacher. As a volunteer teacher in NSW, I witness a different demonstration of respect in Australian schooling from my own schooling experience. The main purpose of the study therefore is to enrich the understanding of respect in Australian schooling from my perspective as a Chinese teaching volunteer.

The literature will make special reference to two prominent philosophers- Kant and Confucius and their interpretations of respect in the West and East. My own experiences are related with a larger cultural and historical background through the main methodology in the study- autoethnography. To be more specific, five stories in my learning experience will be told for their reflection of Chinese cultural influences on respect. In addition, the document (Values Education study) and interviews with NSW teachers will be used as the supplementary data. Values Education Study Final report (2003) will be interrogated for its description of respect as one of core values in the document. Interviews with four primary school teachers in NSW aim to find out the demonstrations of respect in the authentic school context.

The findings from the stories reveal interesting relationships between respect and nostalgia and between respect and the concept of ‘face’ and so on. The document analysis on the other hand suggests a kind of ‘floating signifier’ for respect. It is shown from the paper that respect can be classified as conditional and unconditional. Respect in Australian schools more horizontally oriented while respect in Chinese schools are more vertically displayed.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research background

I am a Chinese student studying at the University of Western Sydney in the Master of Education (Honours) program. At the same time, I am engaged in teaching Mandarin in public schools in Western Sydney region as a volunteer teacher, hence I am a Volunteer Teacher Researcher (VTR).

My position as a VTR in Australia is because of an exchange program between the Western Sydney Region of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (DET), the Ningbo\(^1\) Municipal Educational Bureau (NMEB) and the University of Western Sydney (UWS). All partners recognise the importance of intercultural knowledge in language learning and the necessity of postgraduate study for future teachers (Singh & Zhao, 2008).

On my first day at UWS, I met with my supervisors. Their first ‘requirement’ appalled me - I was told to call them by their first names. My experience in China had told me to always call teachers ‘Miss’ or ‘Sir’ respectfully. But as I was in Australia, I tried to call the supervisors by their first names and I become used to it very soon. This incident inspired me to think about the different criteria for ‘respectful behaviour’ between China and Australia.

The teaching experiences in primary schools and frequent observations from kindergartens to senior high schools which followed enriched my understanding of

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\(^1\) Ningbo is a city in the southeast of the People’s Republic of China.
school cultures and school practices in Australia. In particular, students’ seemingly more ‘free’ and ‘expressive’ behaviour in class challenged my understanding of ‘respect’. Gradually, I became much clearer about my topic. I decided to explore Australian understanding of ‘respect’ in the school context. As well, I realise that I need to ‘read’ ‘Australian respect’ from my understanding of respect as a Chinese person. This is not a comparative study between cultures. What I am attempting is to define my experience of the Chinese concept of respect and then to investigate some Australian understandings of respect from the perspective of a Chinese person. Hopefully both cultures are able to learn from the other. In this study, the main literature on respect in the two cultures will come from Kant and Confucius, who valued ‘respect’ highly in their philosophy.

1.2 My experience of respect in China

When I was a small girl, I had a dream of becoming a teacher some day. I often imagined myself standing in the middle of classroom, passionately giving lectures. I admired teachers as the symbols of knowledge and goodness. To a large extent, it was this respect or admiration that formed my dream.

When in primary school, I tended to be obedient and tried to impress teachers by working hard. From my perspective, teachers seemed to have transcended most common people that I met in daily life. In order to avoid any tiny mistake, my nerves would be always a little strained when talking with teachers and sadness would flood over me if I accidentally did something wrong or received a negative response from teachers. My attitudes changed a little after entering senior high school. As most teachers regarded students as adults, my relationship with teachers became more ‘equal’. As well I was no longer so constrained in front of teachers.
1.2.1 Respect for teachers

Even in senior school, I was still firmly convinced that we should respect our teachers - a belief that is actually closely related to Chinese culture. Teachers enjoy a high position in Chinese society. Metaphors for teachers are always positive and encouraging, such as the ‘an engineer of the human mind’ or ‘a silkworm’ (Huber, 2010, pp.298-299). Teachers’ images are often related to ‘loftiness’ or ‘selflessness’. People also tend to use candles to symbolise teachers, with the idea that both are enlightening and giving of themselves. On every Chinese Teachers’ day, that is, 10th September every year, many students choose candles as a present to express their gratitude towards teachers.

The social customs above reflect teachers’ high social position. Actually, the positive connotations of ‘teacher’ date back more than one thousand years. The image of ‘teacher’ was illustrated in one influential article in ancient China, On the Teacher (Han, 802). The presentations of ‘teachers’ and ‘students’ in this article are so famous that On the Teacher is still compiled into a Chinese textbook for first year senior high school students. The author, Han Yu (768-824), is a famous Chinese poet and prose writer. In this article, Han Yu stressed that teachers are expected to undertake three major tasks. Specifically, a good teacher is able to impart knowledge to students, but not to ‘cram’ it. Teaching is the most direct and straightforward way to convey knowledge. Second, a qualified teacher is expected to be a bridge between students and their dilemmas. By consulting teachers or having face-to-face communications with them, students can solve their problems efficiently and effectively. Students can even make friends with teachers, which would encourage their motivation to study and their initiative, thus forming sensible learning habits. Third, a good teacher is a facilitator or mentor who will enlighten students and provide guidance and orientation like a beacon, paving the way for students’ development in society. It is clear from this passage that in China, teachers are
regarded as a combination of ‘knowledge carrier’, ‘caregiver’ and ‘ethical mentor’, which, as expected, deserves respect.

Confucius epitomises the teacher in China. He lays the foundation of much traditional Chinese thought on education. One of his achievements in education was the great number of his disciples. According to Yang (1993), Confucius recruited three thousand students and broke the aristocratic monopoly on learning. He firstly set up a private academy, making sure that any people, rich or poor, had access to learning and education.

1.2.2 The notion of respect in Chinese culture

According to Confucius and Lau (1992), the Chinese notion of respect—jing—is an ancient concept dating back to the pre-Confucian era. It appears quite often in the literature of the early Zhou dynasty, where it refers to the frame of mind of a ruler when he conducts sacrificial ceremonies to Heaven and his ancestors. Respect or jing at that time meant that the ruler was keenly aware of the immensity of the responsibility placed upon him by the deities to promote the welfare of the people. The notion of respect matured in the Confucian era. Confucius emphasises respect and regards it as one major goal for education. More importantly, he discusses the appropriate objects of respect and the way to show respect. For Confucius, the social framework defines each person’s dynamic social role, which further determines the range of respectful conduct. For Confucius, respect then is due to persons in accordance with their social roles, for example, one is expected to respect one’s father at home and one’s superior at work. In spite of various social frameworks involving different people, people in ancient China were expected to respect and worship five objects, namely, heaven, earth, the emperor, parents and teachers. This reflects our awe for heaven and earth, our deference to nations and our reverence for parents and teachers. These five characters were often put on the walls of the living
rooms in ancient China and worshipped by the whole family as a reminder about respect.

In modern China, Jing is not complex enough to represent the notion of ‘respect’. Hsueh et al (as cited in Li & Fisher, 2007) argue that zun zhong and zun jing are the closest equivalents to ‘respect’ in Modern Chinese. Therefore understanding Chinese respect relies heavily on understanding of zun zhong and zun jing. I will now discuss these two terms based on the etymologies of the characters. Chinese language has two systems, a pronunciation system and a writing system. The pronunciation system (pinyin) is composed of letters similar to English while the writing system is recorded by Chinese characters. For example, zun jing is the pronunciation of the two Chinese characters 尊敬. Even though many Chinese characters have evolved over time, their current forms retain some connections to the original ideograph. Therefore, I will attempt to understand zun jing and zun zhong through the etymologies and the structures of the Chinese characters.

The main source of the etymology is a traditional Chinese dictionary, shuowen jiezi (Xu, 100), itself literally meaning ‘explaining simple characters and analysing compound characters’. There is a brief introduction to this handbook on Wikipedia as follows:

The Shuowen jiezi was an early 2nd century CE Chinese dictionary from the Han Dynasty. Although not the first comprehensive Chinese character dictionary, it was still the first to analyse the structure of the characters and to give the rationale behind them (sometimes also the etymology of the words represented by them), as well as the first to use the principle of organisation by sections with shared components, called radicals.

It is obvious that the two terms zun jing and zun zhong have some similarities as they share a same word zun with the character 尊 which evolved from the original form 鉧. In shuowen jiezi, there are three steps to explain the structure and meaning of this character. The early explanation was quite straightforward: zun is originally a
kind of vessel for wine. The top half of the character  is ideographic, deriving from the picture of vessel. In ancient China, the container for wine was not only for the purpose of entertainment among friends. More importantly, the container was used during sacrifice ceremonies, especially in those ceremonies to honour heaven and ancestors. It is therefore not difficult to infer that the sacred ceremony would lead to the exalted value of the related equipment, including zun. The second part of the explanation is related to the bottom part of the character 王. It illustrates a picture of a person holding the vessel with two hands in a deferential way. Therefore the character could be employed either as a noun (‘respected vessel’) or as a verb (‘respectfully holding a vessel’). The last step of the explanation briefly lists six different kinds of vessels in ancient China. Over time, the original meanings of the character as a vessel for wine changed, but the connotation of the sense of respect from this word zun remained. Nowadays according to the modern Chinese - English Dictionary (Wu et al, 1987), zun refers to ‘elder’, ‘senior’, ‘respect’ and honourable titles and is used to address and differentiate social positions, status and roles. Despite changes with time, the structure of the character still illuminates the idea that zun is translated as a feeling of respect, as it was originally related to the sacrifice ceremony.

There are also slight differences between the synonyms zun zhong and zun jing, even though both of them relate to ‘respect’. From shuowen jiezi, the explanation of zhong is not complex. The first part of the explanation indicates that zhong is the same as thickness. The following two parts of the explanation describe a context for zhong, as well as explaining the original character 王: a person standing on the earth with a heavy bag on their back. This demonstrates the understanding of zhong in ancient China. The image of a person with a bag evokes the understanding of zhong as well as zun zhong. The presence of a heavy bag symbolises the existence of regulations and laws in society. These regulations define respectful actions; as well as requiring
people to be respectful. Therefore zun zhong, within the broad idea of respect, is specifically produced by external regulations and laws.

As to jing, the meaning is again related to the structure of the character 敬 with the ancient form 敬. Shuowen jiezi tells us that jing indicates a sense of seriousness. More specifically, the left side 譹 has the connotation of ‘being circumspect’ and ‘being cautious’ while the right part of the character 譹 visualises a person whipping himself with wands or scourges to remind himself. The images of wands or scourges typically convey the notion of self-discipline or self-reflectiveness. Therefore the character 敬, deriving from the ancient form 敬, suggests an intentional state of respect as claimed by Chan (2006). Zun jing would put emphasis more on the active role that the person himself is playing in the process of understanding the notion of respect.

The analysis above gives a clue to the difference between zun zhong and zun jing. While both of them indicate a feeling of respect, zun zhong emphasises the collectively social influence on the establishment of respect while zun jing stresses more the individual affective influence on the construction of the respect. As a result, zun zhong would connect more frequently with the forms of laws and rights while zun jing would connect more with individual choices.

In practice, however, in modern China, traditional beliefs have been noticeably in decline (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Some valuable qualities, including respect and politeness, are seen as less prominent among the young. The generation who grew up in the 1980s is thought to incline more towards individualism and equality.

1.3 My early experiences of respect in Australia
After I arrived in Australia, the situation seemed to be more complicated. As I mentioned above, the cultural collision began on the very first day of my arrival. The issue of respect occurred to me again when I was introduced to the Child Protection Policy in NSW, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. This represented concrete ways of regulating teachers’ behaviour towards students. While my perhaps stereotyped understanding of respect was confined to students’ respect for teachers, the policy reminds me of the importance of teachers’ respect for students.

I tried to understand the English word ‘respect’ from its etymology. The Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.) shows that ‘respect’ derives from the Latin word respectus, literally ‘looking back at one’. Specifically, ‘looking at’ is from the word spectus, while the prefix of re suggests the action of ‘back or again’. The etymology of ‘respect’ describes an action of ‘looking back at’. As mentioned in 1.2.2, the Chinese concept of respect—zun jing and zun zhong—derives from the original worship of the immense power of heaven and unchallengeable authority of people in high position. The Chinese concept of respect in this sense has more emphasis on ‘vertical relationships’ among people. In contrast, a sense of ‘looking back at’ from the English word ‘respect’ suggests that a Western understanding of respect is more about ‘horizontal relationships’ among people. With this basic understanding of respect in different cultures from the perspective of etymologies, I became more interested in respect in schools. In particular, I had direct experience from my teaching and observations of others teaching.

As a volunteer teacher in NSW public schools, I soon realised that primary school teachers pay special attention to students’ moral education and to respectful manners in particular. Young students, especially those in Kindergarten or Year One, are trained to form the habit of speaking in a polite way, with special emphasis on words such as ‘please’ and ‘excuse me’. There is indeed an emphasis on instilling the
concept of ‘respect’ in primary school students. It is possible that students are still unaware of a clear definition of respect. But regulation and teaching give them a positive demonstration of respectful behaviour.

However, Australian secondary schools at first left me with a different impression. During observations in secondary schools, I found that some students would interrupt the teacher directly in class and even ignore teachers. Whereas in China, teachers enjoy an inherent and fundamental respect among students, in Australia, respect or authority seems to need to be gained by teachers, rather than being assumed. For me, this appeared to be quite disrespectful. On the other hand, there seems to be more emphasis on teachers’ respect for students in Australia than in China.

With these direct observations, I turned to literature for a discussion of respect. There are not many studies on respect in education. Most of the research on respect mainly focuses on medical areas. There are very few studies on respect in the Australian school context. So there is a gap in the literature in terms of the concept of ‘respect’ in schools. I also turned to some relevant documents from the NSW DET. Firstly I focused on the document Values Education Study Final Report 2003. Respect is not frequently mentioned in the document. Within these limited references, in most cases, respect is followed by very generalised objects such as ‘others’. In this sense, the object of respect remains very vague in schools, which ran against my traditional belief that teachers should be the main objects of respect in schools.

1.4 Research questions

The overarching topic for this paper is ‘respect’. Therefore, firstly, I will concern myself with the various understandings of respect in different cultures. I will make special reference to Kant and Confucius.
Within this overarching topic of ‘respect’, I will focus on respect in school contexts. As a researcher from a Chinese background, I am particularly interested in respect in Australian schools. My way of exploring Australian respect is through a document about Values Education - Values Education Study Final Report 2003 - where respect is classified as one value. I will also attempt to understand respect from interviews with public school teachers. The document analysis and interviews are expected to provide enough information for me to understand respect in Australian schools.

Respect in Australian schools is only one part of this study. I will try to analyse my Chinese sense of respect in schools from my living and learning experiences in China. I will then attempt to connect my personal experiences of respect with larger cultural and historical understandings of respect in China and the West. My main research methodology will be autoethnography, which I will explain in more detail in the next section, 1.5, Introduction to the methodology. Finally I will attempt to ‘read’ Australian respect from the perspective of respect in Chinese schools. Hence, my main question is:

How can I ‘read’ respect in Australian schools from the perspective of who I am and what cultures I bring in?

The contributory questions are:

1) What are the particular understandings of respect in different cultures with special reference to Kant and Confucius?

2) What are the understandings of respect in Australian schools as expressed in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003?

3) What are the demonstrations of respect in Australian schools, as reflected in particular teachers’ interviews?
1.5 Introduction to the methodology

As the four research questions indicate, my data will be collected in four ways, namely, literature, document analysis, interviews and autoethnography.

The main research question will be answered from my main methodology, that is, autoethnography. Autoethnography will mainly focus on my experience of respect in China. As the name indicates, autoethnography is composed of three parts, i.e., auto (oneself), ethno (cultural and history) and graphy (emotional recall and thick description). The main purpose of this method is to relate the experience of oneself to broader culture and history by emotional recall and detailed thick description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this study, my way of ‘doing’ autoethnography will be through telling five stories specifically on respect. It is expected that story telling and story analysis will ‘explain’ my identity and aspects of my culture at the same time, who I am and what culture I ‘bring’ to this. Then my understanding of respect in Australian schools will be revisited and ‘read’ from my perspective as a Chinese person. Autoethnography is the most fundamental methodology in this study as it will form my understanding of respect as a Chinese person, from the perspective of which the interrogation of documents, interviews and literature will be framed.

As to the first contributory question, in this paper, I will focus on various understandings of respect from particular philosophers, especially Kant and Confucius. Contemporary ideas on respect will be especially represented by Sennett.

In answering the second contributory research question, the Values Education Study Final Report 2003 will be analysed for an understanding of policy about respect in Australian schooling. The introduction in the document tells us that the main purpose of the Values Education Study is to help Australian schools develop and demonstrate
current practice in values education. In the document, ‘respect’ is defined as one of ten core values. I will attempt to analyse how ‘respect’ is reflected in the document.

With regard to the third contributory question, demonstrations and understandings of respect will be collected from interviews with Australian public school teachers. The interviewees are four primary teachers in one school, each representing one stage of schooling (Kindergarten, Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Three).

1.6 Significance of the study

Two of the outstanding ethical philosophers, Confucius in sixth-century B.C. China, and Immanuel Kant in Enlightenment Europe, although from diverse times and backgrounds, both propose and promote seminal notions of respect in their cultures. This thesis will examine the importance of respect and how it is understood and demonstrated chronologically and geographically.

The study also has cross-cultural significance. It is expected that Australia and China can learn from each other’s concept of respect (as neither can represent any ‘universal’ notion of respect). The study therefore aims to examine the ideas of respect in Australia, through discussing its counterpart in China, and vice versa.

Plank et al (2001) argued that teachers in their classrooms are dealing with students who are rude, using profanity, or otherwise switching over to blatantly disrespectful expressions of incivility. Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999) also report an increase in student-on-student violence, especially in hallways, bathrooms, stairwells, or other corridor spaces. This crisis has been attributed to several factors, amongst which loss of respect is supposed to occupy a leading position. However, a search for scholarly literature on the topic of respect in an education context yields relatively few results. While schools are often regarded as cradles for nourishing students’ values, including respect, the reality is that relatively little research has occurred.
This research also reminds Chinese students of traditional culture or values and articulates a different philosophical approach to respect in the West. It also offers an updated understanding of respect in schools. In terms of Australian schools, through the analysis of the Values Education document, the thesis discusses whether this policy provides authoritative direction to promote the notion of respect. It asks whether schools bear some social responsibility to teach students to be respectful citizens.

1.7 Overview of the study

The thesis is developed through seven chapters:

The first chapter serves as introduction, including the research background, the influence of my lived experience on the current research, the research questions, a brief introduction to the methodology and a discussion of the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature on respect, with special reference to Kant and Confucius. Chapter 3 deals with the methodology of the study. It contains a detailed introduction and illustration of document analysis, interview and autoethnography. Chapter 4 discusses the findings from the document Values Education Study Final Report 2003. Similarly, Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of interviews with four Australian primary school teachers.

Chapter 6 deals with five personal stories on respect from my life. Autoethnography is applied in this study through five ‘spots of time’ stories. From this I will glean my Chinese concept of respect. Each individual story will be examined in terms of the literature on respect. This chapter will form a rich understanding of my position in relation to respect in education.
Chapter 7 is the final discussion chapter. In this chapter, I will again try to ‘read’ the findings from the Values Education document and from interviews on respect in Australia. But this reading is not undertaken from the perspective of the literature. It will be analysed from my Chinese concept of respect, which is in turned gleaned from my ‘spots of time’ stories.
Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Respect in schools

On 19 July 2002, a values education study was commissioned by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP (Values Education Study Final Report 2003, p.1). One purpose of the values education study was to develop and demonstrate current good practice in values education in Australia. The study is reported in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, which will be my main focus in the following with regard to values education programs. In this document, ‘respect’ is ranked as one of ten core values and it is expected that the notion of ‘respect’ will be developed and promoted in schools through this document and program.

2.1.1 Teaching about respect

There is little research on the specific topic of ‘teaching about respect’. However, there is discussion on teaching values. The literature review in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003 lists the two contrasting perspectives - character education and cognitive development - which have typically appeared in recent research literature about values education. The first approach, character education, focuses on developing particular moral virtues while the second approach, the cognitive approach, places more emphasis on reasoning ability and critical thinking (Kinnie, Kernes, & Dautheribes 2003; Prencipe & Helwig, 2002).
Lockwood gives a definition of character education, as:

Character education is defined as any school-initiated program, designed… to shape directly and systematically, the behaviour of young people by influencing explicitly the non-relativistic values believed directly to bring about that behaviour (Lockwood, 1997, p.179).

Therefore in this approach, schools are expected to play an extensive role in teaching values. Character education is based on the belief that it is possible to identify universal values and it is the duty of adults, especially teachers in schools, to teach those values to students by direct instruction (Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Wynne, 1997). Instruction is provided in different ways, for example, through literature and specifically-designed lessons about values. Supporters of character education programs, such as Lickona (1991), believe that it is useful to address the ‘noticeable deterioration’ in moral values. But they are also criticised for neglecting students’ active roles in constructing their moral values (Kohn, 1997). More criticism comes from the concern that there does not seem an obvious connection between learning about a particular value and its resultant behaviour. Leming (1993, p.6) notes that few of these new character education programs have systematically evaluated their effects on children’.

In terms of the cognitive-development approach, there are two main concrete methods advocated. Based on cognitive-developmental theory, Kohlberg advocates a method of teaching values, known as ‘moral reasoning’, which develops from Piagetian theory (Forster & Masters, 2002). Another cognitive approach, ‘values clarification’, aims to help students to use rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine and reflect on their personal behaviour (Johnson, 2002). The purpose of ‘values clarification’ is to clarify students’ own values, rather than to inculcate these values. This process of ‘value clarification’ is internal and relative and therefore does not posit any universal set of values. The role of teachers is to lead students in the
process rather than to promote values explicitly (Gibert & Hoepper, 1996). The specific teaching methods for values clarification include large and small group discussion, dilemma simulations and personal journals (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). Numerous studies have proven the efficacy of a cognitive-developmental approach, especially ‘dilemma discussion’ and moral reasoning, as improvement in students’ moral awareness seems evident (Forster & Masters, 2002). But there is still much criticism of activities and programs based on cognitive-developmental theories. They are especially criticised for placing little importance on social factors (Kohn, 1997). It is also reported that some activities are sometimes superficial, thus generating little improvement in values (Kirschenbaum, 1992). Those who favour the teaching of core values also reject values clarification because it is said to make little distinction between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and is based on ‘spurious relativism’ (Lickona, 1993).

2.2 The concept of respect in philosophy

Respect is often regarded as having an important role in a complex society. A vivid metaphor for respect as a ‘social lubricant and glue’ comes from Quaquebeke et al (2007, p.197). However, despite the widespread acknowledgment of the importance of respect, there is no settled agreement about how to understand the concept, what the appropriate objects of respect are or what the moral requirements are regarding respect. In this section, I will offer some examples of the notion of respect from several time periods, beginning with Kant, moving to Piaget and on to the contribution of more contemporary researchers.

2.2.1 Respect in Kant

It is widely held that one of the most influential positions on respect is found in Kant. Central to Kant’s ethical theory is the belief that every person deserves respect. One
of Kant’s earliest sustained references to respect appears in a footnote in the
Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1997). After introducing the famous
proposition ‘duty is the necessity of an action from respect for law’ (p.13), Kant
(1997, p.4) appends the following note:

…What I recognize immediately as a law for me I cognize with respect, which
signifies merely consciousness of the subordination of my will to a law without the
mediation of other influences on my sense. Immediate determination of the will by
means of a law and consciousness of this is called respect…

Moral law is regarded by Kant as the one of the most crucial notions in ethics as it is
established as the source of all moral worth (Seidler, 1986, p.4). As the above
quotation indicates, respect is generated by the unmediated influence that moral law
places on the will. In this sense, the immediacy of the law on the will means respect
is felt as immediacy itself. This model of immediacy distinguishes respect from other
feelings. As respect pushes moral law to directly influence will, the cause of respect
lies in ‘pure practical reason’ (1997b, p.65). While other feelings are ‘pathologically
effected’, respect is regarded as ‘practically effected’ with the objects of the moral
law. Therefore, Kant refers to respect as an ‘odd feeling’ and it serves to make the
moral law a maxim within oneself (1997b, p.76). Many studies (McCarty, 1994) also
point out that respect is both the cognitive recognition of the moral law and an
affective state. More specifically, it works as an incentive to comply with the
cognition of moral law. If we regard moral law as the first and direct influence on our
will and our moral conduct, then the feeling of respect for moral law serves as the
second and indirect influence on moral behaviour.

At the same time, respect is also due to moral law purely because of the latter’s own
worth:

…only what is connected with my will merely as ground and never as effect, what
does not serve my inclination but outweigh it or at least excludes it altogether from
calculation in making a choice – hence the mere law for itself- can be an object of
respect and so a command. (Kant, 1996, p.55)
The existence of moral law encourages people to take part in activities out of their own volition, rather than the consequences of the activities. Kant believed that moral law inherently deserves our respect. Respect for moral law, in other words, is the recognition of the law’s nature as a positive, determining principle of goodwill itself.

The term command indicates that respect is not only appropriate, but also morally and unconditionally required. Kant tells us that “respect for the law… is identical with consciousness of one’s duty” (1996, p.580). The duty of respect owed to others requires that we refrain from treating others with arrogance, defamation or ridicule. In this sense, the duty of respect takes in the form of a ‘negative’, that is, expressed in terms of a description of vices which would otherwise violate respect, rather than providing specific description of virtues equivalent to respect (Kant, 1996, p.569). Besides the duty of respect, there is the duty of love in Kant’s theory (1996, p.568). Performing out of the duty of love puts others under the obligation to pay back while performing from duty of respect is simply fulfilling a duty that is owed.

According to Drummond (2006), there are three kinds of respect in Kant’s doctrine:

- respect for moral law;
- respect for persons with exceptional talents, and
- respect for persons as such.

As fundamental respect is due to the moral law, respect for persons is derivative from respect for moral laws. Kant is clear about this,

…any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of integrity and so forth) of which he gives us an example (1997a, p.14).

