

# Culture and Language Learning through Cross-cultural Peer Scaffolding

The Power of **AND**

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY

This project was contextualized in an intermediate Chinese language class to explore the benefits and challenges of language and culture scaffolding through cross-cultural interactions between Chinese International Students (CIS) and Chinese Language Learners (CLL).

## BACKGROUND

- Extensive research on international students' adjustment (Trice, 2003)
  - Learning strategies
  - Cultural competence
  - Language learning
- Less discussion on cultural and language scaffolding as tandem partners (Gagne & Parks, 2013; Guerrero & Villamil, 2002)
- International students' cultural capital and authenticity

**1,043,839** international students  
studied at U.S. colleges and universities in 2015/16.

Open Doors is conducted by the Institute of International Education with the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Online at: [www.iie.org/opendoors](http://www.iie.org/opendoors)

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International Student Data. Institute of International Education (IIE)

## PROCEDURE

- 7 Chinese International Students (CIS), and 4 Chinese 201 students
- 4 interactive projects
  - Seasonal activities
  - Dining culture
  - Campus life
  - Dating culture
- 50 minutes each time (25 in English and 25 in Chinese)
- Chinese Language Learners (CLL)
  - Write a paragraph to describe a series of photos
  - Get feedback from CIS
  - Ask questions on the relevant cultural aspect
- Chinese International Students (CIS)
  - Share prior knowledge on a topic
  - Translate provided questions into English for interview
  - Raise additional questions for interview
  - Focus on more insightful and critical thinking

## DATA

- Worksheets
- Pre- and Post- interviews
- Recordings of actual conversations

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

- **Diversity and breaking stereotypes**  
“...it is very helpful. It is like I have a stereotype with Americans like most of the are from Europe but after talking with Youa I found America has very big diversity and people from different countries will maybe still keep some of their cultures until nowadays. It also help me to accept cultures.”
- **Being reflective**  
“...every time I talk with my friends, when they give me new things about American culture I was always thinking about Chinese culture.”

### LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT

#### Variety and authenticity

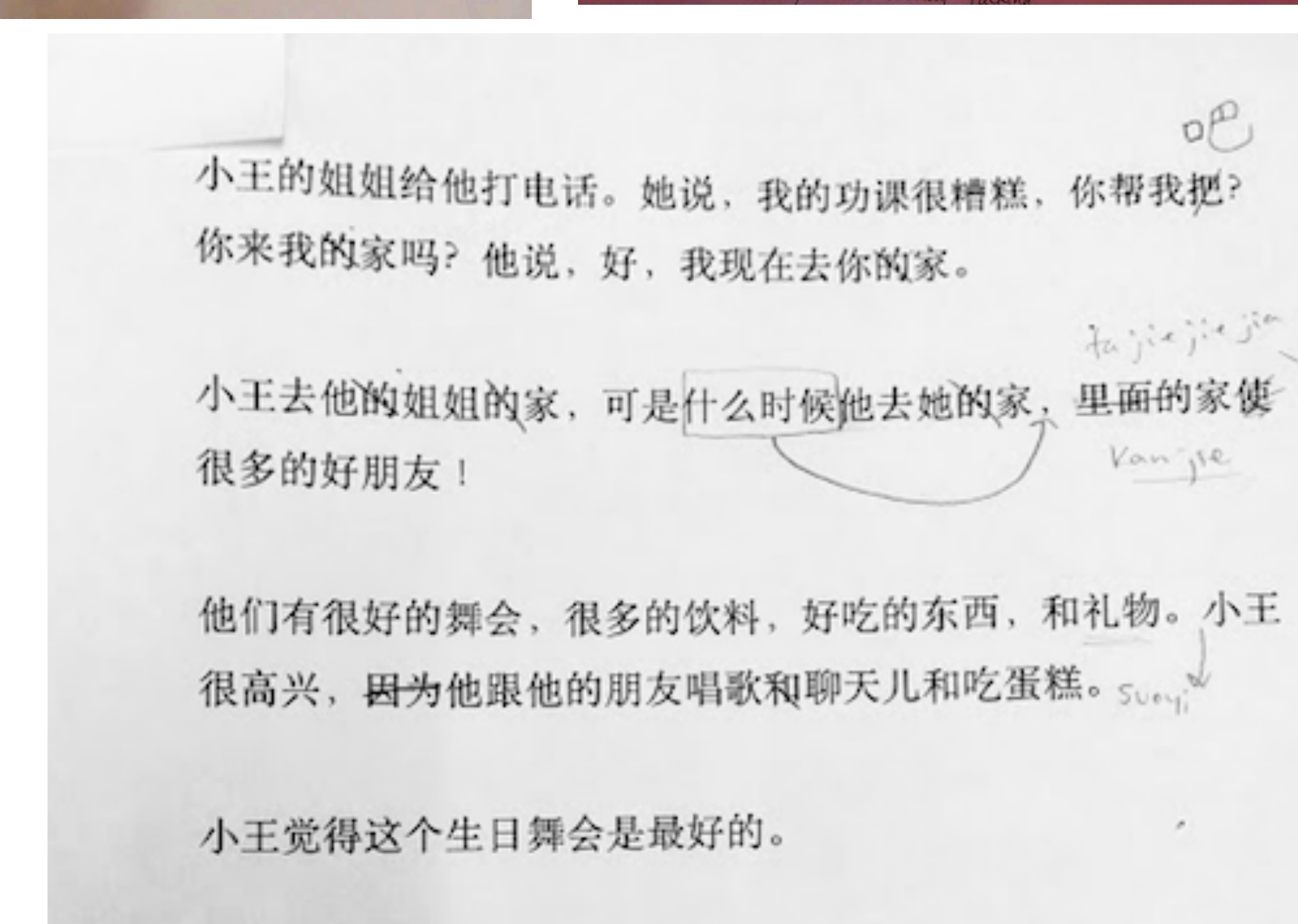
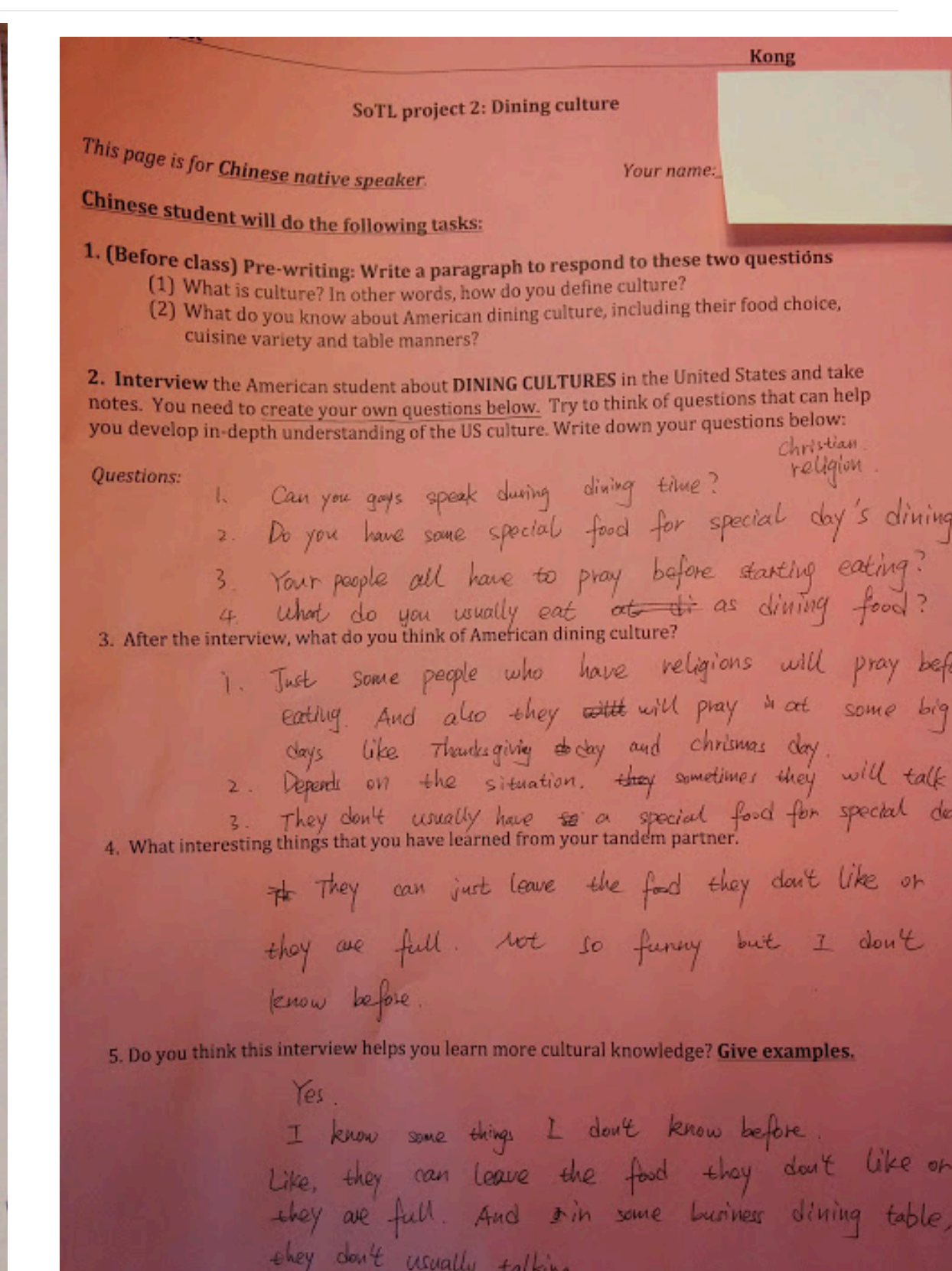
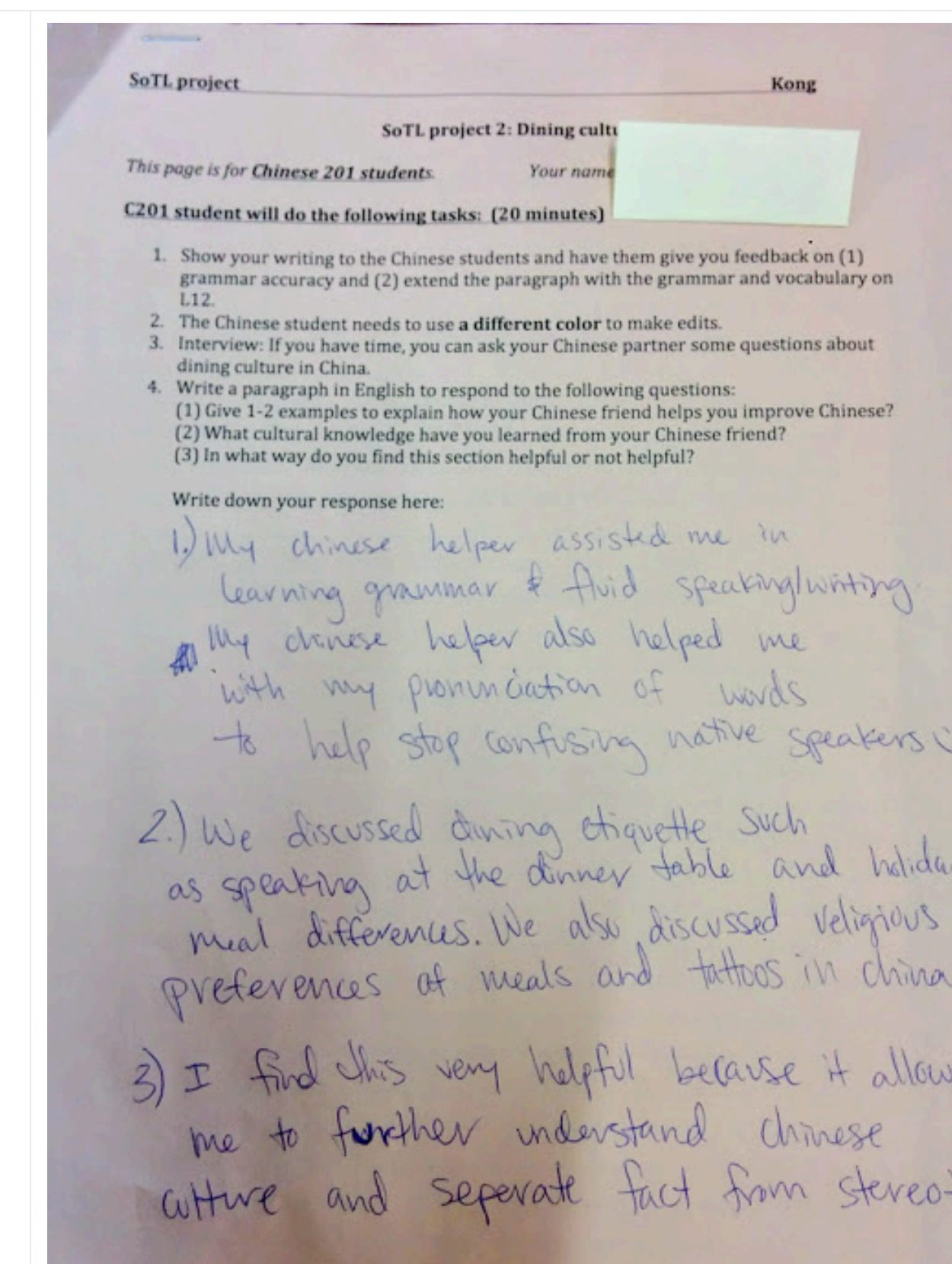
- “It is always fascinating to learn more modern Chinese slang words.”
- “My Chinese helper also helped me with my pronunciation of words to help stop confusing native speaker ☺”

### ENHANCED EMPATHY

“This class for language learners, I know their feeling about learning a new language and they know that too. Basically at least we have something same we can talk about and by helping each other and sharing culture it is like suddenly a lot of same topic we want to talk about popped up! It is much easier to make friends with them.”

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND FRIENDSHIP

“I think it is very helpful for international students because they really need that chance to talk with local students here so it can help them here to engage in and to adapt to here.”



## FUTURE RESEARCH

- Scaffolding skills
- Sustainability (class time, availability)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- The Wisconsin Teaching Fellows & Scholars program and The Office of Professional & Instructional Development for this opportunity and funding
- UW-Eau Claire for financial and administrative support
- Dr. Cyndi Kernahan and Dr. David Voelker for mentorship
- Participants for their time and efforts



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