

Peer-Mentoring for New International Students:
A Study on Utilizing a Peer-Mentoring Program to Assist New Students Experiencing
Acculturation

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to discover the hindrances and apply new innovative ideas to the problematic stages of student acclimatization and acculturation to an American education and Taiwanese host culture. The goal was to improve academic success during the initial first year, improve the acclimatization process, and stimulate the acculturation process.

The study applied a mixed methods approach. Four new foreign students participated in a 12-week innovation. This innovation consisted of establishing a protocol for school staff, creating and implementing a student-led Welcoming Committee, training at the beginning of the school year, establishing guidelines and expectations for participating Welcoming Committee members, assigning peer mentors to new students, and providing opportunities for socializing and meeting people. The participants took pre and post cultural self-efficacy tests. In addition, qualitative data was collected from the interviews of the four participants.

The new foreign students showed an increase in cultural self-efficacy from the beginning of the innovation to the conclusion of it. Findings of this study found that students used past experiences in creating initial perceptions, these perceptions changed after interactions with the Welcoming Committee, ample assistance was given to the new foreign students throughout the innovation, and Welcoming Committee members were relied on to make initial contact with others due to initial difficulties in this area.

DEDICATION

To my mother and father for providing me with a very enriched childhood, it was the best. To my wonderful wife that continues to motivate me. To both of my grandfathers that taught me about empathy, perspective, and the value of hard work. To Michael Devine for putting up with me for 30 years and keeping me focused on life. To Mark Wilkerson for insisting I always be better than the day before. To the John and Kathy Cheska for always supporting me. And to every teacher at Pioneer Park Elementary School. You laid the foundation of who I am.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Study

Many schools throughout the world serve a wide and diverse population of young men and women who share similar goals: receiving an education, making friends, and socializing in a multitude of ways and scenarios based on their passions. My school is no different. The students that attend this school desire to attend a university upon graduation, make lifelong friendships that carryover into adulthood, and participate in sports and activities that peek their interests. What is unusual about my setting is that it is not just a school, but home as well for students from all over the world. Ivy Collegiate Academy (ICA), an English-language boarding school in Taiwan, serves as both school and home for students seeking a Western secondary education. The school utilizes an American education system taught predominantly by American educators, but it is located in the heart of East Asia, and many of its students come from Asian countries. Thus, students arriving at Ivy Collegiate Academy become planted into a setting in which wide-ranging cultural expectations are immediately desired from all directions. They must adapt to both a strong host country culture and a strong Western academic culture. Foreign students therefore immediately go through acculturation as they attend and live at this international boarding school. While some students may find their own paths and become comfortable or content in their new situation, that cannot be said for everyone. Some students may show signs of acculturative stress. In some situations, students may be so overwhelmed by the acculturation process they may severely struggle academically, purposely isolate themselves, and/or permanently leave the school. In this action research project, therefore, I have implemented specific and targeted

strategies in order to minimize the effects of acculturative stress in foreign students and to maximize the successes and growth within individuals experiencing acculturation and acculturative stress.

Action Research is defined by Mertler (2017) as, “any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn” (p. 4). It is with this definition that I applied the use of an action research model for the research conducted. It is also with this definition that continued action research beyond this particular study will be applied in future cycles. This research study is the culmination of multiple cycles of action research applied through several years of research and study of the acculturative issues at ICA.

Local Context

Situated Context

Ivy Collegiate Academy (ICA) is an international boarding school located in Taichung, Taiwan. The exact location of the school is comparable to a suburban one. The school is not downtown and is right on the edge of the mountainous middle of Taiwan. If you look east, you see mountains covered in jungle. If you look west, you see skyscrapers and the hustle and bustle of a large city. ICA serves students from grades seven through twelve. There are currently 205 students enrolled at ICA. Of those 205, roughly 75% are boarding students and 25% are day students. Roughly two thirds of the school population are male, while a third are female. The school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and is required to meet the standards set forth by this accrediting office. The curriculum is

an American curriculum and is modeled after traditional American standards. The school is a college preparatory school that builds its curriculum and accepts students on the knowledge that they will be attending a university in The United States of America, Canada, England, or Australia. Some students do attend schools in Germany, Spain, Switzerland, or Japan; however, the vast majority of graduates end up in the United States. All classes, except for the mandated Chinese language classes and Chinese Mathematics classes, are taught in the English language.

Because the school is a college preparatory school, students take standardized tests from the eighth grade on. The tests the students take are the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test 8/9 (PSAT 8/9), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test 10 (PSAT 10), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Students take the grade-appropriate PSAT until the 2nd semester of their junior year, from which time they take the SAT throughout their senior year. This is to prepare the students for their required assessments in qualifying for college and for the school to analyze progress of students as they grow through their studies. ICA collects test scores and data from all students based on these assessments.

The majority of teachers are from The United States, some are from Taiwan, and two teachers are from Canada. All teachers are certified teachers. American teachers are certified and keep their certification up to date by meeting requirements set forth in their home states. Taiwanese teachers hold the required certifications from the government to teach in Taiwan. Foreign teachers are recruited through multiple different recruiting companies. These include the University of Northern Iowa Overseas Recruiting Fair, Search Associates, and The International Educator (TIE).