This kind of respect works as a response to persons meriting tribute. But Kant is quite firm that the final recipient of respect is the moral law, rather than the exemplars, the embodiments of the law. This is respect for persons with exceptional
qualities. However Kant mainly talks about another kind of respect which is due to persons as such, regardless of their diverse talents, backgrounds, or characters. Kant pointed out that each person is born with ‘this capacity to give universal law’ (1996, p.89). Given that everyone is a lawgiver, Kant argued that everyone deserves respect due to the ‘law within’. Every human being’s fundamental position as a lawgiver puts others under an obligation to respect him. Respect for persons as such, is therefore ‘recognition of a dignity in other human beings, that is, of a worth that has no price, no equivalent for which the object evaluated could be exchanged’ (Kant, 1996, p.579). Moral worth and moral law in others commands our respect and, in turn, our dignity commands respect from others. This further illustrates the egalitarian character of respect for persons, as Kant states that we cannot withdraw respect even from a vicious man ‘even though by his deeds he makes himself unworthy of it’ (Kant, 1996, p.580). Respect is therefore specifically owed to everyone just because they are persons, that is, rational beings.

The emphasis on every person leads to another question - how to deal with one’s own dignity. Kant claims that showing respect is a process of lessening one’s own dignity, which could be quickly recovered once receiving respect from others (1996, p.401). Duties to respect indicate the ways in which a limitation on self-esteem is manifested by recognition of the dignity of others.

The feelings involved in respect are different according to the objects. Kant is aware of this.

I am not bound to revere others (regard merely as human beings), that is, to show them positive high esteem. The only reverence to which I am bound by nature is reverence for law as such. (Kant, 1996, p.583)

Here Kant makes a distinction between ‘reverential respect’ and ‘ordinary respect’. ‘Reverential respect’ is only expected towards moral law. The distinction indicates our subordination to moral laws, which further creates a sense of equality among
human beings as we are all subject to moral laws. The notion of respect is based on, and will contribute to, human equality.

Followers of Kant such as Feinberg (1975) and Dillon (1992), attempt to further discern the nature of respect. But the most influential discussion of Kantian respect is made by Darwall. Darwall (1977) describes two distinct ways in which respect can be manifested. One form consists of ‘a disposition to weigh appropriately in one’s deliberations some feature of the thing in question and to act accordingly’ (Darwall, 1977, p.38). The weight in question is described as attaching to a ‘feature’ of what is being evaluated, and due to this, Darwall terms this recognition respect. A wide variety of things can be the objects of such respect, including laws, dangerous things, the self, individuals present in different contexts, persons as such and so on. For example, recognition respect for persons is to take seriously and weigh appropriately the fact that they are persons as such. Therefore, Kant’s respect for persons as such is recognition respect. If we go back to the definition of recognition respect, we find that the first step is to give the fact a proper regard and the second step is to ‘act accordingly’. Therefore respectful behaviours are an integral part of recognition respect. This contrasts with What Darwall calls appraisal respect, which doesn’t necessarily lead to respectful behaviour. Darwall describes it as ‘an attitude of positive appraisal of a person either judged as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’ (1977, p.38). It is inferred that either moral beings (as persons) or social beings (engaged in some more specific pursuit) would be the object of appraisal respect. In either instance, the excellence embodied by certain persons has qualified them to be the objectives of appraisal. Therefore Darwall suggests that respectful behaviour may not obviously appear in appraisal respect as the feeling of appraisal itself is accounted as one way to show respect.

Quaquebeke et al (2007) attempt to distinguish between these two kinds of respect by psychological processes. They argue (2007, P.186) that appraisal respect refers to
issue driven attitudes, for which the object needs to fulfil certain conditions in order to be responded to favourably’ and recognition respect is ‘an attitude that is mainly concerned about the process, i.e., independent of an object’s concrete features’.

Appraisal respect is only warranted when we perceive excellence or commitment in the objects. Certain positions might help people get appraisal respect as these positions are characterized by excellence. However, Quaquebeke et al (2007) believe that status should be the consequence of, rather than the incentive for, appraisal respect. It is therefore unreasonable of parents or teachers to demand that their young children should respect them due to status. Appraisal respect is to be earned among equals, i.e., status may be awarded after the fact, but not before. Quaquebeke et al (2007, P.186) define recognition respect as ‘concerned about the process’. It is not the outcome of a decision worthy of respect, but rather the ‘how’ of the decision making process.

Some contemporary discussions of respect explicitly challenge aspects of Kant’s theory. Seidler (1986) argues that the notion of individuality is greatly undermined by Kantian respect. With the premise of the fundamental position of moral law, common people are greatly overlooked, Seidler argues. The influence of respect on moral law occurs at the cost of abstracting everyone from social, sexual and cultural characteristics. This prevents us from getting a fuller sense of the individual. Seidler feels that respect owed to people never really goes to them, as Kant insists that respect for persons is just one form of respect for the moral law. But what Kant does not take into consideration is the characteristic effort every person has made to reflect their law. For example, if a hard-working teacher prepares a lesson until midnight, the students only regard this as the result of the quality of hard-working. They never consider that not everyone would work that hard. This to some extent is disrespectful towards the teachers and his lessons as well.

Sennett (2003) categorises respect as a positive example of ‘character’. According to him, compared to personality, ‘character’ is more related to sociality, with the
capacity to engage the larger world and the possibility of changing under influences from outside. The demonstration and interpretation of respect then would change as our characters become enriched in society. Compared with the ‘negative form’ of Kantian respect, Sennett (2003) highlights the ‘expressive form’ of respect. Sennett argues that showing respect means finding the words and gestures to make respect felt and convincing. This is also confirmed by Li (2006, p.82), who argues that ‘when people show respect, there seems to be a set of behavioural, linguistic, and symbolic norms that convey respect’.

What does not appear in Kant’s work is any bad influence from respect. Sennett (2003) pays special attention to those disadvantaged cases when compassion is reduced to pity, and the self-respect of the recipients is hurt. Shwalb (2006) also points out that respect is not always an example of the positive, as someone may gain respect on the basis of hurting others.

### 2.2.2 Respect in Piaget

Piaget delineates the notion of respect in this way:

> To respect a person therefore amounts to recognizing his scale of values, which as yet does not mean to adopt it oneself, but to attribute a value from the point of view of this person. (1995, p.118)

Scale of values is synonymous with interpretive stance or point of view, according to Lightfoot (2000, p.178). The statement therefore suggests that in Piaget’s understanding, ‘A respects B’ means ‘A understands B’s point of view and attributes a value to B only from the perspective of B rather than A’. Piaget insisted that evaluations should be undertaken from the perspective of the other person because the primary consideration of one’s own profits would ruin social exchanges. In other words, it is an obligation to take account of the other’s point
of view. Therefore mutual respect, in Piaget and Smith (1995, p.119), is nothing else than ‘reciprocal substitution of scales’. Respecting in mutual directions requires both sides to act according to the satisfaction of the other. Based on the principle of reciprocity, mutual respect asks all participants to take others’ needs or satisfaction as the ultimate goal.

The classification of Piaget’s (1932) respect goes along with children’s moral development. Children between 3 and 7 years tend to show unilateral respect. Piaget believes that children at this stage tend to accept all information from outside as they are not able to differentiate themselves from the constraints of the outside, a characteristic of ‘egocentrism’. At this stage, rules, orders and commands are regarded as having ‘a transcendental origin’ (1932, p.89). However as children grow older, they no longer invariably obey ready-made rules. They try to create new rules on the basis of cooperation as ‘rules become something that can be changed’ (1932, p.90). Consequently, the prestige of adults is diminished. This is when mutual respect emerges along with a sense of cooperation. Lightfoot (2000), specified ‘cooperation’ in Piaget’s respect as the ‘child’s own engagement in the process of construction of norms of behavior’ (p.179). Lightfoot argues that not all social interactions are equally inspiring; instead only those involving reasoning and negotiation, like meaningful engagement, would accelerate the transformation from unilateral respect to mutual respect.

It is worth noting that unilateral respect and mutual respect are never completely separated, as if the latter would replace the former at a critical moment. As no one gains 100% mutual respect, what matters to determine moral development is the different proportion of unilateral and mutual respect in each person (Piaget, 1932, p.85).

Compared with Kantian fundamental respect for the moral law, Piaget insisted that respect is a sentiment only towards people, not to a rule or a law (1932,
p.170). He argues that respect precedes any rule or law because the important reason for children’s respect for rules or orders is their respect for adults. Therefore, according to Piaget, respect for people explains respect for laws, but the reverse remains unexplained.

2.2.3 Respect in Confucius

2.2.3.1 Confucian respect

From the point of view of Confucius, the seminal concept of respect is the root of any system of ethics (Wawrytko, 1982). Here I will explore the notion of respect as expressed in one Confucian classic, Lun Yu.

The philosophy and teachings of Confucius were compiled by his disciples and students into Lun Yu. According to Zhu (2009, p.33), Lun Yu is the ‘earliest and most reliable source’ on the life and teaching of Confucius. It consists of about 500 short pieces, each rarely more than a few lines long, which are organised into twenty books (Zhu, 2009). The two basic notions are Ren and Li. The core of Confucius’ system is Ren, which occurs 109 times in Lun Yu. There is a variety of translations of Ren, such as ‘perfect virtue’, ‘goodness’, ‘kindness’, ‘benevolence’, ‘human-heartedness’, ‘charity’, ‘compassion’ and so on. According to Zhu (2009), Legge’s translation of ‘perfect virtue’ for Ren is most suitable as he argues that Ren is so abstract that it cannot be regarded as any specific virtue. It is therefore the total of many virtues, such as ‘filial piety’, ‘fraternal submission’, ‘wisdom’, ‘courage’, ‘sincerity’, ‘gravity’, ‘respectfulness’ and ‘kindness’. Confucius’ doctrine of Ren is a doctrine to describe a standard of ideal character with moral qualities and it encourages us to improve ourselves. Another notion, Li, is often translated as ‘propriety’. It is another key concept, second to Ren and the word appears 71 times in Lun Yu. The original meaning of Li was ‘to sacrifice’. According to Confucius, and
Lau (1979, p.20), Li in Lun Yu means ‘a body of rules governing action in every aspect of life and they were the repository of past insights into morality’. If we regard Ren as the total of many abstract virtues, Li is a set of rules, translating these virtues into everyday practice. In fact, Li covers everything from table manners to the three years of mourning on the loss of one’s parent, from the institution of parenthood to the proper posture for expressing commiseration.

In Lun Yu, Ren tells us what kinds of thoughts are morally right and Li tells us how to transform these thoughts into actions in daily life. Consistency of performance of Ren and Li breeds many specific virtues, such as respect. The notion of respect is deeply embedded in both notions. The idea of respect is enclosed and entailed in the definition of Ren. More specifically speaking, according to the notion of Ren, respect is due to two groups of people: ethically important people and morally important people.

Social harmony—the great goal of Confucianism—results in part from every individual knowing his or her place in the social order, and playing his or her part well. There are five key relationships delineated in Confucianism (Thomasma et al, 2001, p.152):

1. father and son;
2. ruler and minister;
3. husband and wife;
4. elder and younger;
5. friend and friend.

Of these five key relationships, the relationship between friends is the only equal one (although it is often based on age as well). With this possible exception, each of the five relationships is marked by some differences between those who enter into the relationship. The relationships are thus intrinsically unequal. The first term in each case is superior, owing some kind of moral obligation to, and at the same time, should be respected by, the second term. It is noteworthy that relations between
father and son occupy a paradigmatic place and the relationship between older brother and younger brother is regarded as a variation. Together, filial piety and fraternal submission are the root of all benevolent action. (Legge, 2004 p.17).

Confucius reiterates the importance of respect in the family because he believes that it prepares for the flourishing of respect in society. If one wants to claim that there are hierarchical relationships that are not artificially created but have their own base in nature, the father-son relationship seems to be the best example. Once this relationship is accepted as naturally hierarchical, the idea of a natural hierarchy soon applies to the relations between husband and wife and between ruler and minister. Once the ruler-minister relationship is naturalised, it in turn reinforces the idea of the five key relationships. That is the reason why there are passages in Lun Yu that suggest that if a man is a good son and a good younger brother at home, he can be counted on as behaving well in society.

Respect among family members is emphasised as a way to instil the idea of respect according to position in the social fabric with the emperor as the ultimate recipient. Each has to respect parents and elder brothers at home, and abroad respect those in higher social positions.

However, there is an exception for morally important persons. As Confucius focuses much on morality, he encourages people to respect those with perfect virtue, even though they may not be in a high social position. Confucius strongly recommends that these people should become involved in politics and become devoted to administering the state:

There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of the sages. (Legge, 2004, p.116)

In sum, respect is contained in the notion of Ren. With regard to ethically important persons, we are required to respect them due to the rigid social fabric; as to morally important persons, we are expected to respect them due to their moral achievements.
With regard to Li, another important notion in Lun Yu, this gives a detailed demonstration and performance of respect in daily life. Though it is commonly regarded that the expressions of respect would be in words as well as in behaviour (Sennett, 2003, p.207, Li, 2006, p.82), Confucius gives a priority to manners. As fine words are believed to rarely associate with true virtue, Confucius advocates that proper manners, rather than fine words, would show a sense of respect toward others (Legge, 2004, p.18, p.36).

Specific requirements of the performance of respect mainly go to the five relationships mentioned above, with the greatest emphasis being on parents at home and the emperor abroad. Confucius stresses the importance of obedience in discussing relationships with parents. He further explains that obedience requires us to show respect towards both the living and the dead as, ‘parents, when alive, should be served according to propriety; when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and they should be sacrificed to according to propriety’ (Legge, 2004, p.22). Thus respect for parents is shown specifically in serving them, burying them and sacrificing to them in three different times.

Respect for the emperor and other officers is given in different degrees according to their ranks. Confucius provides a specific description of demeanours with other great officers and before the emperor:

When he was waiting at court, in speaking with great officers of the lower grade, he spoke freely, but in a straightforward manner; in speaking with those of the higher grade, he did so blandly, but precisely. When the ruler was present, his manner displayed respectful uneasiness; it was grave, but self-possessed (Legge, 2004, p.66).

In other words, though respect is due to officers, it is shown to different degrees. Among them, respect for the emperor is most emphasised as the effective way to stabilise a chaotic country.
It may appear here that respect is institutionalised as we seemingly respect mainly according to social position. However, as mentioned above, Confucius also asks us to respect morally important persons. Anyone striving for the cultivation of morality also deserves our respect regardless of their background and most respect is allocated to those who have completely obtained perfect virtue.

### 2.2.3.2 Different understandings between Kant and Confucius

Both Kant and Confucius emphasise respect. As mentioned above, Kant puts respect in the centre of his practical philosophy. And for Confucius, respect occupies a vital position in his big idea Ren as the core of the Confucius philosophy. But there are obvious differences in the understanding of respect between these two philosophers. According to Kant, the imperative to respect others derives from our shared rational nature as human beings. But for Confucius, the social framework defines conduct toward others, which means that respect is due to persons in accordance with dynamic social roles. Acting on the assumption that we are indeed social beings, Confucius sought to provide a framework for the social fabric by defining the roles of social positions. Thus, the major point of divergence between Confucius and Kant involves the precise means by which respect is inculcated. For Kant, respect wells up from the sense of participation in a community of rational beings, while in Confucian theory respect results from our experience as a social being in a hierarchy.

### 2.2.4 Respect in other key writers

For Kant, the absence of respect is ‘disrespect’. Disrespect occurs when people ignore the moral law. Contemporary researchers tend to provide the reasons for the absence of respect by a focus on our relationships with others.
According to Drummond (2006), understanding ‘empathy’ is necessary for respect. More specifically, empathy means that through ‘perceiving the other’s bodily activities’, one recognises the other as another ‘conscious life’ (Drummond, 2006, p.15). On the basis of this, one can empathise with others’ lives and realise other possibilities for experiencing the world from different perspectives. Drummond argues that empathy is the presupposition of respect. In short, empathy indicates our ability to relate to others on the basis of understanding them as conscious and unique human beings. This is confirmed by Harris (1997, pp.77-78), who raised four important issues in a number of observations about respect, namely:

1. Our ability to sympathise with others is functionally related to our ability to respect others;
2. Our ability to relate to others is functionally related to our ability to respect others;
3. Our ability to relate to others is functionally related to our ability to respect ourselves;
4. Our ability to relate to our loved ones is functionally related to our ability to respect them as respectful, sympathetic people.

Based on this notion of empathy, Drummond (2006, pp.21-22) listed many cases when respect would be absent:

I might not, for example, empathically encounter the other as a person because of a physical dissimilarity, say, the colour of one’s skin. Sexual difference or physical deformity can similarly occasion failures of respect… It can also fail when particular manifestations of rational capacities are not empathically recognized as such, for example, when others are speaking a foreign language. It can also be absent when we fail to distinguish the grounds for appraisal respect from the grounds for recognition respect.

Respect in this sense, means to acknowledge and appreciate the difference among people, though with the recognition that each is basically the same in being a ‘conscious life’. The co-existence of ‘difference’ and ‘sameness’ of persons are the essential in Drummond’s respect. The difference may be caused by gender, culture,
time, etc. It is obvious that Drummond’s respect differs from Kant’s respect in the sense that Kant regards respect as a more universal concept.

While Drummond reveals the absence of respect in persons as such, Sennett (2003) specifies the reasons why talented people may not gain respect. The first occasion is that the display of one’s ability is too professional or too technical for others to understand. This is closely related to Drummond’s notion of empathy. As the particular ability is beyond the understanding of others, it cannot be empathically recognised and will not lead to the respect that is deserved. Another situation is that the person is so immersed in his work that he loses connection with other people, thus also losing respect from others. Sennett (2003, p.83) named this ability craftsmanship, defined as ‘the capacity to make a thing well’. There is another kind of ability which is put in the service of mastery over others, defined as ‘the demonstration to others of how something is made’ (Sennett, 2003, p.83). In theory, the display of one’s ability, especially mastery, should earn one respect and strengthen others’ self-development through imitation. However, in practice, the membrane between imitation and competition is so slight that envy can break in easily (Sennett, 2003, p.82). Therefore the third situation is that the display of one’s ability or mastery may only lead to envy rather than respect.

Sennett (2003) also refers to cases in which people are not willing to respect others just because it is too tiring. He argues that respect is a free act and is generated by subjective interpretation. Unlike hierarchical regimes with fixed ways of showing respect, in more egalitarian cultures, there are actually no standard criteria to measure whether others deserve respect from us, which in turn exhausts us in showing respect to others. So respect for others can become wearing just because it possesses no limits and no boundaries.
Along with the reasons for the absence of respect, Drummond and Sennett listed the ways to gain respect. According to Drummond (2006), based on the notion of empathy, in order to give proper respect to the right person, we are required to become more expansive in our understanding of the variety of lives that will produce respect. In other words, the cultivation of respect for others requires a moral education to extend our imaginative abilities which will allow us to recognise other possibilities of living. We actively search within and across cultures for those who deserve appraisal respect so that we are better prepared to respect all authentic lives as meritorious persons of exceptional character and to respect all persons simply as persons.

With the presumption that respect is a positive part of character, Sennett (2003, pp.63-64) argues that society shapes character in three ways, so that people will earn respect:

    The first way occurs through self-development, particularly through developing abilities and skills...The second way lies in care of oneself or independence. In other words, we should make sure that we are not being a burden upon others. In this way, needy adults incur shame and self-sufficient persons deserve respect...The third way to earn respect is to give back to others.

Sennett stresses that giving back to others is perhaps the most universal, timeless, and deepest source of esteem for one’s character. After all, self-sufficiency alone is not enough to earn respect. Giving back to others will harvest respect from others. In other words, exchange plays an inseparable role in animating the character of someone who gives back to the community, building good relationships among people. This is confirmed by Mauss (1990), who points out that those who benefit must give something back, even if they cannot give back equivalence. They must do so to achieve respect in the eyes of others and in their own eyes. Put simply, reciprocity is the foundation of mutual respect.
2.3 Cultural differences in the concept of respect

As Sennett (2003, p.59) indicates, respect is socially and psychologically complex. It is inevitably influenced by culture. For a long time, many researchers tended to attribute cultural differences between East and West to the opposition between a collectivist and an individualist culture, stressing the maintenance of group harmony embodied by the East, and an individualist culture prevalent in the West. However, recent research (Li & Fischer, 2007) suggests that the collectivistic aspect of Eastern culture may be overstated. The very influential Confucian theory has some emphasis on individuality, particularly in the person’s own moral striving and development of personal virtues and this has been largely overlooked. So Li claims that despite their noted socio-centric tendency, Eastern people emphasise self-reliance, individual responsibility, and even autonomy in decision making. It seems that the general opposition of collectivism and individualism cannot explicitly explain the cultural origins of respect.

There are a number of cross-cultural studies on respect. For example, Li and Fischer (2007), after a comparison and synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures, conclude that respect in China, although not originating from Western moral conceptions, could also be divided into ought-respect and affect-respect with the translations zun zhong and zun jin in Chinese respectively. The authors (2007) also tested the correspondences of ought-respect, affect respect and their Chinese counterparts. The results showed that zun zhong is very similar to ought-respect while zun jing is less accurately constrained by the notion of affect respect. More specifically affect-respect is extended to four kinds of people in the West, that is, those:

1) with moral/virtuous qualities,
2) with high ability/merit/knowledge/talent;
3) who are charismatic/heroic people and
4) who are powerful people.

Zun jing in China is addressed to five kinds of people, that is, those:

1) with moral/virtuous qualities;
2) with high ability/merit/knowledge/talent;
3) who are teachers/scholars;
4) who are kin elders/old age and
5) who are leaders.

It is interesting to notice that the first two categories, with their reference to qualities, are similar across the cultures. But those with reference to people are quite different.

While most studies tend to criticise the scarcity of respect, one study (Mann et al, 1994) comparing Japanese and Australian children is an exception. The results show that compared with Japan, there is a remarkably high level of respect in Australian families and schools. This is consistent with Feather’s (1975) findings that Australian school children perceive a heavy emphasis on obedience and politeness in their school system. The high level of respect shown by Australian children may be unique to Australia and not necessarily generalisable to other Western cultures. Of course, neither country ‘represents’ a generalised ‘Eastern’ or ‘Western’ culture.

2.4 The importance of respect in schools

Increasingly, school problems are found to be related to the concept of respect. It seems that relatively few scholars or educators are interested in the study of respect in a school context. This contrasts with respect in other professional areas, especially in Medicine. Lack of respect or a distorted understanding of respect is often seen as responsible for problems in classroom management. Sizer and Sizer (1999) argue for the necessity of respect education in schools, as they witnessed increasing violence in schools among students or even between students and teachers. Through a case study
of two urban high schools in America, Hemmings (2003) concluded that students’ perception of respect was quite negative. In her study, the pursuit of respect was seen as a tool to assert personal authority, particularly by boys. This kind of respect will sometimes lead to violence and as Shwalb and Shwalb (2006) argues, this is respect on the basis of doing harm to others.

This ‘crisis’ in respect has been attributed to many factors. Little explicit attention being paid to respect is one reason (Sizer & Sizer, 1999). It was reported that many schools tend to limit themselves to the generally rhetorical use of nouns like “respect” in their stated moral standards or moral goals (Sizer & Sizer, 1999).

Among the limited empirical studies in schools, it is interesting to note that most focus on students’ respect for teachers or other students (Mann et al 1994; Cohen et al, 2006). Few studies have been carried out from the perspective of teachers’ respect towards students. This, to some extent, is opposed to the general belief that students are located in the centre of education. In those teaching approaches we might label as ‘student-centred’, we could expect that respect was conceptualised as ‘mutual’.

In Australia in particular, the notion of respect is also located in studies of violence and bullying, even among early primary school students (Rigby, 2002). Respect among students is sometimes replaced by physically aggressive behaviour. In a study of teachers’ discipline and students’ behaviour in the classroom, Lewis et al (2005) found that there is a tendency for more Australian teachers to discipline students by ‘punishment’ compared with two other countries, China and Israel. In listing the reasons for this ‘punishment method’, the authors argue that the nature of Australian misbehaviour and disrespect might be much more extreme than that in the two other countries, China and Israel. Increasing reports of misbehaviour and disrespect in schools has attracted attention from the Australian Government.
Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 An introduction to the methodology

As outlined in Chapter One, the main research question in this study is:

How can I ‘read’ respect in Australian schools from the perspective of who I am and what cultures I bring in?

And the contributory questions are:

1) What are the related understandings of respect in different cultures with special references to Kant and Confucius?

2) What are the understandings of respect in Australian schools as expressed in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003?

3) What are the demonstrations of respect in Australian schools as reflected in the teachers’ interviews?

Four sources of data will be employed in the study to address each research question.

For the main research question, autoethnography will be applied to explain my identity and my view of respect: who I am and what culture I have brought to the concept of respect as a Chinese background researcher. Then my view of respect as a
Chinese person will serve to ‘read’ my understanding of respect in Australian schooling as shown in findings from the interviews, the Values Education document and relevant literature.

In terms of the first contributory research question, literature has provided philosophical discussions of respect in two cultures, with special reference to Kant and Confucius. There was also discussion on respect from contemporary researchers, such as Sennett.

For the second contributory research question, the Values Education Study Final Report 2003 aims to explore the concept of respect in Australian schooling as reflected in the document. This document will be analysed from different perspectives relating to respect.

Interviews will be undertaken to gain a different perspective on respect in Australian schooling for the third contributory research question. Four teachers will be interviewed for my own understanding and feelings about respect in Australian schooling. In this way, document analysis, interviews and selected literature will build up my understanding of respect in Australian schooling.

The relationship between different sources of data is summarised in the following table, Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1 Different sources of data](image)
In this chapter, detailed descriptions of data collection and data analysis will be provided in terms of the Values Education document, the interviews and autoethnography.


In this study, the document Values Education Study Final Report 2003 will be analysed from 5 different perspectives about respect.

On 19 July 2002, a values education program was commissioned by The Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP (Values Education Study Final Report, 2003, p.1). One purpose of the values education program was to enable schools to develop and demonstrate current practice in values education. My interest in the values education program is because respect is listed as one of ten core values in the program. I will attempt to explore the concept of respect reflected in this document.

There are six key documents related to this values education program,

1) At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling - The Final Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project - Stage 2;


3) Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools: Report of the Values Education Good Practice School Project - Stage 1;

4) Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience;
5) National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools;


According to the Values Homepage (n.d.), among these six documents, underpinning the values education program is The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. However, this national framework is further based on, and developed from the Values Education Study Final Report 2003. Therefore, in this study on respect, I have chosen the Values Education Study Final Report 2003 as the representative document of the Values Education program.

