

# The Everyday Classroom: Experience, Reflection, and Growth at Wenzhou- Kean University

**Mohammad Noman**

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8900-4993>

*Wenzhou-Kean University, China*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*This chapter examines learning as a lived and evolving process shaped by experience, reflection, and intercultural engagement within a transnational higher education context at Wenzhou Kean University. Drawing on student narratives and established learning theories, it explores how moments of uncertainty, cultural encounter, and everyday interaction become sites of meaning making. The chapter traces a movement from initial disorientation toward expanded self-awareness, empathy, and ethical understanding, showing how learning extends beyond classrooms into daily life. Situated within Sino foreign higher education, it highlights dialogue, reciprocity, and relational connection as central to learning across difference, portraying education as an ongoing process of becoming grounded in openness and reflective awareness.*

## **WHERE LEARNING BEGINS TO BREATHE**

Learning begins when familiarity ends. When students leave the comfort of their own classrooms and enter an environment that questions what they once accepted as normal, they begin to learn in a deeper way. Experiential learning explains this movement from security to uncertainty as the space where genuine understanding is formed (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experience alone does not teach; it is

reflection that transforms experience into insight (Dewey, 1933). For students who cross borders and study in new cultural and institutional settings, learning arises through a constant cycle of observation, reflection, and adaptation. In every moment in a new environment, whether navigating a classroom discussion, interpreting an unfamiliar custom, or struggling with a language barrier, an opportunity arises to make sense of the world anew. Through such moments, learning ceases to be the transfer of information and becomes the reorganization of meaning.

Students who study abroad often discover that knowledge is not merely acquired but constructed through interaction (Steinberg, 2002). They grasp ideas by participating in experiences that are shaped by differences. Each challenge in this unfamiliar context requires them to test assumptions about themselves and others. In this way, experiential learning becomes an act of meaning-making that relies on both grasping new experiences and transforming those experiences into understanding (Kolb, 1984). What matters is not simply what they encounter but how they make sense of it. The process of reflecting on lived events and integrating those reflections into future action lies at the heart of the student's transformation (Bretag & van der Veen, 2017).

Transformation, however, is not only a psychological process but also a moral and social one. When learners encounter disorienting experiences, they are invited to reevaluate their assumptions about knowledge, culture, and community (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning gives this experience theoretical clarity. It views moments of discomfort or contradiction as openings through which individuals can question assumptions that have long gone unexamined. For a student in a foreign classroom, this may begin with a small recognition that what constitutes good communication, critical thinking, or respect varies across contexts. Gradually, through reflective dialogue and participation in new academic and social practices, they begin to shift their perspective. They learn that no single perspective is complete and that understanding emerges through conversation, humility, and openness (Cranton & Taylor, 2012).

At its deepest level, transformative learning is about becoming capable of democratic thought and practice (Mezirow, 1991). Students who once operated within a single set of cultural norms begin to appreciate the diversity of voices and interpretations that make up human understanding (Formenti & West, 2016). They learn to listen before responding and to hold their views lightly enough to let new ideas enter. This process of perspective transformation, when nurtured by supportive peers and teachers, develops the very qualities that higher education aspires to cultivate- autonomy, critical reflection, and respect for difference. It also reveals that transformation is not achieved in isolation. The learner becomes part of a community where dialogue itself becomes the medium of growth (Habermas, 1984; Mezirow, 1997).

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-everyday-classroom/405184](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-everyday-classroom/405184)

## Related Content

---

### Sentiment Analysis of Product Reviews

Cane W.K. Leung (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 1794-1799).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/sentiment-analysis-product-reviews/11061](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/sentiment-analysis-product-reviews/11061)

### A Bibliometric Review of Studies on the Application of Augmented Reality to Cultural Heritage by Using Biblioshiny and CiteSpace

Shaoxu Duand Mageswaran Sanmugam (2024). *Embracing Cutting-Edge Technology in Modern Educational Settings* (pp. 184-213).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-bibliometric-review-of-studies-on-the-application-of-augmented-reality-to-cultural-heritage-by-using-biblioshiny-and-citespace/336196](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-bibliometric-review-of-studies-on-the-application-of-augmented-reality-to-cultural-heritage-by-using-biblioshiny-and-citespace/336196)

### Cost-Sensitive Learning

Victor S. Shengand Charles X. Ling (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 339-345).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/cost-sensitive-learning/10842](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/cost-sensitive-learning/10842)

### Fuzzy Methods in Data Mining

Eyke Hüllermeier (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 907-912).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/fuzzy-methods-data-mining/10928](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/fuzzy-methods-data-mining/10928)

### Data Mining for Fraud Detection System

Roberto Marmo (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 411-416).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-mining-fraud-detection-system/10853](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-mining-fraud-detection-system/10853)