The majority of the students at Ivy Collegiate Academy are from Taiwan. However, many students come from countries outside of Taiwan including China, Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh, The United States, The Philippines, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia. In the past, Ivy Collegiate Academy has also hosted students from Italy, Jordan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Macau, and Myanmar. Overall, students at Ivy Collegiate Academy come from many different parts of the world and bring with them a unique set of perspectives, ideas, and experiences that help create a diverse experience for all that attend.

Students come to Ivy Collegiate Academy with a wide range of English ability. Some students come to us as fluent or near fluent English speakers. Others come with no English ability or survival English. In order to maximize learning development, students are put in classes with students that have similar English abilities. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are provided for students who need or want additional English studies. Because many of our students and their families are goal-oriented, the option of the amount of extra English courses each student receives in their studies is semi-autonomous. Essentially, students who need extra English will be required to take the course, while the students with high levels of English who want to maximize their ability in this area can use one of their elective classes to take more English.

In addition to going to college, many students' families want their students to be prepared for going to live in a Western society. Thus, acculturation has become a topic of interest for both school and families of students. Though ICA does work toward acculturating students, the conflict of being located in the heart of Eastern society has made acculturating towards a Western culture difficult, and often times

ICA may be more focused on the future aspects of acculturation, forgetting about the current, more relevant school culture created within ICA. An example of this is the headmaster's attempts to discuss what attending an American university is like, but not addressing issues or difficulties students may currently be experiencing within ICA.

Similarly, many of our foreign students have never experienced Taiwan culture before. The differences between cultures can be a dramatic experience for students. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of these students go through this experience without their parents. As a boarding school, it is not uncommon for our students to be sent to us outright and immediately upon acceptance. For example, a student's family from South Korea learned of us through a Google search, and after applying and being accepted, flew in and dropped their daughter off with an almost immediate turn around to fly back to South Korea. This occurred within a matter of less than a month and neither her nor her parents had ever been to Taiwan.

On campus, you would not be able to tell the difference between ICA and any other school found in America. The physical pieces of the school sync with American schools, the textbooks found in the school are American, and the teachers teach in the manner of what American society expects. If you leave the school campus you are immediately surrounded and reminded of your actual location. Rice fields, beetle nut stands, Buddhist temples, Chinese signs, and scooters inundate you. Due to this reality of the location, students are reminded of their whereabouts and Taiwanese cultural norms immediately upon exiting the gates.

Personal Context

I am currently an administrator at Ivy Collegiate Academy. My title is Dean of

Student Learning. I am also a Department Chair for the Student Services Department. In my role as an administrator I have several oversights I am responsible for. First, I collect and analyze student grades and student test results. Using the data I collect, I report the results to the other administrators and department chairs in order for them to utilize the results in their own areas of focus. I also work with individual students and make plans of action for them when they are struggling academically. Usually this includes aspects of counseling, communicating with teachers, and in some cases creating Individualized Education Plans. Most of my administrative work consists of being both proactive and reactive in student success. If teachers or administrators have a concern regarding a student, I investigate the concern and take proper action. In some cases, this could lead to implementing steps towards establishing an Individualized Education Plan.

Like the students, I am going through acculturation right now in my life, making my research a very personal journey in some respects. As an American that was born and raised in Oklahoma, I moved to Taiwan almost five years ago. Since then I have had my own successes, adventures, misunderstandings, frustrations, and cultural learning points that I have experienced and adapted to. The level of empathy I bring to this problem of practice comes directly from my own frustrations and enjoyments, whether large or small, while acclimatizing to my new situation.

Problem of Practice

Although acculturation in general is a concern at the school, this dissertation focuses on adaptation issues amongst new students from traditional East Asian schools, as they go through the early stages of acclimatization and acculturation at our American school with an American education system in Taiwan. This particular

group has been chosen for several reasons. First, they have no academic experiences within a Western style organization. Second, depending on where the student is from, social experiences at ICA can be difficult due to cultural differences. Third, and finally, throughout the school year, this particular group of students have been the ones most likely to quit ICA and change their goals of going to a university abroad. As mentioned earlier, many of our students come from different countries and backgrounds and have different educational experiences prior to attending Ivy Collegiate Academy. For many of the students, Ivy Collegiate Academy is their first and only experience of an American curriculum, an American school, and American teaching approaches. These curriculum and teaching approaches can be very different from what students have experienced their entire life and can lead to a lot of confusion throughout the acclimatization and acculturation processes. These students that are experiencing an American school for the first time struggle in academics during their first year more than other groups of students. They are reported as students of concern by teachers more often than others are during their first year, and they tend to make the “Library Study Hall” list more consistently. In order to make the “Library Study Hall” list, a student must have two or more failing grades in either the middle of term checkpoint or the end of term when report cards are sent out. While students from all countries can fall into this category of concern, students with this background tend to occupy the list early and often.