The main purpose of the analysis of the Values Education Study Final Report (2003) is to explore the concept of respect reflected in that document. The exploration will proceed through various lenses. First of all, the definition of respect provides the basic information about respect, especially respect in Australian schooling contexts. Secondly, as respect is listed as one of ten core values in the document, it often appears with other values, such as cooperation and care. It is therefore worthwhile analysing the words bundled with respect. These collocations will enable further understanding of respect. Examining objects of respect is another way to analyse this document as this study was initially inspired by the observations that Australian students seem to show less respect towards teachers. It is thus worth examining the objects of respect supported in the document. At the same time, we learn from the document that the purposes for promoting values are different across schools. Scale of respect is then discussed in the document. Special attention will be paid to the different contexts in which respect occurs in the document. Finally as there are two national cultures involved in the study, respect as part of the larger cultural framework will be analysed. In sum, there will be five lenses through which to analyse ‘respect’ in Australian schooling, as reflected in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003:

- Definition of respect
Words bundled with respect

Objects of respect

Scale of respect

Respect as part of the larger cultural framework.

3.3 Interviews

In this study, four primary school teachers were interviewed for their understanding of respect in schools.

Interviews with teachers aimed to provide information on the implementation of the ‘documented’ respect in authentic school contexts. As I am a volunteer Chinese teacher in a public school in New South Wales, I invited some of my colleagues to take part in the interviews. I interviewed four teachers, each from one Stage (Kindergarten/ Early Stage 1, Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3) for a comprehensive understanding of respect across stages in primary schools.

The interviews were semi-structured. Nine questions were given to the participants in advance as follows.

1) What is your understanding of respect?

2) Does respect have specific meanings in your school context?

3) Do you think respect is important in schools?

4) What is your general impression of respect in schools nowadays?

5) Looking back to your school days, do you find a big difference with the understanding or practice of respect in schools today?

6) Can you describe one memorable event about respect in schools?
7) Do you think students’ respect for teachers is a function of their age?

8) Is the notion of respect more characteristic of certain cultural groups?

9) In your class, do you have special ways to reinforce students’ sense of respect for others?

As the Research Question shows, the main purpose of the interviews was to explore the understanding and demonstration of respect in schools. Questions 1), 2) and 3) are all about teachers’ understanding of respect in schools in particular. Questions 4), 5) and 6) focus on the demonstration of respect in current Australian schools and the comparison between the current situation and past experience of respect. Question 7 specifically concerns students’ respect towards teachers. Cultural influence is also opened up in the interview in Question 8). The final interview question is about specific ways of teaching about respect. Since respect is specifically discussed in the school context, teaching about respect becomes an important topic and the way of teaching at the same time reflects an understanding of respect by both students and teachers.

Each interview was recorded and transformed into scripts for further analysis. The first step in the interview analysis was to code all the important messages from each teacher according to every individual question. Then a report for each interview question was synthesised with special attention to similarities and differences among the answers from the four participants. After completing the reports from the nine questions, there was a cross-question analysis with reference to the relevant literature. This analysis will be presented in detail in Chapter 5.

3.4 Autoethnography
Autoethnography is the most fundamental research methodology in the study as it serves as the foundation for further analysing the literature, the Values Study document and the interviews. More specifically, my understanding of respect as a Chinese person will be set up through autoethnography. Then my Chinese view of respect will be employed to analyse respect in Australian schools, which is reflected in the Values Study document, literature and the interviews.

### 3.4.1 Definition of autoethnography

Autoenthnography is a relatively new method with only a thirty year history. In recent years, the most explicit demonstration of this method comes from Ellis and Bochner (2000). According to them (2000), autoethnography is considered as an autobiographical genre of educational research which connects the personal to the cultural. It is a particular approach to constructing research data from life stories, from experiences, thoughts and emotions. The key to autoethnography lies in the importance of knowing oneself and mirroring the culture and history at the same time, which can be expressed as:

…knowing thyself involves an historical and social understanding as much as a psychological awareness. These can no longer be so easily separated. It suggests that the very sense we have of ourselves and our relations with others is deeply influenced by the moral culture we grow up to take very much for granted…They also call us to a deeper historical consciousness of ourselves and the society we grow up in… (Seidler 1986, p.3)

Since oneself cannot be completely separated from culture and history, autoethnographers believe that understanding oneself will, to some extent, reveal a particular culture and history. Therefore, autoethnography on the one hand focuses outward on the social and cultural aspects of personal experiences; on the other hand, it looks inward on a vulnerable self ‘that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretation’ (Deck, Neumann and Reed-Danahay cited in Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p.739).
In the past twenty years, with the prevalence of poststructuralist, deconstructionist and feminist writers, autoethnography has further evolved as an effective and valid research method. Hess-Biber and Leavy (2006) argued that a variety of forms of autoethnographic texts is approved as valid research approaches in social science, including short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals and social science prose.

The writing process of autoethnography is intellectually and emotionally challenging as in these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness are often asked to be featured, appearing as stories affected by history, society, and culture. The authors or researchers have to reveal their unique personal experiences in details and expose vulnerable selves, and at the same time they focus on the social and cultural aspects of that experience. Gradually, the authors move between personal experience and cultural interpretation so often that the distinction between them becomes ambiguous. Due to this regular movement, autoethnographers are regarded as standing between conventional researchers and story tellers. They differ from orthodox social scientists in many ways, as Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue. First, they write in the first person with themselves as the subjects. Second, the accessibility and readability of the text repositions the reader as a co-participant rather than passive receiver. Third, it is inevitable that the text discloses private emotional experience, in sharp contrast to traditional research, in which the focus is partly on the avoidance of personal feelings.

However, Ellis and Bochner (2000) also argue that the precise definition and application of autoethnography has become increasingly more difficult as the meaning of the term has evolved in many different ways. For example, it has come to refer to other similarly situated terms, such as personal narratives, narrative of the self, personal experience narrative, self-stories, first person accounts, personal essays and ethnographic short stories.
Similarly, Hess-Biber and Nagy (2006) also argue that autoethnography can have different meanings in different contexts, especially depending on how it is applied and what theory is applied to it. They (2006) see autoethnography as a general form of autobiographical oral history as follows:

…the personal experience can be interlinked with collective memory; political culture, social power, and so forth, showing the interplay between the individual and the society in which she or he lives (Hess- Biber & Nagy, 2006, p.189).

### 3.4.2 Validity of autoethnography

Though autoethnography has been acknowledged widely, its validity is still questioned. Critics often reiterate that autoethnographical texts are not objective or valid since personal experience is either so particular or subjective that the research results can not be applied in other studies, making the method worthless (Freeman, 2007; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Autoethnographers argue from two levels, that is, the relationships between auto (oneself) and ethnos (culture) and between auto and graphy (language). First, it is true that our lives are particular. But at the same time they are also typical and generalisable, since we all participate in a limited number of cultures and institutions. A story’s generalisability is constantly tested by readers as they determine if it speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). As to the debate between ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’, autoethnography starts from the overriding position that language is not a neutral or transparent medium of communication. Thus the observer must employ some degree of subjective interpretation on the observed. So why should the observer not become the observed? In this context, according to Ellis and Bochner (2000), validity refers to verisimilitude. In other words, the valid work seeks to evoke in readers a feeling that the experience described is believable and possible, and helps readers communicate with others different from themselves (Ellis & Bochner, 2000,
Thus the validity of autoethnography requires us to intellectually and emotionally recall past experience and to try to analyse it culturally, historically or politically. A thick description of personal experience is regarded as the foundation of the validity of autoethnography.

Another question often raised is, how we make sure the narrated past experience is ‘true’. According to postmodernists and deconstructionists (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), our identities rest largely on how well we connect the remembered past with the anticipated future. So what matters is not the truth of the past experiences, but rather, to provide a continuity of self, from past to future. The narrative experience seeks to remake our lives as a whole by retelling and ‘restorying’ the events of life. Gradually, the self is inseparable from the story it constructs. In this way, the goal of autoethnography is to learn more from oneself through self-introspective exploration and to prompt better conversations with oneself and one’s readers.

3.4.3 My reasons for adopting autoethnography

Autoethnography serves to build up a picture of my view of respect as a Chinese person, which will be employed to further analyse and ‘read’ respect in Australian schools. Though one might argue that such a ‘Chinese background on respect’ ought not to be too ‘foregrounded’, my belief is that respect holds such a fundamental place in the Confucian educational world view (as I have explained in Chapter One) that a study of respect in Australian schools will be enriched and broadened from being read through the lens of a Chinese perspective on respect. In addition, since respect occupies an important position in Chinese culture, especially in traditional Confucianism, the descriptions of my life experiences on respect will, to some extent, reveal larger cultural and historical understandings about respect in Chinese society.

3.4.4 My approach to autoethnography - ‘spots of time’
In practice, various methodological strategies have been developed in connection with autoethnographic projects. For example, as Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue, one might start a dissertation with a short personal story, or tell a longer story as a chapter. Or one might integrate parts of the experience into each participant’s story, each of which would form separate chapters, or write one story in comparison to one of the participants who is similar to us. Perhaps we could write each chapter in a unique form to reflect the different experiences we had in each interview. Or we could write the dissertation in the form of a novel. The plot would consist of one’s research journey.

In this paper, I will extract five personal stories from my life experience, each of which concerned respect in an educational context in China. The stories on respect are selected according to ideas from the five key researchers in Chapter 2: Kant, Confucius, Piaget, Sennett and Drummond. The methodology I will call ‘spots of time’, following Wordsworth:

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence - depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse - our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life that give
Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
As Wordsworth believed, memory will enrich and heal our minds only if accompanied by the wisdom of reflection since “the efficacious spirit chiefly lurks among those passages of life that give profoundest knowledge…”. It bears out the claims of autoethnography that through revelation and exploration of one’s past, one’s present will be better understood and arranged (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). At the same time, one’s present, whether ‘typical’ or not, speaks to some extent of a larger culture.

In the paper, there will be five subchapters in Chapter 6 - spots of time - with one story in each subchapter. There will be five individual storytellings and a story analysis and then a further cross-story analysis at the end of Chapter 6. Each story starts with a quotation from one of the five writers. Then the story on respect from my experience in Chinese schools is told. I will pay attention to my feelings, thoughts and emotions as Ellis and Bochner (2000) advised. I shall try to understand the experience of respect I have lived through. A detailed discussion will closely follow the story itself, in which special reference to a larger cultural and historical background will be made as well as reference to relevant literature, Confucius in particular. Then some key themes from each story will be highlighted at the very end of each analysis. Once I have completed the analysis for all five stories, a cross-story analysis will be made on respect at the end of Chapter 6. This cross-story analysis serves as my developed view of respect in educational contexts in China.

The person thus described (‘developed’) will then ‘read’ the Values Education Study document and the interviews to bring a particular perspective to the idea of respect in Australian schooling. This will largely occur in Chapter 7 after preliminary discussion of the Values Education Study document (Chapter 4), and of the teacher interviews (Chapter 5). Thus Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the data and contain some preliminary analysis and Chapter 7 contains the final ‘reading’.
Chapter 4
4.1 Background to the values education program

The Australian Government’s Values Education program was developed to support the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, the Adelaide Declaration signed by all Australian education ministers in 1999. The National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century describes the nation’s future as being dependent upon citizens with certain ‘values’:

…the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions (Goal 1.3).

In this sense, values education is regarded as an essential part of effective schooling. On 19 July 2002, the values education program was commissioned by the Commonwealth Minister. Presently, there are six key documents from this values education program. According to the Values Homepage (n.d.), among these six documents underpinning the values education program is The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. But this key document is itself based on the Values Education Study and its report - Values Education Study Final Report 2003. Therefore in this paper, I will focus on Values Education Study Final Report 2003 as the representative document of the values education program.

4.2 Respect in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003
The Values Education study was managed by the Curriculum Corporation with the support of a dedicated Project Advisory Committee. The main purpose of the Values Education Study was to:

- enable schools to develop and demonstrate current practice in values education;
- provide an informed basis for promoting improved values education in Australian schools; and
- make recommendations on a set of principles and a framework for improved values education in Australian schools (Values Education Study Final Report 2003, 2003, p.1)

The main methodology for the study was action research within a range of schools across Australia to assist and to demonstrate good practices in values education. There were also online surveys for parents, teachers and students as supplementary data.

One important result from Values Education Study was the ‘ten values’. (Values Education Study Final Report 2003, 2003, pp16-17):

1. Tolerance and understanding
2. Respectful
3. Responsibility
4. Social justice
5. Excellence
6. Care
7. Inclusion and trust
8. Honesty
9. Freedom
10. Being ethical
In the document, ‘respect’ is listed as one of the ten core values that need to be promoted and encouraged within schools. My reading of the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, aims to offer an analysis with regard to its description of respect. This analysis of the Values Education Study Final Report 2003 is made through five lenses:

- a definition of ‘respect’: the analysis starts from listing and comparing the definitions of respect appearing in the document; it serves to provide the basis for an understanding of respect, especially respect in schooling as reflected in the documents;

- a study of those words bundled with ‘respect’: as ‘respect’ is listed as one of the values and it always appears alongside other values, such as ‘cooperation’ in the document, it is worth investigating those words bundled with ‘respect’ and their relationships with ‘respect’ in order to gain a better understanding of ‘respect’ itself;

- a study of the objects of ‘respect’: while it seems commonsense that ‘respect’ is a positive value, a more meaningful question is to whom are we supposed to pay ‘respect’?;

- teaching ‘respect’: when positioned in school contexts, the purpose of teaching ‘respect’ is often related to other school problems such as bullying or attendance. So I pay special attention to the contexts in which ‘respect’ is referred to in the document.

- ‘respect’ as part of the larger cultural framework: as there are two cultures involved in the study, it is therefore worthwhile looking at the cultural influences on the Values Education Study Final Report 2003.
4.2.1 Definitions of ‘respect’

Throughout the document, there are two definitions of ‘respect’. Respect reflected in these definitions can be classified as conditional respect and unconditional respect.

Fifty case studies in sixty-nine schools took place in the Values Education Study. These schools develop, demonstrate and document what they are doing to support community values and provide effective values education to students (Values Education Study Final Report 2003, 2003, p.1). In the fifty case studies, only thirty-four of these specifically mentioned the notion of ‘respect’. However, only one primary school gave an explicit definition of respect: ‘admiration for someone’s good qualities or achievements, consideration or concern’. Different feelings are here involved in the definition of respect: ‘admiration’ and ‘consideration or concern’. Two kinds of respect therefore emerge from this definition. Respect in the first half of the sentence ‘admiration for someone’s good qualities or achievement’ is conditional. Good qualities or achievements are a necessary prerequisite for gaining respect. On the other hand, ‘consideration or concern’ in the second half of the definition reflects unconditional respect for people.

Respect was again listed later in the document as one of the ten core values synthesised from the action research. The definition was quite simple, ‘treating others with consideration and regard’. It is obvious that the description of respect here is unconditional as well.

Therefore, both conditional respect and unconditional respect appear in the two definitions of respect. What Kant stressed in his work was unconditional respect. The definition of ‘duty of respect’ from Kant (1996, p.580) implies the ‘categorical’ on respect. The main theme in Kantian respect is always about respect for ‘each and every person’ as discussed in Chapter 2. The egalitarian character of respect in Kant
will seem sometimes go to extremes when he suggests that evil men still deserve our respect. The reason for this claim is that Kant believes that respect goes to people because of their humanity, instead of their character, their background or other external influences (1996, p.89). Therefore Kantian respect is unconditional.

Even though Kant mainly talks about unconditional respect, conditional respect still appears in his work occasionally. In talking about respect for persons with great virtues, Kant points out that ‘any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of integrity and so forth) of which he gives us an example’ (1997a, p.14). In his understanding, respect in this sense doesn’t go to the person, but ultimately to the law within himself instead. One follower of Kant, Darwall, pays special attention to appraisal respect, which is conditional. Darwall describes appraisal respect as ‘an attitude of positive appraisal of a person either judged as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’ (1977, p.38). As ‘admiration’ is kind of ‘positive appraisal’ and ‘good qualities or achievements’ is evaluated ‘as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’, this kind of conditional respect in the document accords with appraisal respect from Darwall. It is inferred from the definition of appraisal respect that either moral beings (as persons) or social beings (engaged in some more specific pursuit) would be the object of appraisal respect. In either instance, excellence performed by certain persons has qualified them to be the recipients of appraisal respect. Darwall therefore suggests that respectful behaviour may not obviously appear in appraisal respect as the feeling of appraisal itself is regarded as one performance of respect. In this sense, the performance or the showing of respect in appraisal respect might not be very obvious. Similarly, performance in conditional respect may not be greatly emphasised as the feeling of respect or even admiration or worship is expressive in itself. In contrast, respectful behaviour seems to be more important in unconditional respect, as positive feelings which are not
obvious are involved in unconditional respect. In this sense, the process of acting out is crucial in Kantian respect or unconditional respect.

On the other hand, from Darwall’s definition, there are not settled ideas about the criteria for appraisal respect. The evaluation of a person ‘as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’ varies with individuals, let alone the influence from time, culture, age and so on. In other words, the conditions for conditional respect are not explained in detail. There is a concern from Sennett (2003) that people may stop respecting others just because it is too tiring. According to Sennett, unlike hierarchical regimes with fixed criteria and conditions of showing respect, in a more egalitarian society, there are actually no standard criteria to measure whether people deserve respect. The over-flexible criteria on conditional respect in turn exhaust us in showing respect. In this sense, appraisal respect or conditional respect can be overwhelming just because there are no limits or regulations on respect.

4.2.2 Those words bundled with ‘respect’

In exploring the words bundled with respect, we find that respect is another relational word. In this sense, respect is about the relationship involved between at least two persons, and is directed outwards.

In the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect is regarded as one of the ten values. There is usually a great number of values bundled with respect, for example, ‘a focus on such values as cooperation, responsibility, respect, friendship, compassion, self-discipline, honesty and perseverance’ (p.97). Therefore one way of understanding respect is through looking at its collocations. A count of collocated words in the document reveals that the most frequent words appearing with respect are: cooperation, care, honesty, responsibility, tolerance while the least frequent are: cleanliness, comfort, determination, discipline, freedom, independence. There is a pattern here. The most frequent words bundled with respect are relational words,
concerning relationships among people. All the definitions of cooperation, care, honesty, responsibility and tolerance suggest that particular feelings are directed outwards, though not necessarily in a mutual way. In contrast, the low frequency words are often about oneself or self-cultivation. Respect itself is another relational word. It is directed outwards. Contemporary researchers, such as Sennett (2003), tend to study respect from the perspective of ‘sociology’ and pay more attention to relational influences on respect. In Respect: The formation of character in a world of inequality, the starting point for Sennett (2003) is that respect is greatly influenced by our characters. Both respect and character may change across time with many influences, one of which is relationships with other people. Therefore, in Sennett’s understanding, respect is a relational word and is influenced by relationships. In contrast, for Kant, though he admits that respect is relational, he insists that respect should not be influenced by relationships, as everyone deserves respect. According to Kant, respect is due to others because of their ‘humanity’ and their ‘moral law within’. Therefore respecting people means treating them respectfully as an ‘end’, not just as a ‘means’.

4.2.3 Objects of ‘respect’

The key finding regarding this aspect of the document reveals that there is silence about the objects of respect in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003. This is in contrast to the finding from the previous section 4.2.2 that respect is a relational word and that the feeling of respect is supposed to be directed outwards to certain people.

The word respect appears 65 times throughout the Values Education Study Final Report 2003. Of these, only two examples are verbs. In terms of respect as a noun, in most cases, it is used without any object:

- ‘a substantial emphasis on mutual understanding and respect’ (p.43),
- ‘develop the values of respect and civic responsibility’ (p.84).
The occurrence of respect with an object occurs only eleven times, for example

● ‘implying a respect for the individual’ (p.85),
● ‘respect for social and cultural diversity and human rights’ (p, 132).

The following Table 4.1 provides the times and frequency that respect appears in the document, in terms of respect as a verb, respect as a noun with an object and respect as a noun without an object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect as noun or verb</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun with an object</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun without an object</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 The appearance of respect in the document

It is obvious from the table that there is silence concerning the actual object to which respect is to be given in the document. Even among the eleven uses of respect as a noun with an object, the objects are still very vague, often simply being ‘others’. Therefore, in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect is an abstraction without an object. It is a kind of ‘floating signifier’.

The findings from studying the objects of respect and studying its collocations seem to be in contradiction to each other. We learn from the collocations that the words most frequently following, or followed by respect are relational words. And the word ‘respect’ itself also deals with relationships. This implies that respect ought to have an object, directing feelings outwards towards certain objects. In contrast, the appearances of respect in the document mostly lack objects. Respect is discussed in very general terms as an abstract value, not by engaging with detail. Even though
respect is regarded as one of the ten core values in the document, there is not enough detailed information to give it conceptual complexity. Respect therefore is reduced to a ‘motherhood’ value.

As mentioned above, there are eleven occurrences of respect with an object. The objects are as follows:

- individual (p.85);
- traditional ways (p.87);
- yourself and others (p.100);
- staff (p.113);
- each other (staff and students) (p.113);
- self (p.120);
- others (p.120);
- the environment (p.120);
- land (p.131);
- cultural and social diversity and human rights (p.132);
- property (p.133).

The very general ‘others’, to some extent, again reflects the abstract nature, or even silence on the objects of respect. On the other hand, it reflects Kantian respect, in which respect is due to everyone regardless of their background. This focus on conveys a sense of equality among human beings. However, more contemporary researchers (Seidler, 1986) realise that a person is a product of particular culture, society, history and environment. They argue that respecting an individual entails respecting where he is located, that is, his culture, his society, history and environment, all of which Kant is largely silent about in his work.

4.2.4 Teaching ‘respect’
In the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect is regarded as one teaching point to broaden values education. Respect is taught to accelerate values education in direct or indirect ways.

‘Directness’ occurs in those schools where respect is required as a specific or key value. The indirect effect of respect in values education is when respect is regarded as a way to do other things, for example:

- build students resilience (p.5)
- counter bullying (p.83)
- create a good learning environment (p.83)
- improve attendance (p.86)

Therefore, while in some schools, respect is taught for its own sake, in other schools, respect is taught for the reason that increasing respect can prevent misbehaviour in schools. In other words, respect is sometimes the means to other purposes, such as a good learning environment or a better classroom culture.

4.2.5 Respect in a larger cultural framework

In the document, respect is depicted as a universal value in some schools, while in other schools it is regarded as a value subject to different cultures and histories.

As I am concerned with respect in two cultures, I have paid special attention to respect in the larger cultural framework in which the document sits. In the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect in some schools is specifically directed towards different people and different cultures (p.58, p.71). At the same time, in some other schools, it is regarded as a universal value (p.136). In one school, ‘respect’ and ‘dignity’ are regarded as universal values for each and every person. The universality of respect and dignity reflect Kant’s ideas on respect. In Kant’s theory, respect is universal as every person deserves it. His claims for unconditional respect are made from the perspective of ‘morality’. In Kant’s understanding of
morality, the dignity of humanity requires equality and unconditional respect among people. However, Eastern society broadly focuses more on ‘social beings’ instead of ‘moral beings’. Eastern cultures believe that the individual exists in the context of his family (Bell, 2000, p.192, Hood, 1998, pp.857-862). A Chinese aphorism: xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, and pingtianxia (修身齐家治国平天下) states that a well-governed state and an ideal world can be achieved via well-behaved individuals and harmonious families, clearly representing the contextual relations between individuals and states. It is therefore not difficult to understand that respect in Eastern societies is positioned in a more vertical relationship, that is, a relationship between a social being and a family or a state while respect in Western societies would lean to a more horizontal relationship, that is, a relationship between equal moral beings.

The analysis above analyses respect through the five lenses in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003. The key findings from the Values document are related to:

- the definition of respect
- relationships in respect
- the objects of respect
- teaching respect
- cultural influences on respect

The definition of ‘respect’ in the document shows that respect can be classified as conditional and unconditional. While Kant always stresses unconditional respect, his follower, Darwall, also makes references to conditional respect. Darwall names this conditional respect as appraisal respect. The condition for appraisal respect is excellence performed by certain persons. However, either conditional respect or unconditional respect is about relationships between at least two persons as revealed from those words bundled with ‘respect’. We learn from the collocations of respect that respect is another relational word because it is directed outwards. But the analysis of the objects of ‘respect’ shows that the document is silent about these objects. On the one hand, respect is a relational word and the feeling of respect is
supposed to be directed outwards to certain objects; on the other hand, the actual objects to which respect is to be given are not mentioned in the document. In terms of teaching ‘respect’, respect is seen as one teaching point to support values education. Respect is taught to accelerate values education in direct or indirect ways. The last issue, the cultural influences on respect, shows that respect is regarded as a universal value in some schools while in other schools it is a value subject to different cultures and histories. The idea of the universality of respect reflects the idea of Kantian respect, which is due to each and every person. Kant develops this argument from the perspective of a ‘moral being’. However, Eastern society more broadly stresses the importance of ‘social beings’. In this sense, respect in Eastern society may focus more on the relationships among ‘social beings’ while respect in Western society may focus more on the relationships among individual ‘moral beings’.
Chapter 5
Four Australian teachers’ perceptions of respect

5.1 Introduction

I undertook interviews with four teachers to gain a sense of how teachers in my immediate teaching environment understood respect in schools. The four interviewees in this study are from one public school in NSW. The main reason for choosing this school is that I work there as a volunteer Chinese teacher. Four teachers, from Kindergarten, Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Three respectively, agreed to take part in these interviews. I will refer to participants as Teacher A (from Kindergarten), Teacher B (from Stage One), Teacher C (from Stage Two) and Teacher D (from Stage Three). Each interview was semi-structured and dealt with the nine questions listed below:

1) What is your understanding of respect?
2) Does respect have specific meanings in the school context?
3) Do you think respect is important in schools?
4) What’s your general impression of respect in schools nowadays?
5) Looking back on your own school days, do you find a big difference with the understanding or practice of respect in schools today?
6) Can you describe one memorable event about respect in schools?
7) Do you think students’ respect for teachers is a function of their age?
8) Do you think the notion of respect is performed differently by different cultural groups?
9) In your class, do you have special ways to reinforce students’ sense of respect for others?
With the participants’ permission, all the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The analysis of interview transcriptions proceeded as follows:

1) At first, I abstracted some important messages from each teacher in each question;
2) Then, I wrote a report on each question based on all four teachers’ important messages. Special attention was paid to comparison and contrast among the four answers for each question.
3) Finally there was a cross-question analysis. This is presented in the last section of this chapter in 5.3. In this section, four teachers’ perceptions of respect are discussed across all nine questions.

