The Acculturation of Chinese Immigrant Students within School Life

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Finding a Voice…

“I have to give up some of being Chinese.”
Ben, 17 years old

“Teachers give us wrong grades because they don’t know us by our Chinese names.”
Tricia, 16 years old
The Study

Examined the values, attitudes and behaviors (participation and interactions)

Purpose to develop an acculturation model within the school context

Add to a previous study on acculturation beyond the school (home, society)
The Research Question

What are the school influences that support/hinder acculturation as measured by student participation and interactions?
The Sample

- Size: 54 students
- Age: 16/17 years old (45%, 25 Ss)
- Grade: 9\textsuperscript{th} & 10\textsuperscript{th} (70%, 37Ss)
- Time in America: 1-3 years (61%, 33Ss)
- Prior Schooling: 7\textsuperscript{th} – 9\textsuperscript{th} grade (52%, 28Ss)
Method of Data Collection

Two-Step Process

**Interview Questions**
- Qualitative Data
- 17 items

**Questionnaire**
- Quantitative Data
- 31 items
Method of Analyses

- Item Analysis
- Index Construction
- Statistical Modeling
Findings of the Study...

**Dependent Variable**
*(Acculturation)*
- Using English to express feelings
- Speak English with American friends
- Understand teachers’ thinking
- Making American friends
- Having American and Chinese friends
- Succeeding in the US
- Feeling a part of US
- Attending school activities to learn about American culture

**Independent Variable**
*(Primary contributions to Acculturation)*
- Computer usage (to learn English, to develop cultural awareness, to help adjust to life in America)
- Participate in extra-activities outside Chinatown
- Believe Chinese teachers understand me
- Using English with American friends
Implications of the Study…

School and Faculty

- Participate in professional development
- Adjust teaching approaches and strategies
- Focus on matching teaching and learning styles
- Become better sensitized to Ss’ cultural styles
- Design programs that explore cultural awareness on deeper levels
- Provide opportunities for Ss to express their feelings about acculturation
Implications...

Students

- Understand their cross-cultural identity due to conflicts in values
- Find ways to increase their cultural awareness
- Use cultural knowledge to make informed decisions
- Use social strategies to negotiate culture and language
Next Steps…

- What is the role of using computers in the acculturation process?
- What kinds of activities beyond the school will facilitate acculturation?
- What kinds of interactions with teachers and other Ss are helpful in the process?
- What feelings, attitudes are Ss experiencing during the adjustment process?