My interest in the issue of acculturation and acculturative stress amongst new students at an international boarding school that have never experienced a Western education derives from my personal passion for student success. I was able to better understand and see this problem through the scope of my administrative duties. With

my access to student grades and looking at the trends and outcomes of students I was able to notice somewhat of a pattern over the past couple of years: entering students struggling academically. As an educator and a person who is truly concerned with the successes of their students, I have found it difficult to watch as many students struggle due to their difficulty in acclimatizing to new ways and a new culture, especially knowing how bright many of these students are.

Larger Context

Limited Prior Research

Research regarding acculturation within an international school has been minimal, particularly when analyzing general acculturative studies as a whole. Acculturation is best defined by John W Berry as, “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p.698). Using this definition, a member of one culture need not moving to a foreign country for acculturation to occur. Acculturation can occur within an international school that hosts a school culture that is different from the culture of the host nation. However, the research is mostly focused on immigrants to foreign nations (Berry, 2005; Kuo, 2001; Rumbaut, 1990; Vang, 2009). There are many reasons why this might be the current situation in acculturation studies. This may result from the fact that researchers and their universities in which they work are predominantly located in the United States, Canada, England and other countries in which migration is at high levels. The population of immigrants in these countries also far outnumbers the populations of schools such as ICA, which are located all over the world. Further, prior access to contexts like ICA may have also been limited by technology,

knowledge, and scholarly connections amongst international institutions.

It has also been pointed out that acculturation studies do not often focus on Asians (Kuo, 2001, Vang, 2009). Most research on acculturation in the United States has been about Mexican immigrants and acculturation patterns within that particular population. As Mexicans make up 26.9% of the immigrant population in America (Zong & Batalova, 2018), it makes sense for this population to have a more thoroughly researched background. Yet, the immigration of Asians to countries like the US is not insignificant. According to the Institute of International Education, students from China and India collectively make up 47.4% of international students in the United States (iie.org, 2016). In fact, China, India, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Japan are all in the top ten places of origin for international students in America (iie.org, 2016). With this large population going through and experiencing acculturation, there is a need for more research, particularly with qualitative data, in order to better understand acculturation with Asian populations (Kuo, 2001).

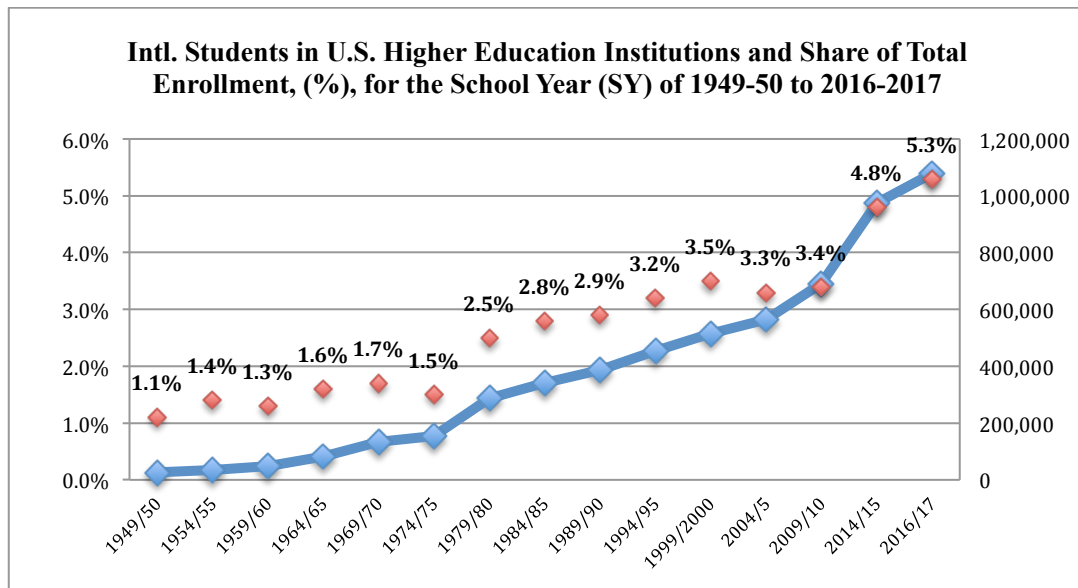
Economic Shifts to Asia

An additional important reason to continue and further acculturation research, specifically in Asia, is the increase in economic prosperity being seen in Asia. A 2019 article published by *The Financial Times* stated that the combined Asian economies will be larger than the rest of the world's combined economies by the year 2020 (Romei & Reed, 2019). This economic lift, along with desires for Western educations, results in what will likely be an increase in children and teenagers experiencing acculturation. Acculturation becomes a major issue when Asian families have the financial means to buy educational opportunities, often, Western educational opportunities. This can include finding opportunities for Western educations within

their own countries, in other Asian countries, or sending their children to Western nations to partake in their educational systems. This act of seeking and receiving Western educations in this new era of economic opportunity highlights the ongoing and future needs to address acculturation matters as more and more people seek this educational opportunity.