Because of word length, I will not present the full analysis of each question as carried out according to procedures 1) and 2). However, I will present Question 1 as an example of how my analysis proceeded for all interview questions. I will discuss each subsequent interview question by gathering together all the teachers’ answers into a general discussion.

5.2 Four teachers’ perceptions of respect in each interview question

Question 1 serves as the example on how the full analysis was done, that is, at first important messages were abstracted from each teacher in each question and then a report for each question was written.

5.2.1 Question 1: What is your understanding of respect?

Teacher A:
I think it’s really hard. I think it’s easier to say you are disrespecting someone than respecting someone. It’s easy to identify someone who is disrespectful, because you will associate disrespect with rudeness. But when I am thinking it, I think respect is
like you hold someone in high esteem, not just a person, also maybe a group. In high esteem, like, that is how you think of someone; then you act accordingly.

**Important messages:**

Teacher A, first of all, points out that it is easier to identify ‘disrespect’ than ‘respect’. In describing the notion of ‘respect’, the teacher uses a phrase ‘to hold someone in high esteem’. Respect here is a positive feeling towards others. She emphasises that ‘someone’ could be a person or a group. This indicates that on some occasions respect goes to certain persons, not because of who they are, but because of what their positions are as a group. Teacher A finally makes another important point that respect is not just about positive feelings; it also involves one’s actions. The performance of respect, from her point of view, is an indispensable part of the notion of respect.

**Teacher B:**

To me, respect is everywhere. It could be outside the school, inside the school, as a community member, as part of the global citizen. And to the general respect that everyone needs in every place is basically being kind to each other, being nice to each other, being considerate. Do things that are not mean. And learning how to do that, you know, having the skills to do that and having the opportunity to learn and having someone to correct you if you do it wrong.

**Important messages:**

At first, the teacher points out the omnipresence of respect. She indicates the important effect respect plays in our life. The words she employs to describe respect are: ‘kind’, ‘nice’, ‘considerate’, ‘not mean’. Finally she also points out that respect is always a learning process.

**Teacher C:**
I think respect means you value someone else’s value and someone else’s opinion. You can respect some people because they are experienced in something. So you would value their experience.

**Important messages:**
The key word in Teacher C’s definition is ‘value’, which is also a crucial notion in Piaget’s understanding of respect (Piaget, 1932). The teacher believes that respect entails valuing others’ ideas and opinions as these are different and unique.

**Teacher D:**
I think respect can be a feeling of admiration. I think it can be a feeling of deferring to someone, recognising that they are holding the esteem in some way. I think if you respect somebody, you admire them for some reason. And I think respect is related with good manners and treating people fairly.

**Important messages:**
Respect is depicted here as a feeling of ‘admiration’, ‘deferring’ and ‘esteem’. This kind of feeling is more common in some unequal relationships with a strong sense of distance. According to Teacher D, respect is related to good manners. In other words, people are encouraged to show respect explicitly through good manners.

**Report on Question 1:**
In defining respect, Teachers A and D used stronger words such as ‘high esteem’, ‘admiration’, ‘defer to’, etc. On the other hand, Teachers C and B used what could be regarded as lower strength words such as ‘value’, ‘being nice’, ‘not mean’, etc. The different patterns in the descriptions reflect that respect in Teacher A and Teacher D’s understanding tended to be unequally based while the other two teachers suggest that equality exists in respectful relationships. Respect in unequal relationships is also related to respect being conditional and only available for particular groups. Teacher A pointed out that the objects of respect can be a particular person or a
certain group and that sometimes respect is given to people, not because of who they are, but because of what positions they occupy as a group.

Teacher B mentioned the omnipresence and importance of respect in the society. Teacher A agreed with the importance of respect in daily life but at the same time she also pointed out at the very beginning of her statement that it is much easier to define ‘disrespect’ rather than ‘respect’ itself.

The performance of respect was also discussed by two teachers. Teacher A thought that respect involved one’s actions. For these teachers, the performance of respect is an indispensable part of the notion of respect. Teacher D also stressed that respect is related to good manners. People are encouraged to show respect explicitly through good manners.

5.2.2 Question 2: Does respect have specific meanings in the school context?

Regarding respect in the school context, the teachers had different emphases. Teacher B talked generally about respect in schools while Teachers A, C and D specifically discussed respect in relation to specific objects.

Teacher B thought that respect in schools, either student’s respect or teacher’s respect, was based on rules or regulations in the schools. The behaviour of ‘obeying rules’ was regarded as respectful. On the other hand, Teacher A and Teacher C made a distinction between different patterns of respect. While Teacher A talked about students’ respect for themselves, other students and teachers, Teacher C discussed the importance of teacher’s respect for students and other teachers. This importance was reflected in her idea that teachers should take the initiative to show respect towards students and then teachers were more likely to receive respect in return. The notion of ‘value’ appeared frequently in Teacher C’s discussion of respect. She argued that respect towards other teachers included valuing their opinions and ideas,
while respect towards students was about valuing their feelings and creating a safe environment, as in the following statement:

I respect other teachers… teachers that are more experienced than me, I value their opinions and ideas because they have normally been in situations that I haven’t been in…As to respect with children, every child has the right to learn in a safe environment. If they have trouble learning something, then I will show respect for their feelings…

According to Teacher C, respect always involves the process of valuing. In equal relationships, we are encouraged to value ‘ideas’ and ‘opinions’; while in unequal relationships (for example, the teacher-student relationship), respect for others means valuing others’ ‘feelings’ more. In this sense, the ultimate objects of value (ideas and opinions or feelings) would vary slightly when the nature of the relationship changes from equality to inequality. Teacher D drew a similar conclusion. She put forward the idea that respect is very contextual:

…respect can be a different thing when you are dealing with friends as the way that you are dealing with someone who is superior to you at work…

The performance of respect is decided by the subject, the object and the larger context. Though the interview was confined to schools, Teacher A still reiterated the importance of family education in the concept of respect as she believed that ‘it’s better if respect is or should be taught from home a lot because it’s how you see society…’.

5.2.3 Question 3: Do you think respect is important in schools?

The four teachers all agreed that respect was important in schools. But the consensus on the importance of respect was produced from different reasons, one of which - the hierarchy system in schools - was from Teacher B, while the other reason - a comfortable learning environment - was from Teacher C.
Teacher B believed that respect was an effective tool to maintain the hierarchy in a school and help the school move forward, as school ‘is the place for learning and to learn we need the structure, we need routine, and we need a timetable’. Both students and teachers had their strictly defined rules and regulations to follow. Similar to her answer to Question 2, Teacher B emphasised the importance of laws and rules in the concept of respect. From her point of view, respect was greatly needed as it helped maintain a rigid hierarchy in schools. This contrasted with Teacher C’s answer. She argued that the importance of respect was reflected in the fact that it built a comfortable environment both for students and teachers.

In relating this question to Question 2, one can see that the importance of respect is greatly determined by teachers’ understanding of respect itself. For example, as her answer from Question 2 showed, Teacher C’s understanding of respect for students included valuing their feelings and creating a safe environment. With this belief, she argued in this question that respect was vital as it built a comfortable environment for students and teachers.

On the other hand, at the very beginning of her answer, Teacher D was trying to prove the bad influence of disrespect instead of directly pointing to the positive. She said specifically:

If the students don’t respect teachers, they don’t do the best they can in class; if teachers don’t respect their students, they might also treat them in a way that is not productive. And in the school, if a teacher doesn’t respect their colleagues, it affects their relationship as well…

This teacher suggested that ‘disrespect’ is much easier to identify than ‘respect’ itself, which was similar to Teacher A’s answer in Question 1. In the latter part of Teacher D’s statement, she also talked about the positive parts of respect and she suggested
that the importance of respect was determined in two ways: the amount of respect people had and the way people showed respect:

…one way or another, the amount of respect you have or the way you show the respect affects the whole interaction between people…

Finally, Teacher A responded to the question from her specific perspective as a kindergarten teacher. She argued that despite the importance of respect, young students often did not know what respect was; therefore it was the teachers’ responsibility to tell them how to act in a respectful way.

5.2.4 Question 4: What is your general impression of respect in schools nowadays?

Teachers A and C believed that respect varied with different schools, cultures and families. Teacher C specifically pointed out the relationship between respect and socioeconomic status (SES). She used the example that in more affluent areas, parents were better educated and tended to question teachers and even schools. This would sometimes greatly influence students’ respect for teachers, young students in particular. But she still believed that respect and questioning were not incompatible, which was obvious from her answer, ‘I’m not saying that teachers are disrespected in this area. But it’s a more questioning environment to work in.’

In general, Teacher A and Teacher D suggested that overall respect towards teachers had faded. Teacher A attributed this phenomenon to the changing society, ‘society being more relaxed, more casual, encouraging individualism rather than conformism’. Besides the quantitative change, some teachers thought that respect had been going through a qualitative transformation as well. Teacher A advanced the idea that respect had changed from the unilateral form (students’ respect towards teachers) to the mutual form (students and teachers respecting each other). She admitted the positive part of this change; however she believed that it was also a sign
of teacher’s lowered position. To some extent, it showed that teachers were not as superior ‘as they had been before’. On the other hand, Teacher B realised that nowadays students would show respect in different, or sometimes unique, ways as ‘there are lots of expressions such as hugs, cards or gifts’. Students tended to be more expressive about their feelings nowadays.

5.2.5 Question 5: Looking back to your school days, do you find a big difference with the understanding or practice of respect in schools today?

All four teachers witnessed a big difference in terms of respect in schools. According to Teacher A, respect for teachers had faded. Teacher B specified that nowadays respect was based more on equality and friendliness and teachers did not have as much absolute power as before. For Teacher C, respect in schools today was more influenced by parents’ participation. She assumed that parents’ questioning of teachers and schools was sometimes due to their insufficient understanding of the school system. Teacher C also argued that her own understanding of respect had changed since she had her own children. In particular, now she had more ‘empathy’ for students and their feelings. As for Teacher D, she drew a similar conclusion to Teacher A’s answer to Question 4, that respect was becoming more mutual. Teachers used to expect respect from students, but did not necessarily give it back to students. However today, teachers found that they had to earn respect by showing respect towards students first.

Except for these differences, all four participants tried to explore the reasons for, and effects of, the differences. Teacher A traced this back to the origins of schools. She believed that respect was more prevalent when education was a privilege. From her point of view, one reason for the perceived lowering of respect today is the free education in Australia:
…in places like Australia, education is for everyone. You don’t have to earn your opportunity to have education; it’s just there. So I think people just take it for granted. So it’s just there. It doesn’t matter if I act in this way or in that way. It’s going to be there. It’s not special…

Her view was that once students did not have to earn the opportunity to be educated, respect for education and schools consequently declined. Teachers also received less respect, especially compared with places where education was still a privilege. With regard to the effects of this difference, Teacher B and Teacher D both agreed that this change was beneficial. Teacher B reasoned that this change helped students to gradually realise that each and every person was equal and had strengths and weaknesses. It then helped them to think individually instead of following some authority blindly. That was a major objective of education. From another perspective, Teacher D also agreed that this was a positive change as students would be more willing to accept others’ advice when they felt respected. Considering the fact that nowadays there is a greater emphasis on teachers’ respect for students, Teacher C expanded her answer by introducing ways for teachers to show respect for students. Teacher C suggested that respecting children required a good relationship between teachers and parents. Respecting students did not only mean respecting students in schools, but also respecting their background and their personality at the same time.

5.2.6 Question 6: Can you describe one memorable event about respect in schools?

This was a question that three teachers found difficult to answer. Only Teacher D described one impressive event about respect in her experience. This is as follows:

A long time ago, that is probably ten years ago and I was in another school. And I came across a young man who I had taught when I first started teaching. He was a very, very naughty boy in class, misbehaved all the time. And I never felt that he worked hard or tried hard. When I met him several years later, he was actually enrolling his son in the school. He recognised me and came up to introduce himself, ‘Do you remember me?’ I laughed and said, ‘Yes I do remember. Did you remember me?’ Because I felt that at that time I had been
very hard on him because he misbehaved. And because he didn’t like working, I was quite firm with him. And I thought he was going to tell me that he hated being at school in my class. But the interesting thing was that he said to me, ‘Ms …, although you made me work hard and I was in trouble all the time, I always felt that you were fair. I really appreciate what you have done for me. ’ So I think in this sense, I must have done something right because years later he obviously respected the way that I was dealing with him.

In the story, Teacher C once thought ‘the naughty boy’ didn’t respect her. Surprisingly, years later, she found out that he did. Firstly, the divergence may be explained by the different positions of the boy - from a naughty student to a father. When people have their own children, their understanding of respect could change greatly, which was confirmed by Teacher C in Question 5. It could also be attributed to time. Respect would sometimes get delayed. At any time, people may not be quite sure about their feelings; however, with the course of time, they might gradually gain respect. In this sense, nostalgia itself might be a kind of respect. Another notion embedded in the story is ‘fairness’. According to the boy, a teacher’s fairness was one important reason for his respect towards Teacher C. When this student received ‘fairness, or fair treatment’, he showed respect for the teacher in return.

The other three teachers listed the reasons that they were not able to give an example. Teacher A believed that it was easier to find and identify something as ‘disrespectful’ than things which are ‘respectful’ as she suggested in Question 1. What’s more, in her understanding, respect was ‘part of everything’; it was very hard to just label one thing as ‘respectful.’ But she did think that respect was not only about performance on big occasions, such as the way we treat national flags on national days. Often the core of respect was reflected in incidental things. Teacher C talked about many situations of respect. However, she was not able to list one example either. This could be related to Teacher A’s answer that it was everywhere and it was part of everything. When one particular notion becomes embedded in a culture, it often becomes invisible. In a similar vein, Teacher B only talked generally about respect in schools. She was supportive of the coexistence of respect and individual thinking. Despite the importance of respect, teachers still expected students to think
individually and make their own judgments. The last point that Teacher B made was that primary school was a good time for students to learn manners, including respect. The older students became, the more difficulty they would find in learning respect.

5.2.7 Question 7: Do you think students’ respect for teachers is a function of their age?

There are two groups of answers to this question. Teacher A and Teacher C agreed that the older the students, the more difficult it was to gain their respect. On the other hand, Teacher B and Teacher D argued that age was more closely related to ‘how students show respect’.

Though Teacher A thought the amount of respect for teachers was a function of students’ age, she stressed that this was only a general impression. It was relatively harder to control students with elder brothers or sisters because it was quite easy for young students to pick up disrespectful behaviour from elder siblings. As for older students in particular, Teacher C advised teachers to earn respect through good relationships. Such relationships were built upon teachers’ long devotion and care for the students. Hence, for some new teachers, it was hard to gain a student’s respect instantly as ‘you don’t have that relationship with them, and they question your right to have an influence on them’. It can take a long time to build up a solid student-teacher relationship. For the purpose of good relationships, Teacher C further encouraged teachers to have more communication with students outside the classroom, for example, in the playground, in a dancing group, or in sport groups. This reminded me of the difference between Chinese and Australian primary schools. In most Chinese primary schools, the classroom teacher will stay with the same class for three years at least. It is more likely that the relationship between students and teachers is more fully developed in three years than in only one year. This might be one of the reasons that Chinese primary students seem to have more respect for teachers than Australian primary students.
From another perspective, Teacher B and Teacher D believed that age was related to students’ methods of showing respect. Teacher B suggested that young students tended to show respect more expressively while older students ‘might feel respectful towards others; however, they might not necessarily show it or express it’. Similarly, Teacher D believed that young students demonstrated respect more frequently. She made a further distinction between ‘demonstrating respect’ and ‘having respect’. Teacher D argued that sometimes young students were demonstrating respect while they had little understanding of what respect was. In other words, they were just following what they were told. On the other hand, ‘as they get older, they understand the concept of respect more. And they also challenge it.’ As for older students, they come to understand the notion of respect; however, understanding comes with questioning and challenging the concept as well. This is confirmed by Teacher A’s point that it was important to tell young children what to do and how to do things respectfully, while for older children, it was more crucial to explain why they had to show respect rather than directly saying ‘You must respect me’. However, according to Teacher A, a common key point in teaching respect was to set up the expectations quite explicitly.

5.2.8 Question 8: Do you think the notion of respect is performed differently by different cultural groups?

Teacher A and Teacher D thought there tended to be more respect among some Asian groups. Teacher A believed the lessening of respect in Australia was related to ‘student-centred’ approaches, such as self-assessment, which were ‘inviting’ students to study. Because ‘student-centredness’ was emphasised in this way, she felt that teachers’ positions would gradually decline in schools.

Teacher B did not directly compare respect in difficult cultures, but she argued that in Asia, students had to follow authority, especially from parents. She also believed
that Asian students were more future-oriented. On the other hand, Anglo-Australian students have more freedom and were more relaxed in childhood. This was similar to Teacher D’s belief. Teacher D doubted some Asian groups’ understandings of respect, just as she expressed concern in the previous answers that young students ‘showed’ respect without enough understanding of ‘respect’. She added that ‘there is obedience in certain cultures’.

For Teacher B, divergence of respect across cultures was partly due to economics. For her, the affluence of Australia made education available for every child. Students then became the centre and the priority of the schools and the education system.

Teacher C believed that respect was so different across countries that it was impossible to compare. From her point of view, respect had different varieties in different countries. Some behaviour would be regarded as disrespect in countries like China; however, it was not in Australia. On most occasions, students were not trying to be rude or disrespectful; there was just a kind of questioning and more egalitarian culture in Australia. On the other hand, this questioning environment ‘pushes’ teachers to make pedagogical improvements all the time.

In terms of disrespect, both Teacher C and Teacher D pointed to students from Middle Eastern countries as not respecting female teachers because of their gender.

5.2.9 Question 9: In your class, do you have special ways to reinforce students’ sense of respect for others?

Each of the four teachers had their own emphasis in answer to the last question.

As a Kindergarten teacher, Teacher A insisted that being explicit was the priority in teaching respect to young students. She believed that respect was a very broad and abstract concept, for Kindergarten students in particular. Therefore she broke down
the notion ‘act respectfully’ into practical and measurable actions such as ‘ask for permission’ and ‘take turns’ in her class.

Teacher D agreed that respect was abstract and sometimes related to other notions. It was generally hard to identify things as ‘respectful’. In that sense, she thought that explicit expectations were crucial in teaching respect. She added that teachers’ modelling was important as well.

In terms of teaching respect, Teacher B was trying to teach the concept of ‘empathy’. For example, she often asked students, ‘If this happened to you, would you feel happy?’ At the same time, she was emphasising the individuality of students as well; she was trying to focus on the importance of every student, making them realise that their behaviour affected not only themselves, but the whole class, even the whole school. She was trying to improve students’ sense of respect from this perspective.

As for Teacher C, she highlighted the importance of building up good relationships. Respect would be more likely to be produced when students realised that everyone was unique, different and equal, as she said ‘You still have to make sure that you have to respect them; even though they are little, they are still people’. In this sense, respect is related to notions such as ‘equality’ and ‘fairness’.

5.3 Cross-question analysis

Above are the reports of the four teachers’ answers to each question. In this section, I will collate these answers and attempt to categorise them. In the following Table 5.1, ‘1A’ represents Teacher A’s answer to Question 1; ‘2B’ for Teacher B’s answer to Question 2, etc.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The amount of respect</th>
<th>Omnipresence 1B 6A 9D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Respect &amp; disrespect</td>
<td>1A 3D 6A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Across time</td>
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<td>Across cultures</td>
<td>Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Across ages</td>
<td>More respect for female 8C 8D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other influences</td>
<td>Middle Eastern: perceived disrespect</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Across cultures | Asia | More respect 8A 8D |
| | | More authoritarianism 8B |
| | | Fewer understandings 8A 8B 8D |
| Across ages | More respect for female 8C 8D |
| Other influences | More respect for female 8C 8D |

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<td>Difference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Across culture</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian students are more free and expressive 5B 8B</td>
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<td>Across ages</td>
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<td>Other influences</td>
<td>Relationships 2D</td>
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<th>Respect collocated with other concepts</th>
<th>High-esteem 1A 1D</th>
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<td>Regulations and rules 2B 3A 3B</td>
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<td>Value 1C 2C</td>
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<td>Explicitness, for young students 7A 9A 9D</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher model 2C 9D</td>
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<td>Good teacher-student relationships 9C</td>
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</table>

| Table 5.1 Four Australian teachers’ perceptions of respect |
The main four themes from the interviews are:

- the amount of respect;
- the performance of respect;
- respect collocated with other concepts and
- teaching respect.

In the following sections, I will discuss these four themes separately.

### 5.3.1 The amount of respect

There are three subcategories in the first theme: omnipresence, respect and disrespect and difference.

Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher D all mentioned the omnipresence of respect in school and in society. Given their sense that respect is everywhere, they found it hard to label one event specifically as ‘respect’ or specific classroom strategies purposefully aimed at ‘respect’. Two of them argued that it was much easier to identify disrespect than respect. This is reflected in Kant’s understanding of respect. He argues that the ‘duty of respect’ takes the form of the ‘negative’, that is, respect is expressed in terms of a description of vices which would otherwise violate respect, rather than providing specific descriptions of virtues equivalent to respect (Kant, 1996, p. 569). The notion of Kantian respect, therefore, is built on denying disrespectful behaviour rather than specifically listing the criteria of respect. Gradually, the notion of ‘respect’ becomes more abstract while concrete descriptions of ‘disrespect’ appear more prevalent. This might help explain why the interviewees found it hard to define ‘respect’ although they thought it was omnipresent.

In terms of difference, the amount of respect ‘given’ varies with time, culture, age and other influences. In terms of time, Teacher A and Teacher D feel that respect has faded across time. Teacher A thinks this is a sign of a whole society becoming more
relaxed and casual. Her assumption is that ‘decreasing respect’ is partly due to the ready availability of education, with the belief that respect for teachers is more prevalent where education is a privilege. She assumes that is related to scarcity and that familiarity can sometimes bring disrespect and even contempt.

The amount of respect is different among cultures as well. Teachers A, B and D all mention Asian countries. They think there must be more emphasis on respect, especially for teachers, in Asian cultures. However, they also think respect is often related to ‘authoritarianism’ in Asia. Teacher B, as an Australian of Chinese background, argues that some Asian countries treat teachers as authorities; teacher D also questions Asian students’ understandings of respect in performance. There are indeed many studies about deference between students and teachers in ancient China. Lewis (1999, p.383) explicitly draws parallels between the master-disciple relationship in Lun Yu and the father-son relationship. In his view, the master-disciple relationship in ancient China is fundamentally characterised by deference on the part of the disciple (1999, pp.56-63).

With regard to across-age influences on the amount of respect, Teacher A and C argue that the older students become, the more difficult it is to gain their respect. This correlates with the phenomenon that in terms of respect, almost all empirical studies discuss respect in high schools (Sizer and Sizer 1999, Hemmings 2003) and many schools’ problems are found to be rooted in high school students’ understanding of respect. But it was also suggested in the interviews that respect would not always negatively relate with age forever. From her experience, Teacher D tells us that sometimes respect doesn’t disappear; it is just delayed, perhaps by immaturity. Students’ respect might manifest itself when they are adults. The objects of renewed respect might be their teachers; or just past memories. In this sense, nostalgia itself is a kind of respect, that is, a kind of respect for the past. Teacher C specifies another reason for this ‘delay’. She thinks that adults will have a different understanding of respect when they become parents. According to Drummond
(2006), ‘empathy’ is necessary for respect. More specifically, in his work, ‘empathy’ means that through ‘perceiving the other’s bodily activities’, one recognises the other as another ‘conscious life’ (Drummond, 2006, p.15). Drummond argues that ‘empathy’ is the presupposition of respect. ‘Respect’, in this sense, means to acknowledge and appreciate differences among people, with the recognition that each one is basically the same as a ‘conscious life’. ‘Empathy’ reinforces the idea that both the ‘difference’ and ‘sameness’ of persons deserve respect. Drummond (2006) advises that we should expand our understanding of the variety of people’s lives. We are encouraged to actively search within and across cultures for those who deserve respect. It is thus worth considering teaching the idea of ‘empathy’ to students to encourage their better understanding of respect.

Besides culture, time and age, there are some other influences on the amount of respect. Teacher A and C highlight the importance of family, parents and siblings in particular. Teacher C argues that students with older brothers and sisters tend to show less respect, as the older siblings sometimes set a negative example in terms of respect for teachers and schools. However, more emphasis is placed on the influence of parents. Both Teacher A and C stress that respect in school is greatly influenced by parents’ attitudes. Teacher C argues that nowadays parents tend to question teachers’ decisions more. This is partly due to parents’ lack of understanding of the school system. According to Sennett (2003), one important reason for absence of respect is that the display of certain knowledge is too professional or technical to understand. Sometimes, although some people are talented, they are not appreciated or respected due to the obscure information they represent. Similarly, it is possible that some school systems are not clear and then are not understood fully by parents. This might lead to parents’ disrespect towards schools and teachers. On the other hand, Teacher C points out a relationship between questioning and parents’ socioeconomic status (SES). In her experience, well-educated parents in affluent areas tend to question more decisions from schools and teachers. This might go against the intuition that
disrespect is a function of low SES. But it is indeed revealed from the interview that on some occasions disrespect will be more easily produced in well-educated people.

Teacher C also argues that respecting students does not simply mean being kind and being considerate, as respect requires teachers to know more about students. Teacher C suggests that teachers need to get behind students’ classroom ‘masks’ and seek to know their interests, and what desires and fears they have. Interestingly, this runs against Kant’s argument that background information could produce feelings which might override respect. Kant claims that respect is due to everyone, because of the moral law and dignity within each person, ‘that is, of a worth that has no price, no equivalent for which the object evaluated could be exchanged’ (Kant, 1996, p.579). Kant therefore insists that knowing too much background information could hinder people from paying proper respect towards each other. Sennett (2003) is also aware of the potential harm of ‘knowing too much’. He pays special attention to those disadvantaged cases when compassion is reduced to pity, and the self-respect of the recipients is hurt (Sennett, 2003, pp136-140).

Family and student-teacher relationships also influence the amount of respect. In Question 3, 5 and 7, Teacher C reiterates the influence of student-teacher relationships on respect. Teacher C suggests that respect comes out of good relationships. The relationship is built upon teachers’ long devotion and care for students. Thus for some new teachers, it is harder to gain a student’s respect instantly as they do not have that relationship ‘capital’ with students. For the purpose of good relationships, Teacher C encourages teachers to have more communication with students outside the classroom, such as in the playground, in interest groups, or in sporting groups.

