

# 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<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> (70%, 37Ss)
- Time in America: 1-3 years (61%, 33Ss)
- Prior Schooling: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 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?