Immigrant Trends and Those Experiencing Acculturation

Another important reason to continue and further research in acculturation is the ever-increasing amount of people that will experience acculturation in their lifetimes. According to Witherell (2015), “international students at U.S. colleges and universities had the highest rate of growth in 35 years, increasing by ten percent to a record high of 974,926 students in the 2014/15 academic year” (np). Those numbers have since increased to 1,043,839 for the 2016 academic year (iie.org, 2016). Table 1.1 provides the historical increase in international students. Each one of those students going to America, just like the many graduating students at ICA, will experience acculturation once embedded in a different cultural setting.



Adapted from Institute of International Education (IIE), “International Student Enrollment Trends, 1948/49-2014/15,” Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange (Washington, DC: IIE, 2015)

Overall, trends suggest more and more people are going to experience acculturation. It is pertinent for future considerations to understand the experiences associated with acculturation for various groups of people.

Psychological and Academic Issues Pertaining to Acculturation

One area of concern in acculturation is the potential for psychological issues. According to Edmonston (1996), “mental health studies suggest that assimilation—in the various forms it can take—can itself be a traumatic process rather than a simple solution to the traumas of immigration” (p. 34). Research on psychological issues in acculturation has focused on Hispanic population of immigrants; the possibility of a universal concern exists nonetheless. Yet, current data suggests that most acculturated students perform better academically when compared to native speakers. According to Edmonston, “With the exception of Hispanics, immigrant minority students from non-English-speaking families had higher grade averages than either majority native-born students or immigrant minority students from English-speaking families”

(Edmonston, 1996, p. 36). These academic successes are notable for my research because the population that was researched was students of Asian descent in which all families were non-English-speaking.

Other aspects of people experiencing mental health have also shown other psychological issues when experiencing acculturation. A meta-analysis by Yoon, Chang, Kim, Clawson, Cleary, Hansen, Bruner, Chan, and Gomes found a correlation between marginalization and negative mental health (2013, p. 22). These negative mental health components included depression, anxiety, negative affect, and psychological distress. Utilizing the data that came from this study, the researchers have suggested considerations of social context and the social systems within those contexts (Yoon et al., p. 27-28). Certain aspects of acculturation issues within international schools abroad are a specific component of social contexts that my research focused on.

Previous Cycles of Research

Several steps have been taken within the action research cycles culminating in this project. In Cycle 0, the question I investigated was whether or not acculturative issues existed at ICA and to what extent the school addresses these issues. Using a structured interview protocol, five veteran teachers at ICA were interviewed. The findings for this Cycle 0 were that the school does, from the teacher's perspective, have acculturative issues, particularly for first year students. Teachers viewed acculturation issues in 2 different ways – first, because the school's American culture is so strong, there is a general acculturative issue regarding all students new to an American system (due to boarding we are very isolated from the local culture). Second, there were identified acculturative issues regarding many new students from

foreign countries, mostly around social issues. The identified social issues included difficulties with making friends, having relationship partners, racism, and unwanted attention.

In Cycle 1, I wanted to find out if the application of an intervention based on the positive deviance theory, utilizing teachers of new students, would be a supportive way of addressing acculturative issues with language as a focus. Positive Deviance can be defined as practicing uncommon practices within a setting that is beneficial to those utilizing it (Marsh, Schroeder, Dearden, J. Sternin, & M. Sternin, 2004, p.2). I applied the concept of utilizing teachers, in a collaborative and focused effort to research the ability of teachers applying positive deviance by sharing what has been successful for them with specific students and creating an opportunity for these teachers to plan and collaborate in order to assist new students within the constructs of language learning. Weekly meetings were held amongst the teachers within the Student Services Department. Field observations and recordings and transcriptions of the meetings were utilized. I found that these meetings created a sense of responsibility for all student success and not just the students assigned to individual teachers' classes. Teachers shared, discussed, planned, and traded teaching strategies to help each other in their teaching duties. Implementation of collaborative ideas occurred and teachers were receptive to the concept according to a survey. However, the application of these teacher groups was very narrow in application, and findings were not applicable to acculturative issues beyond language.

In my Advanced Qualitative class, I was also able to carry out semi-structured interviews with two students, thematically code the interviews, and identify several thematic components students experience as they acculturated to ICA. These

interviews were conducted to discover how these students experienced acculturation and acculturative stress at ICA and how the experience they went through impacted them. Of the two participants to this study, one participant's themes regarding her acculturation experience were Acceptance, Education, and Identity. The theme of Acceptance came from the interviewee's constructive viewpoint of their experience when socializing and engaging others in class and within their social life. Both positive and negative experiences the interviewee experienced directly affected how they felt with regard to being: a member of school, an acknowledged and valued member of the student population, and an accepted member of a community within the school as it pertains to the individual's language ability. The Acceptance theme represented the components of socializing, racism, isolation, and language. The Education theme represented components of going to Ivy Collegiate Academy and being a student. This included aspects of struggling academically, adapting to a new school, and components of improving and using the English language in an academic capacity. The Identity theme represented components of general culture. This includes food, missing home, and the individual's observations regarding components of Taiwanese culture and how living in Taiwan has changed her. The coding process with this individual helped better understand what she was experiencing within the specific location of ICA during her early acculturation. By coding in this manner, it was obvious to see that the components of acceptance, her education, and how people saw her, and her identity were what shaped her experience. The second participant had four themes: Relationships, Engagement in School, Language, and Social Issues. The Relationships theme showed examples of successful socializing in both the Taiwanese social culture and the American academic culture. The Engagement in