5.3.2 The performance of respect
The second theme, the performance of respect is further divided into importance and difference. The importance of performing or showing respect is reflected in answers from Teacher A and Teacher C. Both of them agree that showing respect is an important part of the concept of ‘respect’.

As with the amount of respect, the theme of difference with regard to the performance of respect is also related to time, culture, age and other influences. According to the interviewees, respect nowadays is more mutual (Teacher A, Teacher D), more expressive (Teacher B) and more equal (Teacher B). Mutuality in respect has attracted much attention. Sennett (2003, p.63) stresses that giving back to others is perhaps the most universal, timeless and deepest source of respect. This is confirmed by Mauss (1990), who points out that those who benefit must give something back, even if they cannot give back something equivalent. They must do so to achieve respect in the eyes of others and in their own eyes. Put simply, reciprocity is the foundation of mutual respect. However, according to Mauss, mutuality doesn’t require complete equality. Insisting on ‘exact’ equality in all cases can be unfair. This point, held by libertarians, has a profound effect on the development of contemporary egalitarian theory. Teacher A argues that respect has become more equal; however, she thinks that equality of respect in schools, to some extent, shows that teachers are not as superior as ‘before’. This sense of ‘not as superior as before’ is exactly what Kant describes as the process of performing respect. In Kant’s theory, the dignity of humanity in another person commands our respect. At the same time, Kant claims that showing respect is a process of lessening one’s own dignity, which could be quickly recovered once receiving respect from others (1966, p.401). Duties of respect indicate the ways in which a limitation on self-esteem is manifested by recognition of the dignity of others. This forms a positive circulation of respect among people. Despite their concern for the decreasing superiority of teachers, Teacher A still believes it is a positive change for students and Teachers B and D reconfirm that this change is positive, especially for students. The egalitarian character of respect helps students to be individual thinkers instead of
followers of authority. As to expressions of respect, Teacher B thinks that respect in schools nowadays is more expressive. Compared with the ‘negative form’ of Kantian respect, in recent years, more researchers have focused on the positive and expressive forms of respect. Sennett (2003) highlights the ‘expressive form’ of respect. He argues that showing respect means finding the words and gestures to make respect felt and convincing. This is also reflected in Li (2006, p.82), who thinks that ‘when people show respect, there seems to be a set of behavioural, linguistic, and symbolic norms that convey respect’. Though it is commonly regarded that expressions of respect are linguistic as well as behavioural, Confucius gives the priority to manners. As fine words are believed to rarely associate with true virtue, Confucius supposes that proper manners, rather than fine words, show a sense of respect toward others (Legge, 2004, p.18; p.36).

In terms of respect in different cultures, Teachers B and D think that Australian students are more free and expressive in showing respect, compared with Asian students. On the other hand, Teacher C finds it hard to compare these groups. She believes that respect has many varieties in different countries. For example, while questioning seems disrespectful in Asian countries, it is encouraged in Australia.

As to cross-age differences, Teacher B thinks that age could change students’ ways of showing respect. For example, young students are more expressive of their respect. However, given this trend, Teachers A and C doubt whether young students have enough understanding of respect. When showing respect, they might just follow teachers or follow rules without understanding ‘respect’. Piaget (1932) believes that children between 3 and 7 years tend to accept all information from outside. Similarly they would obey almost all orders from adults as if those orders have ‘a transcendental origin’ (Piaget, 1932, p.89). It is likely that young students, especially students in Kindergarten and Stage One, passively receive orders and rules from teachers without much understating of ‘respect’ itself.
5.3.3 Respect collocated with other concepts

The third theme, respect collocated with other concepts, has three subcategories, high-esteem, value, and regulations and rules.

In the explanation of ‘respect’, Teachers A and D use positive words such as ‘high-esteem’ and ‘admiration’. Interestingly Kantian respect for people does not include such superlative feelings:

I am not bound to revere others (regard merely as human beings), that is, to show them positive high esteem. The only reverence to which I am bound by nature is reverence for law as such. (Kant, 1996, p.583)

Superlative positive feelings may only apply to the moral law rather than human beings in Kant’s theory. In this sense respect for moral law is reverential while respect for persons is rational. On the other hand, one of Kant’s followers, Darwall (1977) distinguishes appraisal respect as involving ‘positive’ feelings and distinguishes this from Kantian / recognition respect.

Teacher C emphasises value in her understanding of respect. She believes that respect entails valuing others’ ideas and opinions as different and unique. ‘Value’ is also an important idea in Piaget’s respect. He delineates the notion of respect in this way:

To respect a person therefore amounts to recognizing his scale of values, which as yet does not mean to adopt it oneself, but to attribute a value from the point of view of this person. (1977, p.118)

Scale of values is synonymous with interpretive stance or point of view, according to Lightfoot (2000, p.178). The statement therefore suggests that in Piaget’s understanding, ‘A respects B’ means that ‘A understands B’s point of view and attributes a value to B only from the perspective of B rather than A’. Piaget insisted
that valuations should be undertaken from the perspective of the other person because a primary consideration of one’s own profit would ruin social exchanges. In other words, there is an obligation to put oneself in the other’s position. However, according to Teacher C, respect for students is not only about valuing their ‘ideas’ from their point of view. She reiterates the importance of valuing students’ ‘feelings’ and then creating a safe environment for them. It seems that respect always involves the process of valuing.

Teachers A and B believe that respect in school is closely related to school regulations and rules. The behaviour of ‘obeying rules’ is regarded as respectful. Rules and regulations are crucial in Piaget’s respect (1932) as well, especially in his explanation of the transformation from unilateral respect to mutual respect. He thinks mutual respect emerges when ‘rules become something that can be changed’ for children (1932, p.90). As children grow older, they no longer invariably obey ready-made rules. They try to create new rules on the basis of cooperation. Consequently, the relative prestige of adults is ‘diminished’ and mutual respect comes in. Then rules or law itself become guides for students’ understanding of respect, especially mutual respect.

5.3.4 Teaching respect

The last theme mainly focuses on teaching respect in schools. Teacher B thinks that primary school is a good time to instil in students a sense of respect. All teachers provide specific strategies for this. Teacher A and Teacher D put explicitness as the priority, for young students in particular. For older students, explicit instructions are not enough. Teacher A and Teacher B advise that a reasonable explanation for certain actions should be given to older students. As introduced in Chapter 2, there are currently two approaches in teaching values, including respect. One is character education and the other is a cognitive development approach. While character education focuses on the ‘direct, explicit’ teaching of respect, the cognitive
development approach suggests teaching respect through ‘moral reasoning’ or ‘values clarification’. In relating this to section 2.1.2 on teaching about respect in the previous literature review, we may find that explicitness, for young students, is an example of ‘character education’ while explanations for older students are typical of the ‘cognitive development approach’. Teachers C and D also think that teachers’ modelling is important at all times in teaching respect. Besides, according to Teacher C, a good relationship helps teachers to gain their students’ respect.
Chapter 6

Spots of time

6.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether there is a ‘Chinese’ concept of respect that I can bring to the analysis of the Values Education document and the interviews. The main methodology used to explore this ‘Chinese respect’ is autoethnography. By using autoethnography, I will attempt to relate my past experiences of respect to a larger Chinese culture and history.

In this chapter, my specific approach to autoethnography is through what I have termed - following Wordsworth - ‘spots of time’. More specifically, my experience of respect will be recorded in the form of stories occurring at different ‘spots of time’ in my life. These stories serve to throw light on two questions: who I am, and what culture I have brought to my understanding of respect. The main reason for the choice of five stories is that each story accords in some way with one important theme from each the five key researchers from Chapter 2: Kant, Confucius, Sennett, Piaget and Drummond.

I will provide detailed thick descriptions of each story and at the same time relate this personal experience to a cultural and historical understanding on the analysis. Each story will be preceded by a quotation from one of the five key writers. Then the story itself will be told, followed by a discussion of the story. Some themes will be abstracted and heightened to complete each discussion. This chapter will conclude with cross-story analysis to explore my identity as a Chinese person and my understanding of respect as a Chinese person.
6.2. Good morning, teacher!

6.2.1 Story 1

The characteristics of a superior man - in his conduct of himself, he was humble; in serving his superior, he was respectful; in nourishing the people, he was kind; in ordering the people, he was just. (Legge, 2004, p.40)

There was a photography competition when I was in Year 4. Since we were all primary students without great technical skills in photography, the competition had more emphasis on themes. The featured topics were required to be interesting, meaningful, or evocative. The leaning to the content rather than the form convinced me to take part in the competition. In the following week, I spent all my spare time wandering around the school in order to shoot satisfactory scenes. But not a single photo came out which reached my expectations. A little downcast, I went to school earlier than usual one morning.

As was usual, four students standing straight at the school gate came into my line of vision. As one of the school conventions, each class from Year 4 to Year 6 took turns to help monitor students’ behaviour and the schools’ routines for a week, which empowered students to take part in the school management. In the appointed week, one of the duties of the class was to arrange four students each morning to stand at the school gate, making sure that each student wore the Honglingjing.²

² Honglingjin: Translated as “the red scarf”, this is the defining uniform item for the Young Pioneers of China, which is a mass youth organisation for children run by the Communist Youth League in China. The investiture ceremony often consists of new members having their scarves tied by existing members.
When I was walking to school, completely immersed in thinking about the photos, a teacher passed by on his bike. “It must be my Chinese teacher”, I murmured to myself, regretting that I didn’t notice him and say hello to him in time. But the regret blew away as the teacher received many greetings from the students on duty. When he walked through the school gate, all four students coincidentally bowed and said “Good morning, teacher.” Though this was routine, the teacher still seemed happy and nodded at the students. Standing near the school gate, I was absorbed in this scene. “How fantastic to be a teacher, receiving greetings in the early morning! It must be one of the sweetest moments for teachers”, I thought. Suddenly an idea flashed into my mind, “Why not take a picture of this, with the theme of students’ respect for teachers? It must be a success.” Without any reservation, I asked the four students for their permission to take the photo. After this, I waited at the school gate for the next teacher. Several minutes later, a teacher came in. I captured the moment when the students bowed and the teacher looked at them with smiles. I made it. I was exulting in my photo. Though I had not checked it yet, my intuition told me that it would be a success. So I sent in this picture, with the title, “Good morning, teacher”. Two weeks later, the results were announced and I won second prize. The comment was, “To explore the special in the ordinary, this is photography. It is not easy for a Year 4 student to catch the scene, which is sweet as well as heart-touching. Let’s respect our teachers in ordinary daily life”.

6.2.2 Analysis of Story 1

At first glance, this is a story about students’ respect towards teachers. In the story, students are supposed to greet teachers politely each time they meet them. This shows that there is indeed great respect for teachers. As the opening quotation shows, respect in ancient China is regarded as a characteristic of a great man. However, respect in China as reflected in the story and quotation is located in a hierarchical relation, directed at ‘superiors’. In such relationships, superiors are assumed to possess greater knowledge and insight and are expected to take care of all
subordinates, who are in return required to respect the authority of their superior
(Hood, 1998, p.856). In this sense, superiors are expected to perform moral
obligations for followers in exchange for their loyalty and respect. One Chinese
expression reflects this ‘superior’ tradition- tian, di, jun, qin, shi (天地君亲师)
(literally, God, earth, Emperor, parents and teacher respectively) - represents
traditional unchallengeable values and names those who deserve unquestioning
respect. The importance of God and earth come from a fundamental reverence for
nature. The Emperor and parents are seen as ethically superior people. In Confucius,
there is always a great emphasis on respect for parents at home and respect for the
Emperor abroad, which is regarded as the root of all benevolent actions (Legge,
2004, p.17). In China, teachers are superior as they were initially connected with the
government and the Emperor.

Formal schooling originated in China in the Zhou Dynasty. As Xueji - the earliest
record about the education system in China - tells us, schools in feudal society were
mainly run by the government. In some dynasties, such as the Zhou and Tang
Dynasties, private schools were popular as well. But the main characteristic of
education in ancient China was that schools were owned by the government and
teachers were, at the same time, high-ranking officers. Respect for teachers, to some
extent, is derivative of respect for officers and the Emperor. On the other hand, it is
undeniable that respect for teachers is a reflection of respect for knowledge and
morality. Obviously, respect in this sense runs against the Kantian notion of respect.
The basis for Kant’s theory is that everyone deserves respect due to their identity as a
person. That is, respect is equally bound to each and every person regardless of their
social status, gender, etc. While the objects of Confucian respect are often
described as superiors, the objects of Kantian respect are all people.

The topic of respect for a teacher did not occur to me until I came to Australia. One
of the most important reasons for this ‘delay’ was that respect for teachers in China is
taken for granted by most students, and by the whole society. My ignorance, to some
extent, came from the ‘ordinariness’ of respect in my life. Respect, as one important part of moral education, is greatly emphasised in Chinese schools. We gain the idea from Confucius that virtues, including respect, will be rewarded if we practise them, though academic improvement relies on our gifts (Legge, 2004). In other words, it is believed that every one is able to obtain moral perfection regardless of their family backgrounds, their talents, etc. This is thoroughly reflected in school management as each student is asked to behave according to specific values every day. The ordinariness of respect comes from teachers’ high social status and the importance of moral perfection in Chinese culture.

Respect is also encouraged overtly in Chinese schools in various ways. In most cases, it becomes ritualised as strict regulations or rules from kindergarten onwards. Admittedly, the rituals of respect sometimes raise the question of sincerity. When students greet teachers, is it a genuine respect which is emotionally engaged or merely a performance? When students become used to such behaviours, it is hard to tell whether they are emotionally inspired or just passively reacting.

On the other hand, if students respect teachers sincerely, we have to make a further distinction between the ‘teacher’ and ‘teaching’. In other words, are the objects of respect teachers as people or teaching as a position? In the story, I still hadn’t made a distinction between these in Year 4. It appeared to me that teachers and their position were the same. This confusion is related to young students’ cognition. Teachers’ training makes a contribution as well. In China, the training courses often ask teachers to uphold a certain image. Jinxin (2005) lists the three most common images for teachers: gardeners, architect of the soul and candles. It is even advised that teachers are not seen at local supermarkets to keep their images consistent. Distance from students and keeping a consistent image are regarded as effective ways to earn students’ respect. This actually violates Confucius’ idea of the teacher-student relationship. The Confucius classic, Lunyu, records many conversations between Confucius and his disciples. Instead of positioning himself as a God, Confucius
would admit a mistake if necessary (Legge, 2004, pp.87-92). However, keeping a
distance as a way to earn students’ respect is confirmed by Kant. In his theory,
respect is characterised by ‘repulsion’ (1966, p.568). The presupposition of respect is
that two persons are not close to each other. Kant further pointed out that respect and
friendship will be at odds with each other. In this sense, for the purpose of respect,
teachers and students are not encouraged to maintain a close relationship. As a result
of such consistent images, teachers are often unidentifiable as individuals; instead
they are seen as one group sharing the same characteristics.

Later on in secondary schools, I came to differentiate between ‘teachers’ and
‘teaching’. However, I still behaved respectfully even though sometimes I really did
not respect certain teachers. This, then, was merely the performance of respect. The
distinction between genuine respect and the performance of respect relates to the
difference between respect for teachers and respect for the position. Respect for
teachers must be emotionally salient. However, respect for the position of teaching,
can be either genuine respect or simply the performance of respect.

Besides students’ respect for teachers and their school and the school’s respect
towards students is also an issue in this story. In Chinese primary schools, it is
common that one class from Year 4 to Year 6 will be on duty each week. The
responsibilities of these classes range from sanitary inspection to student attendance.
This, to some extent, shows the school’s respect towards students, who are invited to
take part in the school management. However, this respect is only given to one third
of the class as helpers. There are different tasks in the duty group and the most
popular one is to stand at the gate, making sure each student has their uniform on. I
was always eager to be part of the duty group as it was honourable to have teachers’
affirmative evaluations. Undoubtedly my favourite task, as for most other students,
was to stand at the gate, although it occurred only twice for me. It was seen as a great
opportunity, showing your excellence to the whole school.
Looking back at this memory now reminds me of respect among students. In most cases, teachers would appoint a certain number of students, according to their behaviour and academic performance, which indeed created and developed an environment where students were striving to be chosen. The sense of being outstanding is inculcated in Chinese students through different strategies. This has historical and cultural roots. The most obvious fact is that there are 1.3 billion people in China. The resources and chances for individual advancement are always limited. Therefore it is encouraged in Chinese culture that in order to live beautifully we should try our best. Working hard to become ‘perfect’ is regarded as an ideal. This is also inspired by Chinese myths. While the Western Christian mythological characters, Adam and Eve, are regarded as people who would make mistakes, in Chinese mythology, the most famous characters, Kua fu and Nv wa, are regarded as sages with all the virtues in the world (Xiao, 2006, p.1). In mythology, Kua fu is hatched from a cosmic egg. Half the shell is above him as the sky, the other half below him as the earth. He grows taller each day for 18,000 years, gradually pushing the sky and the earth apart until they reach their appointed places. After all this effort, Kua fu falls to pieces. His limbs become the mountains, his blood the rivers, his breath the wind and his voice the thunder. His two eyes are the sun and the moon. After him comes Nv wa, a beautiful and wise goddess. She delicately creates the male and female people from mud and is therefore worshipped as the ‘mother’ in China. Both of them are described as ‘perfect’, enjoying all the virtues. These images encourage Chinese people, from age to age, to strive for excellence and perfection. However, it is also true that it is always the teachers’ right to appoint duty groups. The intense competition to be chosen would sometimes lead to poor relations among students. This is a concern of Sennett, who argues that absence of respect is sometimes due to competition and imitation (Sennett, 2003, p.82). While students’ performance is judged by teachers alone, respect between students is often overlooked.
In the same vein, competition among students is also intense when they are striving for the Honglingjin. Its extraordinariness lies in the fact that not every student is entitled to be a Young Pioneer. Therefore, Honglingjin is an honour that students have to earn by themselves. In my school days, only seven or eight students could become Young Pioneers each year. The investiture ceremony often consisted of new members having their scarves tied by existing members. Most students were eager to achieve membership of Honglingjin. There are many reasons underlying students’ desire to belong to the group. One obvious reason is that primary school students are easily led by adult opinion. Piaget, in The Moral Judgement of the Child, argues that young children would often confuse their own ideas with the constraints from the outside world. As a result of their teachers’ encouragement, students would strive to achieve the Honglingjin, as the symbol of being a Young Pioneer. Wachman (1992) found that Asian subordinates tend to identify their interest within a group, to avoid internal division and conflict, and to better comply with commands from their leaders. It is not uncommon in schools that exclusion leads to invisibility. Outsiders are always regarded either as strange or trivial. Most students therefore want to be like others and to stay within a certain group. The special importance of groups in China can be traced back to economic and political origins. As Xiao argues, in Reflections on Chinese Civilization, a strong sense of ‘groupingness’ originated because of the features of Chinese agricultural society (Xiao, 2006, p.13). Ancient Chinese people relied heavily on crops; however, most peasants did not have scientifically advanced methods of agriculture. It is therefore not difficult to understand that people trusted experience from elders and also tended to gather together, collectively solving common problems. These experiences from agriculture led to traditional Chinese respect for older people and a strong sense of ‘belongingness’ to certain groups.
In contrast, some Westerners, especially people in Mediterranean areas, originally made a living by trading. The expansion of commerce was achieved through individual competition instead of group decisions, according to Xiao (2006, p.14). Hence, a different type of economy contributes to the Chinese emphasis on groups. Feudalism also reinforced the position of groups. Many ancient Chinese emperors found it hard to manage such a large population. The dominant class tried to keep most people within certain similar groups for the purpose of management. Therefore Chinese collectivism is also based on inequality between the controlling class and the controlled people.

6.2.3 Main themes from Story 1

Key themes appearing in this story analysis are as follows:

- an emphasis on respect, for superiors in particular;
- high social position of teachers;
- ordinariness of respect;
- rituals on respect;
- respect for teachers and respect for teaching;
- schools’ respect/teachers’ respect for certain groups of students;
- respect among students (a sense of being outstanding and of ‘group-ness’).

6.3 The only way to escape the punishment

6.3.1 Story 2

One owes basic and primary respect to anyone, Kant says, ‘even though by his deeds he makes himself unworthy of it’. (Kant, 1996, p.580).
In Year 6, I was transferred to a new class. One Tuesday afternoon, I went to class as usual, finding several classmates looking worried. As soon as I sat on my chair, they started to ask, one after another, “Did you bring a brush pen?” Not until then did I come to experience the same anxiety. There was a settled rule in our class that every student was expected to bring his own brush pen each Tuesday afternoon for our calligraphy lesson. Our teacher required us to bring this equipment each week even though she did not notify us in advance on Monday afternoon. But the reality was, at the age of 11, there was always a small number of forgetful students. Often the consequences would be horrible, such as being scolded or even being punished by having to copy the class rules ten times. Thinking of the grim punishment, I felt a bit terrified.

Suddenly I heard my desk mate speak excitedly, “There is only one way left to escape the punishment. Let’s pray A will forget her equipment as well.” Instantly we all got the point and cheered for her brilliant idea. A was one of the best students in my class. More importantly, she was born to a powerful and wealthy family, which, we thought, led directly to the teacher showing special kindness to her. Even though we were little at that time, we could still tell the difference, as the teacher never scolded A. In other words, if A forgot to bring her brush pen, our punishments would also be exempted as the teacher would not be willing to blame her. A finally arrived without her brush pen, which reassured us greatly. When the teacher came into the class and found some students, including A, didn’t have the equipment for calligraphy, for the first time she didn’t become as angry as usual. Instead, she cancelled the lesson and started a new Chinese reading class. Some classmates looked at each other, smiling secretly, feeling grateful for A’s occasional carelessness.

On the next Tuesday, a small number of students, about 4 or 5 (there were more than fifty students in one class), forgot to bring their equipment again. When the class began, the teacher asked those forgetful students to put their hands up. Then she
began to criticise them in rather disrespectful words. Suddenly, she found B, a boy who always had the lowest grades in each examination, was among them. She became angrier and shouted, “You are dumb. What can you do? I knew you would learn nothing. I only need you to listen to my instructions, which is the only thing you might have done. Now you still failed in doing this. What a failure.” At this time, I was very angry but I was still not brave enough to stand up and argue with the teacher. I felt sorry for B and turned to look at him, finding him blushing and trying hard to bury himself in his arms. In my memory, B was not as ‘stupid’ as the teacher described. He just learnt a bit more slowly than other students. But he was a poor unfortunate boy whose father was in jail and whose mother had lost her job. Later, as the teacher always called him ‘dumb’ or ‘silly’, some classmates tended to call him that as well. And he became quieter and gained worse results in exams. Many years later, I heard from my mother that he became a mentally ill person.

6.3.2 Analysis of Story 2

Obviously, this teacher runs against the egalitarian character of Kantian respect. As the opening quotation shows, Kant insists that we are obliged to show respect to others equally. But in the story, the teacher’s respect is classified according to different groups of students: students such as A, students such as B and other students.

It is reflected in the story that this teacher’s respect for students depends on socio-economic status. With student B, it seemed that the teacher chose to give up on him. From Kant’s point of view, the teacher is not performing any duty of respect at all towards student B. According to Kant, the duty of respect includes the form of a ‘negative’, that is, respect is expressed in terms of a description of vices which violate respect, such as arrogance, defamation and ridicule (1996, p.569). The teacher’s performance in the story is equivalent to ‘defamation and ridicule’, suggesting a lack of Kantian respect towards student B. On the other hand, for
student A, the teacher shows respect, empathy and care. One underlying reason is student A’s family background. Thus, this is a story about respect rooted in inequality. Respect according to socio-economic status violates Kant’s view of respect. In Kant’s argument, each person deserves respect due to his ‘intrinsic value’, because of the inherent dignity of humanity (Seidler, 1986, p.155). According to Kant, it is this dignity that differentiates persons from animals. Therefore Kantian respect is owed to each person equally as everyone is born with ‘the dignity of humanity’. The focus on ‘person’, instead of ‘family background’ does not accord with the teacher’s reactions to student A and student B. Kant himself is aware that ‘background information’ would influence people’s performance of respect since no one can be completely ‘rational’. Thus he points out that a duty of respect requires people to ‘put aside entirely the influence of inclination’ (1996, p.55). In order to avoid ‘influence’, Kant further suggests that the principle of respect requires people to stay at a proper ‘distance’ from each other (1996, p.585). If applied in school contexts, Kantian respect advises teachers not to find out much information about students, since respect is due to students regardless of the particularities of their experience and history. This idea is challenged by some contemporary researchers, including Seidler (1986). He argues that Kantian respect is defined at the cost of abstracting people from social, sexual and cultural characteristics which could otherwise help us to a fuller sense of ‘their individualities’ (p.44). Therefore he argues that Kantian respect for persons is, to some extent, ‘disrespect’ as each person is situated in certain cultures and histories. Teachers are therefore advised to have a full understanding of students. According to Seidler, the purpose of getting to know students is to find the most suitable learning mode for each student, rather than making it a criterion by which to differentiate students.

The teacher in the story did not do this appropriately. She did not show respect and empathy for the poor students and she did not try to find out much information from students either. There are many reasons for this. First of all, the number of students in a Chinese class (45-55 in one class) is often too large for teachers to spare
extra time for slow learners. Competition among classes and schools drives teachers to leave some slow students behind. The rigid examination system is partly responsible for the disadvantageous treatment of special needs students. The intensive exam competition often leads to comparisons between teachers, classes and schools. In order to have a higher class average score, some teachers tend to ‘give up’ on a small number of students. As Kant argues, respect for persons means that we should not treat people merely as ‘means’ but always as ‘ends’ in themselves (Seidler, 1986, p.154). Therefore, a student cannot be reduced to a machine for high scores; neither can he or she be manipulated for a high class average score.

In the story, for most students, this teacher used fear as an instrument to win respect. However, Confucius argued that fear is not an appropriate method to gain respect, either in state management for the king or in classroom management for the teacher. According to Confucius, respect is rooted in unequal relationships. The essence of the relationship is that the superior party owes moral obligations to, and should be respected by, the inferior party (Legge, 2004). Teachers are expected to carry out their moral obligations towards students while students are expected to show respect in turn. Confucius’ respect is not directed in mutual ways and this exchange, of course, depends on the morality of the superior party. The inherent inequality of the relationships results in the emphasis on the inferior’s respect towards the superior. What the superior gives to the inferior is seen as ‘moral obligations’, rather than ‘fear’ as this teacher showed in the story. Respect for the teacher in this story may only lead to temporary obedience, or the performance of respect for teachers, instead of a genuine feeling of high esteem.

Besides the teacher’s criticism, ‘fear’ in the story is mainly manifested through strict classroom rules. According to Piaget (1932), rules and regulations are very important for children’s understanding of respect. He argues that when students are trying to create new rules on their own, their understanding of respect changes from unilateral to mutual (1932 p.89). The emphasis is that students are not relying on ready-made
rules and commands; instead they are able to create rules on the basis of cooperation. For Piaget, it is inappropriate for the teacher to design all the classroom rules by him/herself without much explanation and discussion with the students. This is not beneficial for students with regard to their moral development.

It needs to be clarified that the teacher in my story is a little extreme. Not all teachers who are very strict with students rely on fear as obviously as this teacher. My Chinese experience also suggests that those who cultivate fear tend to be mainly female teachers. This is not difficult to understand in the context of a male dominated society. Since men are commonly acknowledged as more powerful or capable, most male teachers enjoy pre-existing esteem from students. Hence it is not uncommon that female teachers need to gain or sustain respect in various ways, among which is through strictness or even fear. This accounts for the belief that most mothers are stricter than fathers in Chinese families. Strictness or fear is used as a tool for the female to gain equal respect to the male. Even though the image of a good teacher is often related to mothers in China, female teachers are still disadvantaged compared to male teachers. It is also worth noting that there is still a big gap between ‘female’ and ‘mother’. In China, people do have respect for mothers - we call the longest river ‘Mother River’ and the main Chinese god figure is a mother. The underlying reason for this respect is that mothers give birth to the next generation. However this doesn’t mean that females gain corresponding respect from the society. The reality is that while the general image of ‘mother’ is indeed regarded as great, the individual female is often overlooked. In certain generations, males are still regarded as dominant figures. In this sense, respect for mothers would not necessarily lead to high esteem for the female.

Respect among students is also an issue in this story. To some extent, it is the teacher that made other students look down upon the slow learner. This is a form of bullying towards him. However, not every student followed the teacher’s disrespect towards
the slow learner. Some students, including me, found it unfair for Student B to receive such treatment.

The differences between students’ reactions show that school is not the only place for education in respect. Respect can be taught elsewhere, such as in the family. Regarded as the first teachers for children, parents in China are expected to exert much influence on students’ moral values. Besides direct instilling from teachers, students are able to ‘pick up’ the notion of respect in different ways. There are some songs in China which especially express students’ respect towards teachers. The most common one is called Every night I pass by. It describes a picture of a student passing by his teacher’s office every night and he always finds the teacher working very hard. In China, the selfless image of teachers is deeply embedded through the popularity of these songs.

This is also a story about respect in terms of relationships among different people. On the one hand, this story is mainly about a teacher’s lack of respect for students. On the other hand, it is a story about my loss of respect for this teacher. My respect for the teacher eroded because the teacher respected students differently. In other words, the corruption in her actions led to the corrosion of my respect for her.

Respect is dependent on relationships among different people. One’s respect towards a second person can influence not only the receiver, but other people as well. Respect in this sense is not Kantian respect or recognition respect. It is appraisal respect according to Darwall’s classification (1977). While recognition respect requires us to take seriously and weigh appropriately the fact that everyone is a person, appraisal respect is ‘an attitude of positive appraisal to a person either judged as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’ (1977, p.38). Appraisal respect then is not a duty to everyone, as is recognition respect. It only arises when the objects have manifested excellence. The criteria for ‘excellence’ may vary according to cultures, histories and personal preferences. In the story, the corruption in the teacher’s actions
led to the corrosion of my respect for her, as morality is an important criterion for appraisal respect in China.

6.3.3 Main themes from Story 2

Key themes appearing in this story analysis are as follows:

- respect and its relationship to social position;
- teachers trying to gain respect through fear;
- different sources of influence on students’ understanding of respect;
- respect and its dependence on relationships among different people.

6.4 The starry morning

6.4.1 Story 3

Society shapes character in three ways so that people can earn, or fail to arouse, respect. The first way occurs through self-development, particularly through developing abilities and skills...The second way lies in care of oneself or independence. In other words, we should make sure that we are not being a burden upon others. In this way, needy adults incur shame and self-sufficient persons deserve respect...The third way to earn respect is to give back to others. (Sennett, 2003, pp.63-64)

After graduation from the primary school at the age of 11, I went to a junior high boarding school, which was renowned for its strict school environment and ‘efficient’ learning. As a country girl, this was really a fresh start for me, getting everything organised by myself and making every effort to memorise the countless school and class rules. These rules were put into practice from the time we woke up. For example, we were required to rise at a quarter to six in the morning. Fifteen minutes were allocated for getting up and getting washed. So at six o’clock sharp, everyone was supposed to turn up at the playground for the morning exercises for
another fifteen minutes, after which we could finally get into the canteen for our breakfast.

Rising at a quarter to six was really a huge challenge for us at that time. But since we chose the school, we had to follow all the rules. On the first day, we struggled to rise at the right time. However, what was beyond our expectations was that we couldn’t possibly finish washing in fifteen minutes. The bathroom in the dorm was only able to hold up to two people washing at the same time, which meant that everyone had to shorten the time. What’s more, we had not the slightest idea of time. For example, we planned to make our bed in two minutes, which needed to be doubled. All of this led to our arriving late at the playground by about two minutes. We immediately rushed into the line and began to do the morning exercises. After fifteen minutes, we were about to leave, with the command from the PE teacher, “Now you can go to the canteen. Year One goes first. Year Two and Year Three have to wait patiently.”

Just as my room-mates and I were ready to leave, our classroom teacher stopped us. She began to criticise us furiously, “I am really ashamed of you. See, only six of you were late this morning among the whole school. Our class was looked down upon because of you. How many times did I tell you yesterday that you had to get up at a quarter to six in the morning? Why were you so lazy?” One of my room-mates wanted to explain to the teacher, “We indeed got up at the right time. But we couldn’t really make it in fifteen minutes...” Our teacher interrupted her and became more angry, “Liar! Liar! Why could all of the students do this except you? Are you going to tell me that it is because you are stupid?” At that time, many students were still in the playground or had just passed by and some of them looked at us curiously. I felt so awkward that I lowered my head deeply so as to avoid the looks of others. This was my first experience of being scolded severely by a teacher in front of many other students.
After twenty minutes, the teacher finished “talking”, which meant that we were permitted to have our breakfast. Hungry and depressed, we went to the canteen, only to find that nothing eatable was left. We were about to go back to the dorm for something to eat. But looking at our watches, we realised that morning reading would start in a minute. We couldn’t imagine what would happen if we were late again. So we had to head to the classroom without breakfast.

This was my first morning in the boarding school. Thereafter every morning we all rose at half past five, fifteen minutes earlier, making sure that we had enough time to get ready. In many cases, we arrived earlier at the playground than was necessary. As it was the late fall, we would often find stars in the sky while waiting for other students. Many years have passed away, but the scene of the starry morning often appears in my mind, reminding me of the old days in the boarding school.

6.4.2 Analysis of Story 3

In this story I have much respect for my teacher. It contrasts greatly with the previous story. Both teachers were quite strict with students. However the teacher in this story gains respect from students. Let us return to the three criteria listed in the opening quotation from Sennett: ability, independence and giving back. My experiences suggest that both ability and giving back are reasons for respect. The teacher in this story is knowledgeable and her class was quite interesting and meaningful (compared to the teacher from the previous story, whose teaching, in most cases, only involved reading from textbooks). Their teaching abilities directly affected students’ evaluations of them. In terms of giving back, the teacher from the previous story often criticised or even bullied or teased students for no reason. Though strict as well, the teacher in this story always criticised or praised students according to class rules or school rules, instead of her personal preferences. This made students more willing to listen to her advice or even criticism. At the same time, it also increased students’ respect for her. Among Sennett’s (2003) three ways
to gain respect, the teacher in this story aroused respect from students by her abilities and by giving back.

In addition, these two teachers differed on morality as well. The teacher in this story was more ‘moral’ compared with the previous teacher. There is a tradition of respecting moral persons, according to Confucius. In Lunyu, there are many descriptions of respecting great men with perfect virtues:

There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of the sages. (Legge, 2004, p.116)

Confucius believed that intelligence or ability was partly pre-determined by genes; however morality or virtue was completely determined by one’s own determination and effort (Legge, 2004, p.53; p.80). In this sense, respecting morality or good virtues is regarded as a way to encourage people to live morally. Here, Confucius and Kant are similar. Both put a crucial concept in the centre of their moral philosophy - for Kant, moral law and for Confucius, great virtue. In both cases, ‘respect’ is employed to emphasise these concepts. By directing respect towards moral law and great virtue, Kant and Confucius reinforce the important position of these two concepts in their moral philosophy. Kant further argues that all people inherently deserve respect as human beings are born with moral laws; in this sense, we cannot even withdraw respect for a vicious man ‘even though by his deeds he makes himself unworthy of it’ (Kant, 1996, p.580). However, for Confucius, virtue is not the reason for equality. He admits that people are born with virtue, but he also claims that not everyone is able to remain virtuous. As Lunyu records, ‘by nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart’ (Legge, 2004, p.119). This accounts partly for Confucius’ emphasis on education. He believes that if there is no proper education for children, the good natural instincts of a child will change (especially in a bad direction) along with the surroundings.
High ability, moral behaviour and giving back make the teacher in this story respected. But in the story, respect for the teacher is also reflective of respect for the school. First of all, it was my choice of school - a private boarding school with high tuition. Since it was my own choice to be enrolled, it would be odd not to respect this school. Before I began my study, there was already some respect for the school and its teachers. There is obviously an ‘unearned increment’ of respect for this school.

Respect for the school also came from its strictness. The characteristic culture of this boarding school was composed of rules, strictness and discipline. In the community there was respect for strictness itself as strictness was often related to high learning ‘efficiency’ and a ‘good’ learning environment. The notion of strictness is very important in traditional Chinese education. There is an old saying in China, ‘严师出高徒’ (Yan shi chu gao tu). Literally it means ‘strict teachers will produce excellent students’. It highlights the importance of strictness for any teacher. In traditional ways of thinking, the strictness of teachers guarantees a solid academic or moral foundation for students. Nowadays, the saying ‘严师出高徒’ (Yan shi chu gao tu) is more emphasised as the spirit behind strictness - the spirit of rigour in learning. At the same time, ‘Yan shi chu gao tu’ doesn’t only mean that teachers should be strict with students; it also indicates that teachers should be strict with themselves as well. This might be one reason for the different reactions towards teachers in this story and the previous story. In both stories, teachers try to gain respect though strictness; however the teacher from the previous story lost respect. One of the reasons was that the teacher in this present story is strict with herself as well. Her strictness was applied to students and to herself at the same time. The traditionally high respect for the spirit of strictness led to a higher status for private boarding schools in my hometown.

When looking back to my old schools days, despite the strict environment, I still miss the happy times in this school. Nostalgia is a kind of respect as well, especially
in the form of respect for what is lost and what is left behind. As the etymology of ‘respect’ indicates, respect involves a sense of ‘looking back’. On some occasions, respect will be delayed. Some students might feel annoyed by a strict teacher; however when these students look back to their school days, it is possible that their respect towards teachers and schools is activated. Of course, respect in my story was not delayed; my respect for teachers was already there when I was in school. However this feeling of respect is magnified with the course of time. I realise that looking back is actually itself another kind of respect for things that are left behind, especially things that are missing in one’s present life.

6.4.3 Main themes from Story 3

Key themes appearing in this story analysis are as follows:

- respect for those teachers with ‘ability’, ‘a sense of giving back’ and morality;
- respect for teachers is reflective of respect for schools;
- respect for strictness itself;
- nostalgia is a kind of respect.

6.5 The magic of apology

6.5.1 Story 4

As children become mature, they no longer obey ready-made rules invariably. They try to create new rules on the basis of cooperation. The prestige of adults is diminished. This is when mutual respect emerges. (Piaget, 1932)

After being well-behaved in junior high school for three years, at the age of 15, I continued my study in a senior high school. At that time, I felt like being an adult and
wanted to behave more individually. I also came to realise the importance of freedom and had a stronger sense of ‘individuality’.

On the fifth day of school, our classroom teacher decided to spend one hour encouraging us to work hard and prepare as early as possible for the National College Entrance Examination. At the very beginning, he stressed the ever growing intense competition in society. He, in other words, was asking us to be more diligent in school; otherwise we would easily be ‘left behind’ in society. But after twenty minutes, he began to tell us about his daughter. His daughter was our schoolmate and had just graduated from our school that year. She gained a very high score in the National College Entrance Examination, which guaranteed her enrolment in a prestigious university in Shanghai.

The focus of the teacher’s talk was to tell us how diligent his daughter was and how strict he was with his daughter, with an eye on the final exam. At first, we listened attentively. But as the speech lasted for more than thirty minutes, we gradually lost interest and became restless. Many murmured to each other, ‘We are not children anymore. We know how important the exam is.’; ‘What’s the purpose of telling us about his daughter for such a long time?’; ‘I am so lucky not having such an evil dad’, ‘We are not his children anyway.’ I felt annoyed as well by his lengthy talk and said to myself, ‘This is really a waste of time. I don’t really get the point.’ I guess I also had some facial expressions which indicated that I was sick of the ‘hard working education’ talk. Suddenly, the teacher raised his voice, ‘What’s wrong with you all? Is it proper to listen to your teacher in this way? Is that what an adult should do?’ It seemed that he was scolding the whole class. But I felt this was for me in particular as the teacher was staring at me most of the time. Maybe my words and facial expressions were the last straw.

When he finished talking, he commanded, ‘Ying, follow me into the office’. I was a little scared by his imperious tone but I had to anyway. So I followed him at a
distance. Once into the office, he threw the books on the desk and started to question me, ‘What’s the matter with you? Do you feel sick of my daughter or me? I thought you were a good student. But you really disappointed me…’ After rebuking me for half an hour, finally he became calmer and sent me back to class. I didn’t say anything in the office. From my experience, if you want to argue with an angry teacher, you gain nothing except more blame or punishment. So I preferred to keep silent. But it didn’t mean I felt good. On the contrary, I was deeply depressed and ashamed for the rest of the day.

At night, when reflecting on what I had done, I realised that I really did wrong and needed to explain this to the teacher. So early the next morning, I went straightaway to my teacher. Without giving him the chance to talk, I started, ‘Sorry about yesterday. I felt sorry because I was so rude to you. But believe me I had no intention to disrespect your daughter or you. What I am trying to express is that you don’t have to encourage us by always citing the example of your daughter. We all know that your daughter is outstanding. But this kind of comparison gives us lots of pressure. After all, not everyone is that talented or born into as well-educated a family as your daughter. What’s more, we are not children anymore. We know the pressure of the National College Entrance Examination.’ The teacher looked at me and smiled. ‘I also need to say sorry to you. I realised it was rather inappropriate to speak to you in such a disrespectful way. If you need any advice, you can come to me directly. I am not a dogmatic person. But I hope you won’t express your dissatisfaction in the way you did yesterday. Education is not only about scores. More importantly it tells us how to be a civilised person.’ I nodded and added, ‘OK. Now I realise how important communication is’. For the first time I felt I was talking equally with a teacher. Afterwards, even though there were still some times when I disagreed with his teaching philosophy, I felt grateful towards my classroom teacher in senior high school for giving me the space for self-development and the chance to speak to him as an adult.
6.5.2 Analysis of Story 4

In the story, the apology helped me gain a new understanding of respect and, at the same time, my attitudes toward the teacher changed from disrespect to respect.

First of all, the story is an epiphany about equality and mutuality in my understanding of respect, as I felt equal to a teacher for the first time. As the opening quotation shows, mutual respect emerges when students realise that rules are changeable. In the story, I came to question the rule that ‘students are not allowed to talk when the teacher is speaking’ because I saw the teacher’s talking as not beneficial. But at first I chose an improper way to show my dissatisfaction, which was criticised by the teacher. Then I apologised and reasoned with the teacher. It worked quite well and I came to a new understanding of respect. In this sense, not all activities are helpful in transforming unilateral respect to mutual respect. According to Lightfoot’s (2003) comments on Piaget’s notion of respect, only interactions involving reasoning and negotiation, like meaningful engagement, can accelerate the transformation from unilateral respect to mutual respect. Therefore teachers are advised to provide students with more space for negotiation, reasoning or debating, for teenage students in particular. Otherwise these students might simply become rude to show their dissatisfaction. However, discussions and negotiations are not suggested by Confucius in his work. In terms of respect, Confucius lists manners instead of words as he believes that ‘fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue’ (Legge, 2004, p.18).

Fortunately for me, I had the opportunity to discuss my feelings with the teacher and I really appreciated his response. From then on, I came to appreciate equality and mutuality in respect for teachers. Respect in this sense is recognition respect. Darwall (1977) points out in his work that Kantian respect is recognition respect.
However there is still an emphasis for me on respect for the position of teaching. Previously my respect for teachers and teaching were confused. But from then on, I tended to regard teachers as real people. Teaching remains simply an abstract concept. I have no particular feeling towards this position; however, I recognise the importance of teaching in our society and I show my respect towards teachers generally. Respect in this sense is still recognition respect in Darwall’s dichotomy of recognition respect and appraisal respect (1977). There is indeed recognition respect for teachers generally. However after initial contact, my respect for teachers would be more directed at teachers themselves. This is when appraisal respect merges as ‘an attitude of positive appraisal of a person either judged as a person or as engaged in some more specific pursuit’ (1977, p.38). The criteria for appraisal respect are that the objects have manifested characteristics which make them deserving of positive appraisal. For some teachers, one would not show appraisal respect; for some teachers, appraisal respect comes along with recognition respect. Certain positions might help people gain appraisal respect as these positions are characterised by excellence. However, Quaquebeke et al (2007) believe that status should be the consequence of, rather than the incentive for, appraisal respect. It is therefore unreasonable of teachers to demand that students should respect them due to their status. Appraisal respect is to be earned among equals, i.e., status may be awarded afterwards, after the event. This is distinct from my previous understanding of respect for teachers when I was in primary school or even junior high school.

Therefore the story records my new understanding of respect. Equally important was the transformation from disrespect to respect towards the teacher. Disrespect didn’t last long with the intervention of the apology. In the story there are two apologies - my apology towards the teacher and the teacher’s apology towards me. I did regret my rudeness to the teacher as students are not allowed to talk while the teacher is talking. However, another reason for my initiating the apology was my position as the Chinese course representative. I would have to communicate with the teacher often in the near future as he taught us Chinese. In this sense, our relationship was to
some extent institutionally based. With the recognition that an on-going positive relationship with the Chinese teacher was the basis for my work as a course representative, I determined to ask the teacher’s forgiveness. Looking back on my apology in the story, it seems very mature. But it was not a spontaneous apology. On the contrary, it was a deliberately organised and prepared speech. I expressed my guilt for my rudeness the day before. At the same time, I needed to tell the teacher our true feelings about his talk, on behalf of the whole class. I realised that this was my duty as a communication bridge between the students and the teacher. The reaction of the teacher was unexpected. His reply was short, but determined, still with an educative element, but without overdoing it. I appreciated his response. Apology in two directions also proved that both of us cared about the views of each other. But due to his apology, my respect for him returned.

There seems to be a paradox in the relationship. On one hand, the teacher is humbling himself by making an apology. He is repressing his ego to apologise to me. It could be inferred that this is shameful as his position is lowered. On the other hand, my disrespect towards the teacher disappeared and respect increased. It appears in the story that my respect increased as the teacher ‘reduced’ himself. However, this is not a paradox from the perspective of Kant. In Kant’s theory, respect comes from humbling one’s dignity of humanity. Each human is born with the dignity of humanity, which deserves our respect. However, when one decides to respect another, the first step is to

lessen one’s own dignity, which can be quickly recovered once respect is received (1966, p.401).

Disrespect arose initially mainly due to the teacher’s lengthy boring talk. He did not even acknowledge that we knew these facts about the competitive society and the important National College Entrance Examination. In addition, his harsh criticism invoked feelings of shame, increasing my disrespect towards him. I lost face in front
of the whole class. Face, though originating in the Chinese language, is a universal concept now. The earliest formal definition of face appeared in the classic sociology studies of Goffman (1955, p.213):

The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes.

The two focal points in this definition are:

- Face is the image people expect to sustain in front of others;
- Face is contextual (implied from the phrase ‘during a particular contact’).

However, this definition has been criticised as not ‘universal’, or at least inapplicable to the Chinese concept of face. Based on the Chinese concept of face (i.e., 面子 mianzi), many researchers (e.g. Ho, 1994) emphasise the crucial position of ‘others’, other than ‘oneself’, in the definition of face. Face is not only about one’s expectation of sustaining a particular image; it is more about others’ recognition and assessment of the image one strives to maintain.

Despite the differing definition, there is consensus about the important position of face in Chinese cultures. A growing number of researchers try to attribute the concept of face to the individualism-collectivism cultural syndrome. According to Triandis (1995), face requires collectivism as a foundation as it is consistent with the characteristics of collectiveness: interdependence, group goals, norms, obligation, and duties and communality. However, this doesn’t mean that face doesn’t apply to ‘individualists’. It might be manifested in different ways in different cultures. Ting-Toomey (1988) suggests that people in individualistic societies lean towards maintaining their own face; while people in a collectivist society would place more emphasis on mutual or other face.
The relationship between face and respect in the story could be summarised in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I did not give face to the teacher</th>
<th>I have disrespect for the teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I did not receive face from the teacher</td>
<td>I have disrespect for the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I gave face to the teacher</td>
<td>I have disrespect for the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I received face from the teacher</td>
<td>I have respect for the teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1 Face and respect

To be more specific, in ‘1’, I was rude to the teacher and thus did not give face to the teacher. Disrespect was due to his lengthy boring talk. In ‘2’, disrespect increased with his harsh criticism. I certainly did not receive face. In ‘3’, I was determined to apologise to the teacher. By losing my own face, I gave the teacher his face. But this was just a performance as disrespect continued. Finally in ‘4’ my respect to the teacher came back, however different in quality.

This obviously reflects the contextual loss of face. The feeling of losing face is produced by particular events. The feeling of disrespect, on the other hand, is a more long-term state. Disrespect may increase or decrease as time goes by. The spontaneous feeling of losing face may lead to a more stable feeling of disrespect.

The difference between ‘1’ & ‘3’ and ‘2’ & ‘4’ tells us that receiving face is more predictive of respect than giving face. When I received face, I felt respectful towards the teacher; when I didn’t receive face, I felt disrespectful towards the teacher. This confirms Sennett’s view that giving back is the most
universal way to gain respect (2003, p.64). When one person receives face, it is more likely that he will have a sense of respect. As a way of showing respect, the person probably would then return face:

Receive face $\rightarrow$ more possible $\rightarrow$ Respect $\rightarrow$ more possible $\rightarrow$ Return face

However, in reality, some people skip the process of respect. They treat face as an item of trade and are scarcely emotionally engaged. If A receives face from B, then A gives face back to B in other circumstances. Face is therefore reduced to a bureaucratic relationship.

It is no less obvious from the story that giving others face doesn’t necessarily mean respecting them. When I decided to make an apology to the teacher, I still felt disrespectful towards him. Ho lists the reasons for giving face in different cultures and pays special attention to Chinese culture:

Chinese culture would put more weight than American culture on generation rank (1), birth, blood or marriage ties (2), social connections (3,4), and formal title, position, rank or office (5,6). U. S. American culture, which champions individualism, would put the most weight on attributes that reflect personal effort or achievement (3, 5) and personal reputation (7). A permissible generalization is that Chinese culture tends to emphasize relational attributes, whereas U. S. American culture tends to emphasize individual attributes. (1994, p.277)

It is true that as the Chinese course representative, I felt obliged to sustain a good relationship with the teacher and had to apologise to him. In this sense, my reason for giving him face was partly institutional and relational, instead of genuine respect. Therefore face based on relational attributes is not necessarily related to genuine respect. Comparatively speaking, respect would be more likely to be the reason for giving face that is based on individual attributes. When face is given only for the reason of relational attributes, rather than personal achievement, respect is removed from the concept of face.

6.5.3 Main themes from Story 4
Key themes appearing in this story analysis are as follows:

- with maturity, equality can become more important in one’s understanding of respect;
- negotiations and discussions are important in students’ understanding of respect;
- respect is sometimes institutionally based;
- respect towards the teacher increases when he ‘reduces’ himself;
- respect and face in two cultures.

6.6 A dilemma over respect

6.6.1 Story 5

*Empathy requires one to recognize the other as another ‘conscious life’ by ‘perceiving the other’s bodily activities’. (Drummond, 2006, p.15).*

At the age of 17, I went to university in Ningbo, studying a major in English Education. During the first semester I found many differences between university and high school, one of which was that rather than learning many subjects, in college we needed to focus on our major only. Consequently, in many cases, I felt rather confined to English and was eager to have some courses in other subjects. As a result, in semester two, when we were given the chance to choose one or two classes of our own, I chose a course called ‘Traditional Chinese Culture’. In my view, languages are interrelated. Therefore, if I wanted to have mastery of English, first of all, I needed a solid foundation in my own language, Chinese. Another reason was that learning Chinese, especially Chinese culture, would help my sense of identity. So many expectations for the course and the teacher went along with my decision to attend the class.
On the first day, I went to the classroom very early, occupying a front position in order to listen to the teacher more attentively. But I became a bit worried as soon as the class began, as the teacher was speaking English. First of all, my concern lay in the fact that my original understanding of some traditional cultures was not deep enough yet for me to absorb the English version. I was also worried about the teacher’s capability and whether he was able to convey the essence of traditional Chinese culture in English. Unfortunately, my concerns turned into deeper disappointment. The teacher did not speak Mandarin ‘well’ as he had a strong Sichuan accent. Consequently his English was also influenced by the Sichuan dialect. The basic situation was that we were not able to understand many parts of his teaching regardless of whether he was speaking English or Chinese. When the teacher was still in the classroom, some students began to murmur to each other, ‘I didn’t know what he was saying for the whole lesson.’; ‘I won’t come for the lesson again for sure.’…

Perhaps the teacher also realised his problem of pronunciation, so in the second lesson he spoke very little and most of his teaching became writing. In other words, he spent much time copying material from the textbook and writing it on the blackboard. This was even more boring as each of us had a textbook and we actually all knew which page he was copying from. Surprisingly, he copied exactly without adding any of his own comments. As a result, few students were ‘listening to’ the class. Some chose not to attend class and they preferred spending time on their own. Some students became used to chattering in groups, especially girls. As for the boys, most of them were engaged in the world of games. My enthusiasm died out after the second lesson. But I still found it inappropriate to skip the class, as this would be rather disrespectful to the teacher. So mostly I still went to the class and was always occupied doing something else, without annoying the teacher and other students.