School theme pointed towards aspects of Participant 2's experience that allowed for him to have a better experience. This participant found opportunities to become an active member within the school's clubs and activities. Through joining varsity soccer and student government, he interacted and worked with other students, thus creating relationships. Language was such a focal point of Participant 2 that it has its own overarching theme. In almost every scenario and discussion, language was important to Participant 2 and often helped him as he gained language competency. The Social Issues theme became an important theme to understanding Participant 2's experience because he indicated minimal influence regarding potential social issues. These codes helped answer the questions regarding their experiences by giving deep and personal insight into how they understood and interpreted their experiences. These codes were able to show portions of each individual's experience and allowed me to become more familiar with what the acculturation experience at ICA is like and what aspects of it are more common to experience. The experiences expressed by the participants in these interviews elaborated on common concerns. Both participants expressed stress resulting from social factors that lasted longer and were of greater concern than the stress that was construed from academic experiences.

These early cycles were instrumental in redirecting my research. I found a greater need within the school for new students because of the outcomes of the past cycles. It was quite clear, that at ICA, the social factors forms of support had a greater impact on new students experiencing acculturation than did the academic factors. Overall, past cycles showed a need for support and clarity early on for new students.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a peer mentoring system at reducing acculturation stress and supporting acclimation within

an international school in Taiwan. The purpose was to also find out what can be done from a school point of view to help students in acclimating and acculturating to both Taiwan and the American education system within the confines of an international boarding school. More specifically, it is to address these issues in the local setting of ICA.

Summary

This study was initiated due to a local need for student support and improvement in both the initial year of attendance at ICA and the ongoing experiences beyond that year, specifically with regard to students that are new to an American curriculum. The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to discover the hindrances and apply new innovative ideas to the problematic stages of student acclimatization and acculturation to an American education and Taiwanese host culture. The goal was to improve academic success during the initial first year, improve the acclimatization process, and stimulate the acculturation process. Though there is not much research within the local context of this situation, there is enough to proceed and work with in researching the difficulties of early acculturation stages for students. Recent trends in immigration populations show a need for a better understanding of acculturation, especially for students from Asia.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspectives and Research Guiding the Project

Introduction

In chapter one, I discussed and introduced contexts and reasons for this study. This chapter will examine the theoretical frameworks of the study and supporting research. The first section focuses on Berry's Model of Acculturation. This is the primary framework within this study. The second section will consider Bandura's notion of self-efficacy within Social Cognitive Theory. In applying these concepts and frameworks, the definition of culture becomes a critical component. I have utilized the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition's (CARLA) definition of culture. They define culture as, "the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization" (What is Culture, 2018). As people are exposed to new cultures, some of the most influential moments they will have while acculturating will be from what they observe and experience in others, including those not in the new culture. It is through each person's observations, experiences, and self-awareness of interactions that acculturation is affected. As people adapt with their interactions, so too do they apply strategies in acculturating.

Theoretical Framework

Berry's Model of Acculturation

In order to fully understand acculturation and what it consists of, one must define acculturation and look at the historical context of acculturation. The definitions have changed throughout time and are constantly evolving. It is important to

recognize this fact because aspects of acculturation, based on the definition of acculturation, can be quite different and lead to different results of studies. Similarly, studies, including Berry's own, are engrained in the changes of the definition throughout time. This has helped lay a foundation for his research and those that follow it.

In early studies of acculturation, Theodore Graves provided a definition of acculturation as "changes in value orientations among minority groups in the direction of Anglo norms" (Graves, 1967, p. 347). Obviously in a specific framework, this definition allowed for the advancement of acculturation and the studies that have developed from it. However, this idea of acculturation is exquisitely narrow, specific, and oblivious to perspectives beyond one specific culture's experience. Berry (1997) identifies Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits as early definers of acculturation initially defined in a 1936 study. According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, "acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). This definition of acculturation is not as broad as today's definition of acculturation. With this definition, acculturation acknowledges change amongst people, but specifically amongst groups and only indirectly does it acknowledge change amongst individuals based on the aspects that it takes individuals to create groups. Similarly, in 2005 Berry shared another definition provided by the Social Science Research Council in 1954. According to the council, acculturation is defined as,

Culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous

cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life (as cited by Berry, 2005, p. 701).