This situation lasted for a term. Before the exam, the administration office in our faculty organised a survey. They would randomly choose one or two students from
each class and ask their general impressions about the class and the teacher. I turned out to be the interviewee. I struggled for a while about whether I should tell the truth. On the one hand, I knew that the teacher might be in trouble if I was to tell the truth. On the other hand, I firmly believed that he was not qualified to teach this course. ‘Don’t worry too much. What we are doing is good for students as well as for teachers. And the teacher wouldn’t know who the interviewee is’, the office lady tried to assure me. With the realisation that I definitely did not want other students to experience the lessons as I did, I poured out what I heard and saw in the class. After listening to my description, the administration officers were astounded, ‘Why didn’t you tell us this at the beginning or in the middle of the term?’ ‘I didn’t know I could do that.’ I responded honestly. ‘If you have any questions about teachers, you can come to our office at any time. If any of your classmates had reported to us about this lesson, we would probably have changed the teacher for you.’ At the same time, they pointed out their office to me and said, ‘You can come to us at any time. Thanks for your information. We will do further investigation and have a talk with the teacher.’

6.6.2 Analysis of Story 5

In this story, I had little appraisal respect towards the teacher, though I paid him recognition respect by keeping quiet in his classroom. Sometimes I felt regretful about my little respect for him. I expected to empathise with his life and consider his circumstances from different perspectives, for example, his poor English perhaps resulting from special circumstances. I did once try to show empathy towards the teacher, as Drummond (2006) suggested in the opening quotation. However, I came to realise soon that empathy is based on the reality that the other person is respecting you as well. The teacher in the story obviously disrespected us as he spent little time preparing each lesson. In my understanding, his disrespect made him undeserving of my empathy and my respect. Kant may disagree with this view because he argues that everyone deserves respect (Kant, 1996, p.580). It needs to be pointed out that I always had recognition respect or Kantian respect for the teacher. Only my
appraisal respect disappeared due to his disrespect. In this sense, this is not contradictory with the egalitarian character of Kantian respect.

Though the teacher did not respect us, I still had recognition respect towards him, not only due to his dignity of humanity as Kant argued, but more importantly, related to his position as teacher. I was born in the city of Ningbo, located in the most developed area of China. But strictly speaking, I am not a city girl as I was brought up in a small village far away from the centre of the city. However, even in the 1990s, people in my home town realised the importance of education and knowledge. So did my parents. They strongly believed that education could change my life. For my parents, teachers are not only the symbol of knowledge, but also the people able to continue civilisation. It is therefore not difficult to understand the exalted position of teachers. My mother used to list instructions for my behaviour to teachers: bowing to teachers when greeting them; not arguing with teachers; listening attentively in class, and so on. Under the supervision of a strict mother, in my childhood I was a quiet girl, used to following every direction of the teachers and working hard at school, being a ‘model’ either in school or in my neighbourhood.

Besides this, the special context of school also reinforced the high position of teachers. Teachers are granted authority for the purpose of managing the class. In Chinese primary or secondary schools, there is one classroom teacher in charge of each class. Even though the classroom teacher only teaches one subject, he/she is responsible for every aspect of the class, ranging from student behaviour to the sanitation situation. It would be considered rude to interrupt teachers in class, let alone question them. These requirements are even put into regulations for students, the Regulation for primary school students. There are ten items in this document issued by the Ministry of Education. Within this, Item 6 clearly reminds students to ‘respect teachers and elders’. The Regulation for primary school students works as a guideline for students’ behaviour. Interestingly enough, it is also a punishment tool. It is a common punishment that we were commanded to copy the regulations ten or
twenty times when misbehaving. Therefore the necessity of recognition of the teachers’ position is easily embedded into students’ minds. Another reason for respect towards teachers is the exam system in China. For most Chinese students, exam results are the priority in school. Outstanding results can ensure their entrance into a key senior high school, a key university and ultimately a good job. This is a worldly perspective of the notion that education can change one’s life. Currently the results of the Exam for the Entrance to Senior High School and the Exam for the Entrance to College are the main criteria for key schools. Students and parents pay great attention to this. In this sense, students show a very future-oriented disposition. This is mainly due to the intense competitions for jobs in a country with such a large population. Most students only have one chance for each exam, except those willing to spend another year on revision. Students have no previous experience of exams. On the other hand, teachers, especially the experienced ones, have gone through the exam several times with different groups of students. Teachers, with professional knowledge and accumulated experience, enjoy unchallenged authority in the preparation for examinations, the hottest topic among students. Respect for this reflects Sennett’s (2003) finding that high ability is one way to gain respect from others. In this context, reference to a teacher’s ability refers especially to their ability and skill in preparing students for examinations. This again builds up a students’ sense of obedience, emphasising the necessity of acting respectfully towards teachers.

Yet much of this does not work for university students. For example, there are no classroom teachers, no clear regulations, and no pressure from the entrance examination any more. Besides, with maturity, university students have a clearer sense of individuality. Consequently some students do not treat teachers as deferentially as before. In this sense, respect completely based on rules is not reliable. As Piaget (1932) argues, respecting rules and laws is an important sign of unilateral respect. However, he further stresses that the transformation from unilateral respect to mutual respect finishes only when rules and laws are ‘within’
children, instead of having ‘a transcendental origin’ (1932, p.89). For Piaget it is a good time to learn about respect in primary schools where there are lots of rules. However, teaching respect does not only mean asking for obedience. Otherwise students might not show recognition respect in places with few regulations like universities. In the university, students tend to use different ways to take out their dissatisfaction with the teacher or the lesson. I, for example, preferred to do assignments on other subjects. I suppose staying in the classroom and keeping quiet showed at least part respect for my teacher.

However, admittedly, appraisal respect had already gone by the second lesson. As everyone has expectations for an ideal teacher, mine were very typical. First of all, teachers were supposed to be knowledgeable, at least in their teaching area. As I became older, my emphasis on knowledge grew. Sometimes it even overrode pedagogy. For most young students, teachers or even other adults are easily regarded as a source of wisdom. But high school or university students need advanced information in a particular field of knowledge. Teachers are expected to be the guide to knowledge. Secondly, diligent teachers who showed good preparation for classes seemed to be popular among students. This is the typical image of Chinese teachers. In China, the most common metaphor for teachers, the candle, also indicates the Chinese measure of a good teacher: enlightening others and ‘burning’ oneself. The last requirement for a perfect teacher is a good personality. This includes being caring, kind, humorous and so on. One reason for this is that teachers are not only responsible for students’ academic results, but also their moral and psychological health. They are supposed to be the model of good behaviour. Another reason is related to pedagogy. Some personality traits such as humour and passion are regarded as an important element in pedagogy. Disappointingly, my teacher in the story failed each item in this list.

My dilemma lasted for nearly a term. On the one hand, I realised that the teacher was not qualified. On the other hand, I never thought of taking the initiative to improve
the situation. For me, sitting in the classroom quietly without listening to the teacher was not impolite or disrespectful. However, the intervention of faculty administration officers pushed me to take an initiative in the teacher-student relationship. At university, teachers are only responsible for delivering lessons, which is a big difference from primary and secondary teachers. The establishment of an administration office serves partly as a bridge to connect students and teachers. The first step for the office therefore is to survey ideas from both sides. This is now very common in many Chinese universities. At the same time, it is also criticised for its ‘commercial intention’. Many people now see the student-teacher relationship as that of vendor-customer.

I really appreciated this survey performed by the administration office. To some extent, they were performing the role of classroom teachers in primary and secondary schools. But my feelings towards these two groups of people are distinct. For teachers, I have recognition respect due to their humanity and teaching position. There might be appraisal respect for some individual teachers as well. However for these administration officers, previously I had no special feeling. After this event, I came to have recognition respect towards their humanity and towards their position or their job. But there was still no appraisal respect. Many factors contributed to the different feelings for teachers and faculty officers. First of all, in Chinese culture, my personality and my schooling all tell me about the importance of respect to teachers. But there is comparatively little concern about other groups related to education, such as administration officers in a university. This greatly violates Kant’s idea that respecting persons due to their humanity is unconditional. However it is reflected in the story that I treated teachers and administration officers in different ways, mainly due to their position instead of their humanity. I didn’t have recognition respect until the officers performed their jobs. Position in this sense overrides fundamental humanity. Undeniably, Confucius tends to reflect the hierarchical context of his family and his state (Legge, 2004). Unlike the individualistic culture of the West, Chinese culture depends on relationships. However, the basic recognition respect for
everyone’s humanity should be more emphasised in China. This basic recognition of humanity should not be determined by social position.

On the other hand, the existence of different relationships was also a factor. I have encountered teachers since I was 4 or 5, an age when I easily regarded adults as authority figures. However, the function of administration officers did not concern me until the age of 18, an age at which I had formed a habit of critical thinking, with a greater sense of individuality. It seemed to me then that the officers were just carrying out their duties as bridges between teachers and students. The relationship here was more bureaucratic and created by an institutional imperative. In other words, they were not regarded as individuals, but just as the symbols of the institutions. This is one reason that, after this event, I came to have recognition respect for this position; however, I still did not have appraisal respect for individual administrative officers.

6.4.3 Main themes from Story 5

Key themes appearing in this story analysis are as follows:

- respect and empathy depend on mutuality;
- influences on my understanding of respecting teachers (parents, strict mother in particular, school system, examination system);
- respect totally dependent on rules is unreliable;
- expectations of a teacher worthy of respect;
- respect depends on positions and relationships.

6.7 Analysis across the stories

In this section, the key themes earlier identified will first be listed by story. Then all these themes will be synthesised into several categories in the form of a table.
The themes from each story are:

**Story 1:**

- an emphasis on respect, for superiors in particular;
- high social position of teachers;
- ordinariness of respect;
- rituals on respect;
- respect for teachers and respect for teaching;
- schools’ respect/ teachers’ respect for certain groups of students;
- respect among students (a sense of being outstanding and of ‘group-ness’).

**Story 2:**

- respect and its relationship to SES;
- teachers trying to gain respect through fear;
- different sources of influence on students’ understanding of respect;
- respect and its dependence on relationships among different people.

**Story 3:**

- respect for those teachers with ‘ability’, ‘a sense of giving back’ and ‘morality’;
- respect for teachers is reflective of respect for schools;
- respect for strictness itself;
- nostalgia is a kind of respect.

**Story 4:**

- with maturity, equality can become more important in one’s understanding of respect;
negotiations and discussions are important in students’ understanding of respect;

respect is sometimes institutionally based;

respect towards the teacher increases when he ‘reduces’ himself;

respect and face in two cultures

**Story 5:**

- respect and empathy depend on mutuality;
- influences on my understanding of respecting teachers (parents, strict mother in particular, school system, exam system);
- respect totally dependent on rules is unreliable;
- expectations for teachers worthy of respect;
- respect depends on positions and relationships.

All these themes can be categorised as in the following Table 6.1. In the table, s1 stands for the themes from Story 1 and s2 stands for themes from Story 2, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of respect</th>
<th>Emphasis on respect s1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ordinariness of respect s1</td>
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<td>Rituals of respect s1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of respect</td>
<td>Respect and its relationship with social position / for superior</td>
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<td>Rules in respect s5</td>
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<td>Negotiation and discussion in respect s4</td>
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<td>Mutuality in respect s4 s5</td>
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<td>Equality in respect s4</td>
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<td>Face in respect s4</td>
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<td>Relationship in respect</td>
<td>between two people. s4</td>
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<td>s5</td>
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<td>among different people. s2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>institutionally based. s4</td>
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<td>Respect in schools</td>
<td>Students’ respect for teachers</td>
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<td>Respect for teachers and teaching s1</td>
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<td>Criteria for teachers s3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers’ respect for students</td>
<td>For certain groups of students s1 s2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect among students</td>
<td>A sense of being outstanding s1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A sense of ‘group-ness’ s1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for strictness s3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for the past s3</td>
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</table>

Table 6.1 Cross story analysis

The main ideas from each story are organised in this table. There are three main themes from the stories - the importance of respect, the nature of respect and respect in schools. The importance of respect is reflected through the emphasis on respect, the ordinariness of respect and rituals of respect. As reflected in the stories, respect is embedded in Chinese cultures, especially students’ respect towards teachers in schools. This great emphasis on respect is sometimes reinforced through rituals of respect. Respect is encouraged in Chinese schools in various ways, such as bowing to teachers, strict rules, etc. Both the emphasis on respect and rituals contribute to the ordinariness of respect in the culture. Of course, the ordinariness of respect, especially in schools, is also closely related to the high positions of teachers and the importance of moral perfection in Chinese culture.
The nature of respect is discussed from seven aspects. From Stories 1 and 2, we can find that Chinese respect often depends on social position. The objects of respect in Chinese cultures are more often ‘superiors’. In this sense, Chinese respect is conditional as only certain groups of people are entitled to receive respect. On the other hand, towards particular groups of ‘superiors’, respect becomes unconditional, which is often converted to reverence or obedience. Rules are important in respect; especially in teaching about respect, as rules help ritualise respect in schools in some ways. But it is also reflected in Story 5 that respect completely based on rules is unreliable. It is reflected in the stories that the passive learning of rules might lead to a performance of respect, not necessarily a genuine respect. Only rules involving negotiation and discussion may help students have a full understanding of respect, especially mutual respect. There is a tendency in the stories that, as I matured, my understanding of respect became more based on equality and mutuality. In Story 4, I came to realise that my respect towards teachers would last only when they treated me equally and mutually. At this stage, my respect towards ‘superiors’ became conditional. Face is mentioned in Story 4 as well. Losing face might lead to a feeling of disrespect. In practice, receiving face is more predictive of respect than returning face. Returning face is possibly reduced to a bureaucratic relationship where real respect is not involved. Relationships are discussed in several stories. As Chinese respect would more often be directed at a ‘superior’, the relationships in respect became more important as they indicate the relative position of each group. In ancient China, there are five key relationships. In each relationship, one group is supposed to show unconditional respect towards the superior group. Respect in this sense is shown to particular groups only due to their ‘position’, instead of ‘humanity’, as Kant suggested. Therefore sometimes respect is institutionally based, as reflected in Story 4. It was also found in Story 2 that respect can depend on relationships among a group of people, not just between two people. For example, a teacher’s attitude to a student can influence respect from another student. Respect therefore ‘circulates’ among people.
In terms of respect in schools, different patterns of respect are described in the stories: students’ respect for teachers, teachers’ respect for students, respect among students, respect for strictness and respect for the past. Students’ respect for teachers appears in several stories. We can find some cultural and historical reasons from the stories that explain why teachers are highly appreciated and respected by students in China. As a tradition of respecting ‘superiors’, the high social position of teachers is the first reason for respect for teachers in Chinese schools and society. In traditional Chinese culture, the notion of teacher represents traditional unchallengeable values, besides God, earth, emperor and parents. On the other hand, respect for teachers is also related to respect for the emperor, as ancient schools were run by the government and teachers were often high ranking officials at the same time. Nowadays the school system and examination system in China have reinforced teachers’ unchallengeable authority. For example, Chinese teachers’ experience with examinations ensures them an authority in helping students gain the key to good high schools and good universities. For most teachers, their modelling in academic and moral fields is also an important reason for students’ respect. However, for some teachers fear is also one way to gain students’ respect. As reflected in the comparison between Story 2 and 3, fear only leads to obedience, rather than genuine respect. Outside the school, the family exerts a great influence on students’ respect towards teachers. Parents’ attitudes to teachers will sometimes influence students’ understanding of respect. Other influences, such as popular songs about respect for teachers, also contribute to the great emphasis on respect towards teachers. All of these affect students’ understanding of respect and their respect towards teachers in schools.

However, there is a difference between respect for teachers and respect for teaching. Respect for teachers is embedded deeply in Chinese culture and teachers are trained to maintain a particular image. Therefore, it is sometimes hard to know whether students are showing respect generally to the position of teaching or specifically to the person of the teacher. I could not tell the difference until I was in high school.
Respect for the position of teaching is more culturally driven, which will lead to students’ pre-existing respect generally for teachers. However, respect for individual teachers is also greatly influenced by other factors.

There are some criteria for teachers who deserve respect from the stories. First of all, it is reflected in Stories 3 and 5 that ability or knowledge is crucial for a respected teacher. This will become more important among high school or university students. Mutuality is another influence on students’ respect. It is revealed in Story 3 that teachers tend to receive more respect when they choose to give back respect. Students’ respect towards teachers also varies with a teacher’s morality. Disrespect will increase when certain teachers are found to behave in a way which students perceive as ‘immoral’. On the other hand, being diligent will help teachers earn respect from students.

*Teachers’ respect* for students is discussed in Stories 1 and 2. It is reflected that some teachers tend to respect particular groups of students due to their academic or moral excellence or just simply because of their social position. There are many reasons behind this. The large number of students is a big issue, so teachers sometimes have to ‘give up’ on some students. This conditional respect from teachers to students, to some extent impairs respect among students. A strong sense of needing to be outstanding brings intense competition among students, which sometimes leads to disintegration and disrespect among them.

In addition, respect for strictness and respect for the past are discussed in Story 3. There is a tradition of respecting strictness itself, especially in education in China. Respect for strict teachers and respect for schools with a strict environment and rules and derives from respect for strictness. However, strictness requires a teacher to be strict with himself or herself, besides being strict with students. On the other hand, respect for the past is also emphasised in Story 3. In this sense, nostalgia itself is a kind of respect.
Chapter 7

Discussion

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 contained discussions about each source of data: documents, interviews and stories respectively. In this chapter, I will address the findings from the documents and interviews again, from the perspective of the findings from the stories. More specifically, the findings from the stories form my view of respect as a researcher of Chinese background. The interpretations of respect in the documents and interviews are developed here from this understanding of respect.

Firstly, I will remind readers of the important findings from the Values document, the interviews and the stories respectively. These findings will be listed in headings or tables. The detailed explanations of the tables or headings are displayed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

In Chapter 4, the key findings from the Values document are related to:

- definition of respect
- relationships in respect
- objects of respect
- teaching respect
- cultural influences on respect

The following table sets out the finding from the interviews as discussed specifically in 5.3 in Chapter 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The amount of respect</th>
<th>Omnipresence 1B 6A 9D</th>
<th>Respect &amp; disrespect 1A 3D 6A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Across-time</td>
<td>Fade 4A 4D 5D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across-culture</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>More respect 8A 8D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More authoritarianism 8B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fewer understandings 8A 8B 8D</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Eastern: perceived disrespect for female 8C 8D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Across-age</td>
<td>The older, the less 7A 7C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental positions 5C 6D</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are delayed 6D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other influences</td>
<td>Family 2A 4C 5C 7C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher-student relationships 3C 5C 7C</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The performance of respect</th>
<th>Importance 1A 3D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Across-time</td>
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<td>More mutual 4A 5D</td>
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<td>More expressive 4B</td>
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<td>More equal 4A 5B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Across culture</td>
<td>Australia students are more free and expressive 5B 8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect has different varieties 8C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across-age | Different demonstrations 7B  
| Young children’s restricted understanding 3A 7D
| Other influence | Relationships 2D

| Respect collocated with other concepts | High-esteem 1A 1D
| Regulations and rules 2B 3A 3B
| Value 1C 2C

| Teaching respect | Explicitness, for young students 7A 9A 9D
| Explanations, for older students 7A 9B
| Teacher model 2C 9D
| Good teacher-student relationships 9C

The following table reflects the analysis of my ‘spots of time’ in 6.3 in Chapter 6:

| Importance of respect | Emphasis on respect s1
| Ordinariness of respect s1
| Rituals on respect s1

| Nature of respect | Respect and its relationship with SES / for superior s1 s2
| Rules in respect s5
| Negotiation and discussion in respect s4
| Mutuality in respect s4 s5
| Equality in respect s4
| Face in respect s4
| Relationship in respect | between two people. s4 s5
| among different people. s2
| institutionally based. s4

| Respect in schools | Students’ respect for teachers
| Reasons for respect | High position of teachers s1
| Fear s2
| Teachers model s2
| Parents s2
| Popular songs s2
| Schools s5 s3
| Examination system s6
| Respect for teachers and teaching s1
These tables and headings represent the individual findings from each source of data, that is, the documents, interviews and stories. What is needed now is to ‘read’ the document and interview findings from the perspective of the analysis of my ‘spots of time’.

I will use the key headings of the Values document as an organisational principle. Under each heading from the Values document, the discussion will proceed in the following order:

- Who I am (from Chapter 6)
- What the Values document says (from Chapter 4)
- What the interviews say (from Chapter 5)
- How I read across these areas.

7.1 Definition of respect

7.1.1 Who I am

As revealed from the stories, respect is deeply embedded in Chinese culture. This is especially reflected in the emphasis on respect from Story 1. The great emphasis on respect is reinforced through ‘rituals’ of respect. Respect is encouraged overtly in
Chinese schools in various ways, such as bowing to teachers, strict rules, etc. Rules are regarded as an effective tool to instil a sense of respect in Chinese schools. The ritualisation of respect depends on the establishment and implementation of strict class rules and school rules. In most schools, respecting teachers and the elderly is one of the school rules. Both the emphasis on, and rituals of, respect further contribute to the ‘ordinariness’ of respect in China. Respect becomes invisible when it becomes part of the school culture. Of course, the ‘ordinariness’ of respect, especially in schools, is also closely related to the exalted position of teachers and the importance of aiming for moral perfection in Chinese culture.

One characteristic of traditional Chinese respect is that it depends on one’s position, as shown in Story 2. The objects of respect in Chinese culture are directed most often towards ‘superiors’. In this sense, Chinese respect is conditional as only certain groups of people are entitled to respect. On the other hand, towards these particular groups of ‘superiors’, respect becomes unconditional, which is manifested in reverence or obedience. Therefore Chinese respect is conditional in terms of its scale; Chinese respect is unconditional in terms of its amount towards particular groups.

However, as I myself matured, I realised that genuine respect should be based on equality and mutuality, rather than position. This change was due to both my personal growth and the changing society. I came to find that respect due to the ‘position’ might only lead to obedience or a performance of respect, but not necessarily genuine respect.

7.1.2 What the Values document says

Respect reflected in the Values document can be classified as conditional respect and unconditional respect. Respect reflected in ‘admiration for someone’s good qualities or achievements’ is conditional, as good qualities or achievements are a necessary
prerequisite for gaining respect. However, respect, in the definitions ‘consideration or concern’ and ‘treating others with consideration and regard’ is unconditional.

7.1.3 What the interviews say

In the interviews, three teachers mentioned the omnipresence of respect in schools though they found it hard to define respect. On the one hand, they thought respect was everywhere, but on the other hand, they found it hard to label one event specifically as ‘respect’ or to identify specific classroom strategies purposefully aimed at ‘respect’. They agreed that it was much easier to define ‘disrespect’ than ‘respect’. Their deeper understanding of disrespect might be related to Kantian respect. In describing a ‘duty of respect’, Kant argues that respect takes the form of the ‘negative’, that is, respect is expressed in terms of a description of vices which would otherwise violate respect, rather than the description of virtues equivalent to respect (Kant, 1996, p. 569). The notion of Kantian respect, therefore, is partly built on denying disrespectful behaviour rather than specifically listing the criteria of respect. Gradually, the notion of ‘respect’ becomes more abstract while the concrete descriptions of ‘disrespect’ appear more concrete.

In the teachers’ discussions of respect, there are three concepts collocated with respect: high-esteem, values and regulations and rules. Respect based on high-esteem or admiration is conditional for particular people. On the other hand, respect based on the process of valuing requires us to respect people unconditionally. Teacher C suggests in the interview that respect entails valuing others’ ideas and opinions as different and unique. Respect in this sense is unconditional as it values every person. It is also revealed from the interviews that respect is related to regulations and rules. Teacher B thinks that respect in schools is based on rules. The behaviour of obeying rules is regarded as respectful.
In terms of the performance of respect, it is reflected in the interviews that respect nowadays is more mutual (Teacher A, Teacher D), more expressive (Teacher B) and more equal (Teacher B). Compared with the ‘negative form’ of Kantian respect, in recent years more researchers have focused on the positive and expressive forms of respect. Sennett (2003) highlights the ‘expressive form’ of respect. He argues that showing respect means finding the words and gestures to make respect felt and convincing. Young students are more expressive of respect. However, given this trend, Teachers A and C doubt whether young students have enough understanding of respect. When showing respect, they might just follow teachers or follow rules without understanding the idea itself.

7.1.4 My readings across these areas

In all three sources of data, there are two kinds of respect, conditional respect and unconditional respect. In China, the criteria of conditional respect are relative social positions; however in Australia, the main reason to respect a particular person is his/her personal achievements, as reflected in the document. Therefore the underlying criteria for conditional respect vary across cultures. The emphasis on ‘personal achievements’, rather than ‘given social positions’, may indeed create a sense of equality among people. But it also brings up the question of how ‘achievements’ are evaluated. It is easy to measure success for a businessman; but for positions such as that of a teacher, it is more difficult to measure the effectiveness of teaching, which can take a long time. Insisting on respecting only according to personal achievement can disadvantage an occupation such as teaching.

On the other hand, unconditional respect requires us to value each person as unique and different, as discussed in the interviews. But in China, unconditional respect reflects the ‘obsolete’ respect given to members of particular groups. Respect would go to a ‘superior’ unconditionally, regardless of his personal achievements. The ‘unconditional’ is reflected in the degree of respect that people pay to others. In this
sense, Australian respect is ‘horizontally’ unconditional while Chinese respect is ‘vertically’ unconditional. For Chinese, the equality of respect is problematic. The urgent need is to ensure that every person is entitled to respect. For Australia, on the other hand, the degree of respect is problematic. Kantian respect is often criticised for its ‘over-equality’. Researchers such as Seidler suggest that the notion of respect does not simply mean respecting everyone themselves. More importantly, it requires us to take into account other considerations, such as SES, gender, and so on.

It is reflected in all three sources of analysis that rituals can be important. In the interviews, there is an interesting contradiction, in that the omnipresence of respect is regarded as one reason for the fact that teachers find it hard to define respect, at least harder than to define ‘disrespect’. On the other hand, we know from the stories that the successful transition from ‘emphasis on respect’ to the ‘ordinariness of respect’ can rely heavily on the ‘rituals on respect’. So if rituals are ignored, ‘emphasis on respect’ may not lead to the ‘ordinariness of respect’.

We see from the interviews that the performance of respect is important. But recognition of its importance is not enough. A simply declared emphasis on respect or the irregular performance of respect might also lead to the situation in which people are not able to define respect, even though they think respect is everywhere. The understanding of respect may need to be reinforced from the regular performance of respect, or even rituals around respect. Lack of rituals might also be one reason for teachers being more readily able to define ‘disrespect’ instead of ‘respect’. Regulations and rules can highlight disrespectful behaviour while performance and rituals may reinforce our understanding of respect. Therefore, if rituals are overlooked, it is possible that ‘disrespect’ will be understood more deeply than ‘respect’ itself.

It is undeniable that rituals of respect raise the question of sincerity. Is it possible that respect will be reduced to the performance of rituals only? This possibility is not a
reason for us to completely reject the importance of rituals of respect. My experience suggests that rituals were beneficial for me to understand respect. It is therefore suggested that there is a value in an element of ‘ritual’ in our understanding and definition of respect.

7.2 Relationships in respect

7.2.1 Who I am

Relationships are discussed specifically in the stories. As traditional Chinese respect tends to be directed at ‘superiors’, relationship in respect becomes important as it designates the relative position of each group. In ancient China, there were five key relationships (Thomasma et al, 2001, p.152):

6. father and son
7. ruler and minister;
8. husband and wife
9. elder and younger;
10. friend and friend.

These relationships are intrinsically unequal and hierarchical. The former of each pair is superior, owing a moral obligation to the latter and at the same time, should be respected by the latter of the pair. Confucius reiterates the importance of respect in the family because he believes that it prepares for the flourishing of respect in society. Everyone has to respect parents and elder brothers at home and respect those in higher social positions abroad.

There might be several hierarchical relationships for each person at home, at school or in the workplace. But the common issue is that each person is expected to respect his/her superior in a particular relationship.
In most Chinese schools today, teachers are still regarded as ‘superiors’. However, as shown in Stories 4 and 5, as I became mature, hierarchical relationships became less important for my respect towards teachers. The criteria for teachers who deserve respect became much clearer, related to mutuality, morality and their knowledge. Therefore, the hierarchical relationship is one important reason for my respect towards the position of ‘teaching’ or for my respect for ‘teachers’ generally. However, this came to exert less influence on my respect for individual teachers.

It can also be seen from Story 2 that respect might depend on relationships among a number of people, instead of just two people. For example, a teacher’s attitude to a student may influence respect from another student. Respect therefore circulates among people, instead of just between people.

7.2.2 What the Values document says

In exploring those words bundled with ‘respect’, we can find that respect is another relational word. In this sense, respect is about the relationship involved between two people.

In the Values document, the most frequent words bundled with respect concern relationships among people, such as cooperation, care, honesty, responsibility and tolerance. Even though Kant agrees that respect is relational as the feeling of respect is directed outwards, he insists that respect should not be influenced by relationships. Kant argues that everyone deserves respect regardless of the relationship they are involved in. But for other contemporary researchers, such as Sennett, respect is strongly influenced by relationships.

7.2.3 What the interviews say
The importance of relationships is reflected in the interviews. In answering Question 2, Teacher D thinks that respect is very contextual. The way we show respect is greatly determined by the context and the relationship. More specifically, in the school context, Teachers A and B think the relationship of respect is more equal and mutual nowadays. Though it seems that teachers are not ‘superior’, this is a positive change for students. This sense of ‘not as superior as before’ relates to what Kant describes as the process of performing respect. In Kant’s theory, the dignity of humanity of another person commands our respect. At the same time, Kant claims that showing respect is a process of lessening one’s own dignity, which is quickly recovered once receiving respect from others (1996, p.401).

Teacher C also highlights the importance of relationships, especially teacher-student relationships. She suggests that respect comes out of good relationships. The relationship is built upon teachers’ care for students. The ‘memory’ of a good relationship could stop disrespect. Thus for some new teachers, it is difficult to gain the respect of students, as they do not have that previous relationship. It takes time to build a good student-teacher relationship.

**7.2.4 My readings across these areas**

Though all referred to relationships, it is noticeable that the indication of relationship is quite different between the document, interviews and stories. Relationship and respect, as they appear in the Values document and interviews, are generally based on equality, which can be regarded as a horizontal relationship and horizontal respect. On the other hand, relationship and respect appearing in the stories are generally based on hierarchy. This can be regarded as a vertical relationship and vertical respect. However, it is worth mentioning that both kinds of respect exist in both China and Australia.
Chinese cultures believe that the individual exists in the context of his family (Bell, 2000, p.192, Hood, 1998, pp.857-862). A Chinese aphorism: xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, and pingtianxia (修身齐家治国平天下) states that a well-governed state and an ideal world can be achieved via well-behaved individuals and harmonious families, clearly representing the contextual relations between individuals and states. It is therefore not difficult to understand that respect in Eastern societies is positioned in a more vertical relationship, that is, a relationship between a social being and a family or a state, while respect in Western societies would lean to a more horizontal relationship, that is, a relationship between equal moral beings.

It is difficult to compare vertical respect and horizontal respect. The advantage of horizontal respect is clear in making everyone feel respected. But at the same time, this can become a disadvantage. An over-emphasis on ‘each and every person’ might sometimes only lead to respecting nobody. The emphasis only on the scale of relationship, instead of the way we show respect, may not be beneficial in promoting respect in our society. As to vertical relationships and vertical respect, there are clearer and firmer ‘regulations’ on the objects of respect and the performance of respect. But, of course, inequality is an issue in vertical relationships. Nevertheless, as shown in Stories 4 and 5 in particular, there is a tendency to equality and mutuality in respect with maturity.

We also find from the interviews that a good teacher-student relationship is an effective tool for teachers to gain respect from students in Australia. However, it is reflected in my stories that ‘relationship’ is not as important as ‘knowledge’, ‘mutuality’ or ‘morality’ for gaining students’ respect. While respect is important in Australian schools, for Australian students, respect towards teachers is based more on equality. It requires teachers to ‘humble’ themselves and become equal with students. This process of ‘humbling’ and having an ‘equal relationship’ seems important for teachers to gain respect in Australia. However, for Chinese students, relationships and respect within schools tend to be vertical. There is often not such a
demand from students to have an ‘equal’ relationship with teachers. The vertical relationship is taken for granted and produces vertical respect.

7.3 Objects of respect

7.3.1 Who I am

In the stories, there is an emphasis on respect towards teachers. As there is a tradition of respecting ‘superiors’, the high social position of teachers is an important reason for the respect for teachers in Chinese schools and society. In traditional Chinese culture, teacher represents traditional unchallengeable values, alongside God, earth, Emperor and parents. Respect for teachers is also related to respect for the emperor as ancient schools were run by the government and teachers were often high ranking officials at the same time. Nowadays the school system and examination system in China reinforce teachers’ unchallengeable authority in China. For example, Chinese teachers’ great experience in teaching for exams gives them authority, as exams are the key to entering good high schools and good universities. All of these affect students’ understanding of respect and their respect towards teachers in Chinese schools.

However, it is still confusing for some students to tell the difference between respect for teachers and respect for teaching. Respect for teachers is deeply embedded in Chinese culture and teachers are trained to hold a particular image. Therefore, it is sometimes hard to tell whether students are showing respect generally to the position of teaching or specifically to the person of the teacher. I could not tell the difference until I was in high school. My ability to differentiate between respect for teachers and respect for teaching is partly due to the influence of equality and mutuality on respect. I still have unconditional respect for the position of teaching; however, I have become more rational in showing respect for individual teachers. There are
some criteria for those teachers who deserve respect, among which ‘being knowledgeable’ is the most important for me.

Teachers’ respect towards students is discussed in Stories 1 and 2. Some teachers tend to respect particular groups of students due to their excellence in academic achievements, or just simply because of their social positions. There are many reasons behind this. The large number of students is one big issue, so teachers sometimes have to ‘give up’ on some students. This conditional respect from teachers to students, to some extent impairs respect among students. In addition, a strong sense of having to be outstanding brings intense competition among students, which sometimes leads to disintegration and disrespect among them.

Respect for strictness and respect for the past are discussed in Story 3. There is a tradition of respecting strictness itself, especially in education in China. Respect for strict teachers and respect for schools with a strict environment and rules derives from ‘respect for strictness’. However, strictness also requires teachers to be strict with themselves, besides being strict with students. Respect for the past is also emphasised in Story 3. Nostalgia itself is a kind of respect

7.3.2 What the Values document says

There is silence about the objects of respect in the Values Education Study Final Report 2003. This is in contrast to the findings that respect is a relational word and the feeling for respect is supposed to be directed outwards to certain people. Eighty percent of the appearances of ‘respect’ in the document are made without any grammatical objects. Even among the 11 uses of respect as a noun with an object, the objects are still very vague, often simply being ‘others’. In the Values Education
Study Final Report 2003, respect is an abstraction without an object. It is a kind of ‘floating signifier’.

7.3.3 What the interviews say

In the interviews, Teachers A and D think that respect, especially respect for teachers and schools, has faded across time. Teacher A attributes ‘decreasing respect’ partly to the ready availability of education. She assumes that students do not strive for the opportunity to have an education. This leads to another extreme, she believes, in which teachers have to ‘invite’ students to study. As a result, students’ respect for education and teachers is low. Teacher D thinks respect for teachers and schools reduces when equality and mutuality come into respect.

Teachers A and C also believe that as students get older, they show less respect towards teachers. But it was also suggested that respect does not negatively relate with age forever. From her experience, Teacher D tells us that sometimes respect does not disappear; it is just delayed. This is why nostalgia itself is a kind of respect, i.e., respect for the past.

In terms of respect towards students, Teacher A focuses on ‘valuing’. From her point of view, respect requires teachers to value the ideas and feelings of students even though they are young. She also suggests that teachers should take the initiative to respect students; then it is more likely that students will return respect towards teachers.

7.3.4 My readings across these areas

Generally speaking, the objects of respect in the interviews are not as clearly shown as those from the stories. In other words, the objects of respect do not appear very often in the interviews or the Values document, while they are indeed emphasised in
the stories. This may be related to different relationships as discussed in 7.2 above. As the emphasis of horizontal relationships is on ‘everyone’, this might lead to objects not being given great attention in horizontal respect. On the contrary, for vertical respect, the focus is on the different positions among people. It is thus easy to understand why objects of respect are clearly shown in my stories.

In terms of respect for teachers, the stories emphasise the importance of, and the reason for, respecting teachers, while teacher interviewees focus on the ‘decreasing’ respect nowadays in Australia. Chinese respect for teachers derives from respect for the position of teaching. Students generally have respect for the position. However, this ‘respect due to position’ is often rejected by Western philosophers, such as Kant. This partly leads to the contradiction in the interviews that, on the one hand, teachers think respect is omnipresent in daily life; but on the other hand, they feel that they are getting less and less respect nowadays. In this sense, there might be an emphasis on respect in Australian schools; however, the focus is often placed on the respect for every person equally. At the same time, traditional respect for superiors, such as teachers, is largely ignored. From my experience, respect for certain positions sometimes can be beneficial as long as this respect for certain positions does not automatically go to individual members. In other words, respect for teaching is beneficial as it creates a sense of valuing knowledge and valuing education in society. But it is worth mentioning that respect for the position of teaching ought not to be expected to go automatically to individual teachers. Respect for particular teachers might be more valuable as conditional respect.

In terms of respect towards students, it is reflected in the stories that teachers only respect particular groups of students, according to their academic performance, morality or social positions. Unequal respect is harmful for students. But certain criteria, such as academic performance, can create a sense of achievement among students. On the other hand, it is reflected in the interviews that there is more emphasis on respect towards students in Australia. Teachers are meant to take the
initiative to show respect towards students. From my point of view, this also works against mutuality.

7.4 Teaching respect

7.4.1 Who I am

There are no obvious ‘teaching methods’ or ‘teaching strategies’ for respect reflected through the stories. As discussed in section 7.1, an important way to reinforce respect is through ‘rituals’ of respect. In most cases, in China, students are directly asked to perform particular rituals of respect. Some of the rituals are reinforced by rules. Strict class rules or school rules are important in implementing ‘respect’ in China as reflected in Stories 2 and 3.

Besides direct teaching through rituals and rules, there are other indirect influences on learning and teaching respect. From Stories 4 and 5, we find that students’ learning of respect and their understanding of respect is also a function of their understanding of their role as students. For example, if students identify themselves as ‘passive learners’, they will probably not try to establish equal and mutually respectful relationships with teachers. In this sense, learning and understanding respect for teachers is based on students’ reflections about themselves as learners. Therefore an indispensable part of teaching respect is to help students undergo this reflection.

Modelling from teachers also exerts a great influence on students’ understanding of respect. It is said that respect sometimes is not ‘taught’, but ‘caught’. In Story 4, there is a description of an apology as an example of teacher modelling. The teacher in the story makes an apology to me. My respect towards the teacher begins due to this apology. By ‘lowering’ himself and becoming ‘equal’ with students, the teacher showed students what respect was and at the same time gained respect from students.
In the stories, there are discussions about external influences on respect. Family is one of these influences. There are others, such as songs about respect, and stories about respect, especially respect for teachers. In sum, the total social context of respect is definitely crucial in learning respect. Though schools are important in teaching respect, students’ understanding of respect starts before schooling and will not stop when they leave school. Therefore, helping children understand respect is the responsibility of the whole society.

7.4.2 What the Values document says

In the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect is regarded as one teaching approach to broaden values education. Respect is taught to accelerate values education in direct or indirect ways. While in some schools respect was taught for its own sake, in other schools respect was taught for the reason that increasing respect can prevent misbehaviour. In other words, respect is sometimes the means to other purposes, such as a good leaning environment or a better classroom culture.

7.4.3 What the interviews say

In the interviews, Teachers A and C are aware of timing in teaching respect. Both of them agree that primary schooling is a good time to teach respect since they believe it is harder to gain respect from older students. But Teachers B and D do not think the difference between young students and older students is only about the quantity of respect. They argue that it is also different in quality. Respect from young students often contains less understanding. It is likely that young students, especially students in Kindergarten and Stage One, passively receive orders and rules from teachers without much understanding of respect itself.
Based on these differences of quality and quantity, Teachers A and D make explicitness about respect a priority, for young students in particular. For older students, explicit instructions are not enough. Teachers A and B advise that a reasonable explanation for certain actions should be given to older students. As introduced in Chapter 2, there are currently two approaches in teaching values, including respect. One is character education and the other is a cognitive development approach. While character education focuses on the ‘direct, explicit’ teaching of respect, the cognitive development approach suggests teaching respect through ‘moral reasoning’ or ‘values clarification’. We find from this literature that ‘explicitness for young students’ is an example of ‘character education’ while ‘explanations for older students’ are more typical of a ‘cognitive development approach’

In schools there are other influences on teaching respect, such as good student and teacher relationships, as Teacher C emphasised in the interview. Both Teacher C and Teacher D mention the importance of teacher models. They think that most teachers are examples for students. In this sense, students’ understandings and demonstrations of respect are greatly influenced by teachers as models.

Besides the influence of schools, Teacher A and Teacher C point out the importance of family education about respect. Family members, including parents and siblings, are all likely to exert a great influence on students’ understandings of respect. Teacher C thinks that students with older brothers and sisters can show less respect as the older siblings sometimes set a negative example in terms of respect for teachers and schools. Both Teacher A and C stress that respect in school is greatly influenced by parents’ attitudes. In her experience, Teacher C specifically mentioned that well-educated parents in affluent areas tend to question more decisions from schools and teachers. This might lead to students’ different attitudes towards teachers. In this sense, teaching respect requires teachers to have a full understanding of students.
7.4.4 My readings across these areas

In the interviews, there are some references to ‘understanding students’ and ‘knowing students’ in order to teach students about respect. Each student is located in a unique background. Therefore it is suggested that respect be taught in different ways. For some students, it is suggested that teachers provide more ‘explanation’ and ‘clarification’ about respect, rather than ‘direct instruction’.

The interviews pay considerable attention to teachers knowing their students. On the other hand, we learn from the stories that learning and teaching respect is also influenced by students’ ‘knowing themselves’. Students’ understanding of their roles is beneficial in their learning about respect and their performance of respect. If students are identified as ‘passive learners’, it is difficult for them to take the initiative to sustain respectful relationships with teachers. Therefore helping students to reflect is helpful for them to sustain a respectful relationship with teachers. In this sense, both teachers’ understanding of students and students’ understanding of themselves are important in teaching and learning respect.

As discussed in 7.1, rituals can be important. However, we find in this section, despite the importance of rituals, the teaching of respect can also focus on the ‘explanation’ and ‘clarification’ of respect as suggested by the cognitive development approach, for older students in particular.

Besides the influence of schools, teaching respect is also affected by family members, highlighted both in the interviews and stories. But what is missing in the interviews is the influence on respect from the whole society. It is reflected in the stories that teaching respect does not stop when students step out of school. Outside of the school in China, students are ‘taught’ about respect through popular songs, TV programs, and so on. Such ‘immersion’ learning may be beneficial in developing
students’ understanding of respect. Helping students learn a broad sense of respect may be the responsibility of the whole society.

7.5 Cultural influences on respect

7.5.1 Who I am

As the stories record my experience of respect, they only reflect respect in the context of Chinese schools. My changing emphasis on respect is partly due to cultural influences. As I matured, I tended to respect those teachers who treated us more equally. However, I still respected the ‘traditionally respected’ teachers, especially those strict teachers.

7.5.2 What the Values document says

In the Values document, respect is depicted as a universal value in some schools, while in some other schools, it is regarded as a value subject to different cultures and histories. In the Values Education Study Final Report 2003, respect in some schools is specifically directed towards different people and different cultures. As I am concerned with respect in two cultures, I have paid special attention to respect in the larger cultural framework in which the document sits. The universality of respect and dignity reflect Kant’s ideas on respect. In Kant’s theory, respect is universal, as every person deserves it. His claim for unconditional respect is made from the perspective of ‘morality’. In Kant’s understanding of morality, the dignity of humanity requires equality and unconditional respect among people.

7.5.3 What the interviews say

Most teachers in the interview focused on the differences between Australia and Asia on respect. Teachers A and D argued that there is more respect in Asia. But Teacher
B thinks Asian respect is more related to ‘authoritarianism’. All three teachers worry that Asian students have less ‘understanding’ of respect even though they are ‘showing’ respect all the time. In terms of this performance of respect, the interviewees think that Australian students are more free and expressive of respect, compared with Asian students. On the other hand, Teacher C finds it hard to compare. She believes that respect has many varieties in different countries. While questioning seems disrespectful in Asian countries, it is encouraged in Australia.

7.5.4 My readings across these areas

It is reflected in the Values document that respect is sometimes regarded as a universal value while on some occasions it is seen as subject to different cultures. But we find from the interviews and stories that there are cross-cultural influences on respect. Differences among different visions of respect are reflected through the amount of respect and the performance of respect in the interviews. However, the demand for respect for every person is reflected in both the stories and interviews, even though Chinese respect depends on position and relative relationships in most cases. For me as an older student, respect is based more on equality and mutuality, as shown in Stories 4 and 5. In this sense, respect is a universal value - unconditional and basic respect for each person. This is the kind of respect that Kant articulates.

Three teachers in the interview worry that Asian students have less ‘understanding’ of respect even though they are ‘showing’ respect all the time. The stories showed that some Chinese teachers try to gain respect through ‘fear’. Story 2 records that students are sometimes scared of teachers’ authority. Respect in this sense might only lead to temporary obedience from students. This is in contrast to the findings from the interviews that respect is related to other notions such as regulations and rules. In the interviews, Teachers A and B think respect is based on rules or regulations in the class or in the school. They believe that respect based on objective rules is more sustainable. It is further suggested that rules and regulations should be
the result of cooperation between students and teachers. If rules are solely determined by teachers, then the nature of these rules only reflects the values of teachers, which is not greatly different to respect based on fear.

Respect based on fear is different from respect based on strictness as shown in the stories. It is reflected in the stories that there is respect for strictness itself. The interviews show that the performance of respect in Australian schools is more expressive. Strictness requires both students and teachers to be strict with themselves. This indicates that respect should proceed in an organised way. However, from the interviews, we gain teachers’ views that Australian students are more ‘expressive’. Students are given more choices about the objects of respect and the performance of respect. This creates a sense of diversity and respect for everyone’s choices. But there is also a possibility that some people will stop showing respect when there are too many free interpretations of the notion, as Sennett (2003) argues.

7.6 Conclusion

In sum, there are a number of findings from the above ‘readings’. Respect can be classified into conditional respect and unconditional respect. Conditional respect often raises the question of ‘criteria’, which vary with culture, time and even occupations. Some occupations, such as teaching, are not as instantly socially or economically ‘effective’ as, say, business is. As to unconditional respect, it is shown that in Australia, this is more ‘horizontally unconditional’ and it is more ‘vertically unconditional’ in China. It appears that rituals can be important in respect, especially in leading to the ordinariness of respect. Relationship is an important concept in respect. It appears in several parts of this thesis that Chinese respect is based on vertical relationships between social beings, while respect in Australia can depend on horizontal relationships between moral beings. It is shown from the stories and Values document that the objects in horizontal respect are often generally identified
as ‘everyone’ while the objects in vertical relationships are more clearly labelled and emphasised. In some cases, relationships in respect not only involve two people. Respect ‘circulates’ among different people. In this sense, the way one person treats another person not only affects his/her respect for that person, but also the respect given by other people. In the school context, the teachers interviewed complained about decreasing respect for teachers in Australian schooling. Though equality is important, respect due to position, such as teaching, can be beneficial, as long as respect generally goes to the occupation, rather than automatically to individual teachers.

At the same time, teachers are also responsible for students’ understandings of respect. Modelling, direct instructions and explanations can be useful in developing students’ understanding. But if teachers use direct instructions or regulations too often, students are more likely to ‘perform’ respect with a restricted understanding of the notion. At the same time, it is also revealed in the stories that students’ self-reflections on their roles as students are also crucial in their understanding of respect. It is shown that active students are more likely to set up respectful relationships with teachers. Moreover, it is also pointed out several times that school is not the only place to teach respect. Teaching students about respect is a responsibility for the whole society.
References:


Appendix 1 Information Sheet for Teachers

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<th>Human Research Ethics Committee</th>
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<td>Office of Research Services</td>
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<th>Participant Information Sheet (General)</th>
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<td>An information sheet, which is tailored in format and language appropriate for the category of participant - adult, child, young adult, should be developed.</td>
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**Project Title:** Respect in Australian schools

**Who is carrying out the study?**
ZHANG Ying, a student in the degree of Master of Education (Honours) at the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Assoc Prof Wayne Sawyer.

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by ZHANG Ying. The research will form the basis for the degree of Master of Education (Honours) at the University of Western Sydney under the supervision of Assoc Prof Wayne Sawyer.

**What is the study about?**
The purpose is to investigate the notion of respect in Australian schools and enrich the understanding of respect from my perspective as a Chinese background researcher.

**What does the study involve?**
The study is a study of the concept of respect in Australian schooling from the point of view of a Chinese background speaker. As part of the study, I will be interviewing up to 4 teachers on their views of respect in schools in Australia. Questions will be about respect between teachers and students/teachers and students and teachers and students. I am seeking your permission to be one of the interviewers. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and, with your permission, will be digitally recorded.

**How much time will the study take?**
The interview will take approximately 30 minutes.
How is this study being paid for?
The study is not funded.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Results will be disseminated through my thesis and academic journals, however no participants will be identified.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and if you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving any reasons and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Zhang Ying will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Zhang Ying (Email: student.wests.edu.au or her supervisor: W.Sawyer@uws.edu.au)

What if I have a complaint?
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The approval number is [enter approval number].

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0883 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au

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

If you agree to participate in the study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.
Appendix 2 Consent Forms for Teachers

Participant Consent Form

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigators.

Note: If not all of the text in this row is visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on this page to expand the row. To show guidance on what is required in each section 'hover your cursor' over the bold text.

Project Title: Respect in Australian schools

I, ..........................., consent to participate in the research project titled respect in Australian schools.

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to the interview and the taping of the interview.

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

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

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address: 
Appendix 3 Interview Questions for Classroom Teachers

1) What is your understanding of respect?
2) Does respect have specific meanings in the school context?
3) Do you think respect is important in schools?
4) What is your general impression of respect in schools nowadays?
5) Looking back on your own school days, do you find a big difference with the understanding or practice of respect in schools today?
6) Can you describe one memorable event about respect in schools?
7) Do you think students’ respect for teachers is a function of their age?
8) Do you think the notion of respect is performed differently by different cultural groups?
9) In your class, do you have special ways to reinforce students’ sense of respect for others?
Appendix 4 Notification Email of Ethics Approval

Dear Wayne and Ying,

I am writing to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has agreed to approve the project.

Title: Respect in Australian Schools

H8186  Student: Ying Zhang (Supervisor: Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer)

The Protocol Number for this project is H8186. Please ensure that this number is quoted in all relevant correspondence and on all information sheets, consent forms and other project documentation.

Please note the following:
1) The approval will expire on 30/12/2019. If you require an extension of approval beyond this period, please ensure that you notify the Human Ethics Officer humanethics@uws.edu.au prior to this date.
2) Please ensure that you notify the Human Ethics Officer of any future change to the research methodology, recruitment procedure, set of participants or research team.
3) If anything unexpected should occur while carrying out the research, please submit an Adverse Event Form to the Human Ethics Officer. This can be found at http://www.uws.edu.au/research/ethics/human_ethics/adverse_event/end_of_project_report
4) Once the project has been completed, a report on its ethical aspects must be submitted to the Human Ethics Officer. This can also be found at http://www.uws.edu.au/research/ethics/human_ethics/adverse_event/end_of_project_report

Finally, please contact the Human Ethics Officer, Kay Buckley on (02) 4735 0883 or at k.buckley@uws.edu.au if you require any further information.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Associate Professor Janelle Price
Chair, UWS Human Research Ethics Committee