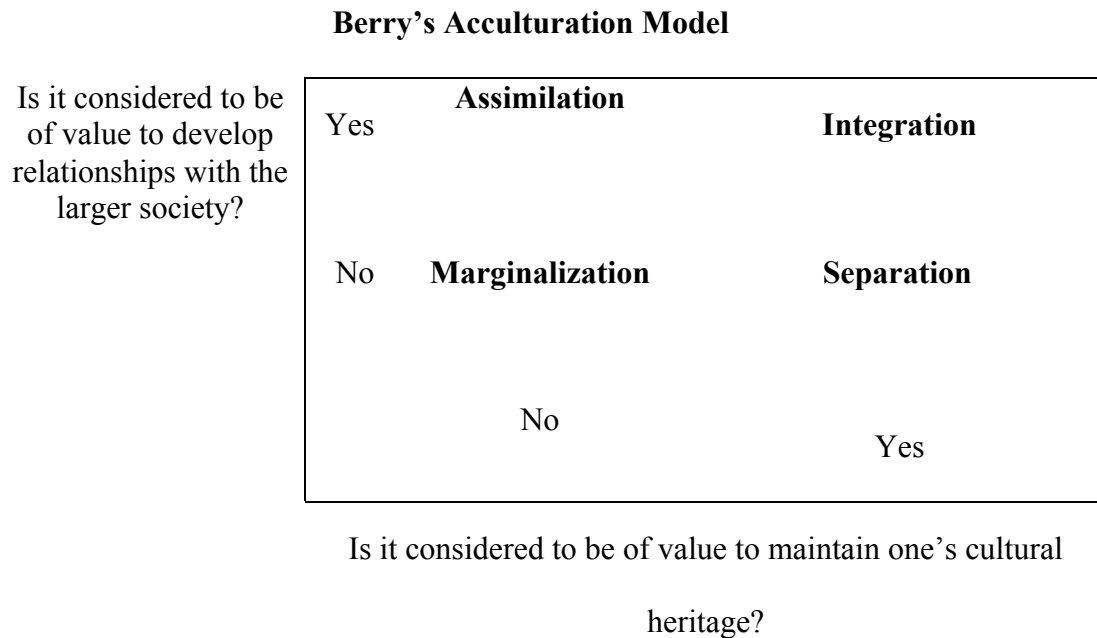
While a rather long definition, this definition shows an understanding that acculturation is not necessarily a group interaction reaction, unlike Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits. It applies the ideas of acculturation within the idea that there are multiple cultural systems at work. This is important because it addresses the idea that culture is a part of every individual. This expansive definition utilizes examples in which acculturation occurs, including what is labeled as non-cultural causes. This is important to understand because the very definition of acculturation is evolving with time, even within the current day framework of the leading researcher of acculturation. As more studies and research has been applied to acculturation, change of what acculturation is has evolved quite significantly over time.

Berry's Four Acculturation Strategies

How individuals adapt or adjust to the changes involved in acculturation varies from individual to individual. When a person from one culture is put in a situation in which a different culture's features are dominant, that person goes through acculturation. In order to achieve this, a person adapts to their culture in different ways—sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully. Berry defined four specific adjustment strategies individuals use in order to acculturate into new cultures: 1) assimilation, 2) separation, 3) integration and 4) marginalization (Berry,

1997, p. 9). These strategies are shown in Figure 1. They are based on the behaviors and attitudes of individuals experiencing the acculturation process.

Figure 1.



Adapted from (Berry, 1997, p. 10)

Assimilation. *Assimilation* occurs when an individual loses all of their original cultural identity and they fully apply another culture's ways (Berry, 1997). This can entail low levels to no levels of acculturation. One of the few benefits of this strategy is the high level of help-seeking behaviors (Miller, et al., 2013, p. 2). As one becomes more familiar and comfortable with a host culture, they will tend to be able to adapt quicker within the culture by utilizing techniques others may not feel comfortable in doing. This usually entails taking risks and participating more often within the host culture's norms and activities.

Separation. *Separation* occurs when an individual will not conform or participate in any form of another culture and holds strong to their own cultural ways (Berry, 1997). This strategy is connected to many types of adjustment issues and

mental health problems. Focusing specifically on Asian families, one study found that the separation strategy is not as detrimental as theorized in the past (Choi, Tan, Yasui, & Hahm, 2016, p. 1393). Choi et al. (2016) looked into acculturation strategies specifically of Koreans in Midwest America. They found that three were identifiable: separation, integrated bicultural, and modest bicultural. They found these strategies are substantial predictors of immigrant adaptation specific to this subgroup (Choi, Tan, Yasui, & Hahm, 2016). While this study is specific to Asian families, this may be too general and a more specific look at different subgroups of Asian ethnicities could add deeper value to this finding. For that reason, the context of unique experiences is important to acknowledge, but not to the extent in which my study should move away from Berry's Model.

Marginalization. *Marginalization* occurs when one has little interest in growing or maintaining cultural ties to their new culture (Berry, 1997). This strategy can occur due to negative experiences one might have when experiencing acculturation. According to Berry, "Marginalization, when imposed by the dominant group, is called 'exclusion'" (2005, p. 706). So too can marginalization occur due to choice. Marginalization as a strategy can be a reaction to conflict, thus people could isolate themselves in an attempt to avoid interacting with both their own culture and the host culture (2005,p. 708).

Integration. *Integration* is the strategy used for individuals that want to find a balance between their own culture and another culture (Berry, 1997). Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson (1992) found that there might be universal appeal to integration as an adaptation tactic. Their study, which focused on American youth in diverse settings, found that youth experiencing acculturation preferred integration as a

strategy to the other strategies (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992). Furthermore, “This endorsement of integration did not differ among ethnic groups, by gender, by social class, by place of birth, or by self-identification among college students” (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, p. 308). This is of interest due mostly to the universal findings in such a diverse population. Gomez, Alfredo, and Glass (2014) studied international college students attending mid-sized universities in the mid-Atlantic region of America and found that there is a positive relationship between acculturation levels and the participation in on-campus sports and off-campus socialization. This kind of interaction is paralleled with aspects of integration as an acculturative strategy. A recent study by Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) found that international students at a medium-sized university in Midwestern America using the integration strategy along with levels of social support experienced lower levels of acculturative stress. This was especially so when comparing integration to separation and marginalization. This has furthered the notion that integration has been a more beneficial strategy for those going through acculturation.

Berry’s Model, when applied to this study’s research context, helped me apply key concepts in examining and understanding individual strategies as students go through acculturation. Aspects of each strategy identified by Berry have common features that individuals apply as they adjust to their new setting. Furthermore, Berry’s Model acts as a foundation for understanding and explaining individual actions people take when going through acculturation. My study looks into aspects of an intervention to assist people during this timeframe. By utilizing Berry’s Model within action research, integrating the understandings of acculturation created an

intervention that can be beneficial to new students experiencing a peer-mentoring program.

Beyond Berry's Model

Choi, Tam, Yasui, and Hahm (2016) suggest the potential move beyond Berry's Model due to ethnic specific strategies found in Korean youths. According to Choi et al.,

In contrast to Berry's four strategies, we find three distinct acculturation strategies among Korean American youth. None fits squarely into the existing four-strategy model. Our main findings are that Korean American youth, socialized mainly in the United States, are growing up American and show a more integrated bicultural strategy with a strong sense of ethnic identity. (p.1390)

The three mentioned strategies in this study were separation, integrated bicultural, and modest bicultural. Though this sample did not fit Berry's Model precisely, the authors did admit that Korean American youths that are third generation or beyond could possibly better fit into the model due a reemergence of an assimilation group for future generations (Choi et al., 2016, p. 1390).

Rudmin suggests redefining acculturation due to the difficulty in defining culture due to culture's ever-changing definition, the independent process an individual experiences with all the different variables occurring to them, and the racial bias of past definitions with stronger a stronger emphasis on the aspects of minority groups separated from the experiences of a white or Western dominant society (2009, p. 109). Thus, Rudmin (2009) suggests a new three-word definition of acculturation. This suggested definition for acculturation being, "second-culture acquisition" (p.

109). This definition gets to the core of acculturation, but leaves out the unique details its counterparts incorporate.

Further definitions cite Berry's research in the matter by defining acculturation based on the exemplified definition provided by Berry himself within his own studies. In studying acculturation attitudes and self-esteem, Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson (1992) used Berry, Trimble, and Olmedo's definition of acculturation, which is defined as, "the changes that occur as a result of continuous contact between two distinct cultures" (as cited in Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson, 1992, p. 300). Many researchers choose to use Berry's definition and concepts when researching acculturation.

With regard to acculturation in a more modern context, Dr. John W. Berry has led the way in theorizing acculturation more generally and created a strong foundation for researchers to pursue the understanding of acculturation for a more modern era that has broader applications and has grown to be applicable in many more contexts. For my study, I have chosen Berry's model over other models due to two reasons. First, Berry's Model is widely accepted and is still being implemented and researched. A general search of Berry's Model from the last ten years will show thousands of results. Second, acculturation studies seem to be going towards unique definitions, strategies, and models made specifically for unique groups of people. Currently, there is not a model for international students in Taiwan at an American school yet. Berry's Model has been shown to be a starting spot for further models and for research in which there is not a more specific model or theory.

Bandura's Notion of Self-Efficacy

This study also draws on Albert Bandura's notion of self-efficacy. Self-

Efficacy is defined as, “an individual’s perceived capability to perform given tasks” (Bandura, 2016, p. 527). It has similarly been expressed as “one’s own ability to carry out actions in a social context with the intention of achieving the desired result” (Briones, Tabernero, Tramontano, Caprara, & Arenas, 2009, pg. 302). This theory derives from Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, which can be described as, “people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling” (Davey, 2015). Self-efficacy is vital to the theory due to each individual’s self-efficacy developing from the experiences one has.

Beyond the broad definition of self-efficacy is the definition of cultural self-efficacy. Cultural self-efficacy is defined as “the perception of capability to function effectively in a culturally diverse situation” (Du, Li, Lin, & Tam, 2014, p. 241). This definition is within the same concepts and understandings of self-efficacy, but with a specific focus on culture and situations dealing with acculturation. Cultural self-efficacy did originate from Bandura’s findings of self-efficacy (2014, p. 241). A reason why this is important is because high levels of cultural self-efficacy have shown to help depression (2014, p. 241). This can be an important factor when looking at the experiences people have during acculturation and shows how a person’s self-efficacy can affect their acculturation.

In this study, the notion of cultural self-efficacy was be useful for understanding how students view themselves and their own abilities in a multicultural setting. Specifically towards cultural self-efficacy, the idea of being able to function within a different culture is important in understanding the aspects of acculturation each person is experiencing. In my study, utilizing a peer mentor program can hopefully impact a person’s cultural self-efficacy and make strides in their

acculturation experience.

Justification of Use of Theories

Both Berry's Model and Bandura's notion of self-efficacy are current and leading theories in their own fields. Berry's Model was very applicable in this study due to the direct application of acculturation strategies and what is known about the uses of those strategies. When people are going through acculturation, they instinctively use an acculturation strategy as they try to figure out and adapt to their new situation. These strategies can change through time and vary based on what is occurring. Using Berry's Model, the ability to affectively identify what strategies participants are using assists in understanding their experiences and perceptions. Bandura's notion of self-efficacy applies quite well when trying to understand what and why the acculturative strategies applied were. It also helps in understanding the changes that occur over time during the acculturation period.

I think, in this case, about a lot of my own experiences in moving to Taiwan. I was not comfortable with all situations I was in and I reacted very differently to each based on my interpretations of these situations. I am an example of a person that was able to grow throughout my acculturative experience and in reflection I have been able to see how my cultural self-efficacy has been impacted from my experiences. These students from foreign countries go through similar experiences. Applications of these theories in implementing a peer-mentoring program make for an opportunity to research and study an application of assistance to better understand what new foreign students experience and how individuals can have better more supportive experiences as they adapt to their new foreign environment.

Literature Review

This literature review covers concepts and studies that were essential to my research regarding contexts for acculturation. In particular, this section contains studies that have been conducted on international students with acculturation as a focus. These studies have looked into aspects of acculturation strategies, aspects of discrimination, and ethics. These studies create a ground for my own study in representing the aspects, experiences, and acculturative issues an international student may go through or understand.

Contexts for Acculturation in International Students

International students, though similar in many aspects to other types of immigrants worldwide, have unique and specific experiences that may conclude with different acculturative issues and understandings. Just like anyone else, there are different aspects that need to be looked at when researching acculturation. The aspect of being a sojourner is part of many international students' experiences. A study by Tan and Liu (2014) discuss some of these components in their study of international students at an Australian university. Their study looks at acculturation within the concept of the sojourners experience and how their ethnic visibility pertains to their acculturation experience. The results Tan and Liu found regarding ethnically visible international students was that they were able to have higher scores on aspects of expected discrimination, perceived cultural distance, and heritage culture orientation. However, they scored lower on host cultural orientation than the ethnically non-visible students (Tan & Liu, 2014). Due to the multicultural setting within Australia, students that tended to be of a white ethnicity were able to be accepted by the Western host nation at a quicker pace than those from non-white ethnicities. Tan & Liu also

found that, regardless of the negative aspects of experiencing acculturation, even students that are ethnically visible preferred high levels of contact and associations with the host culture (Tan & Liu, 2014, p. 186).

Another study looking into different aspects of acculturation came from Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi, and von der Heidt (2016). Their study looked at this situation within the confines of a public university located in Malaysia in the context of academic conduct (Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi, & von der Heidt, 2016). The study looked into international students and the aspects of ethics. What the study found was that a person's individual attitude towards adjustment affected how a person views ethics and ethical decisions. Those that are more focused on adjusting were more inclined to believe that the host nation's values and norms should be complied with (Shafaei et al., 2016, p. 661). Their study concluded that students that were more connected to their host country were more likely to follow the ethical expectations.

While Tan and Liu (2014) looked into aspects of ethnic visibility and Shafaei, Nejati, Quazi, and von der Heidt (2016) looked into aspects of ethics, Shih and Brown (2000) looked into acculturation through the context of vocational identity. Having a strong understanding of what one wants to do for a living as an adult when acquiring an education in a foreign country can play an important role in an individual's experience with acculturation. Shih and Brown (2000) conducted a study on the vocational identities of Taiwanese international students in America. They found that vocational identity was greater when Taiwanese international students had a low level of acculturation (Shih & Brown, 2000, p. 44). To this extent, maintaining one's own cultural identity can possibly help in staying focused on individual career and educational goals. This study shows that there are benefits in utilizing different

acculturation strategies than just integration and assimilation and could explain why some people may feel comfortable in using different strategies.

Similarly to Shih & Brown (2000), Cao, Zhu, and Meng (2017) looked into an East Asian culture and acculturation. One quantitative study, with a multilayered setting of cultures examined specifically Chinese international students at an international school in Belgium. They were trying to see if acculturation strategies were predictable based on their socio-demographics. In this study, the participants acculturation strategy of choice tended to be affected by their social connections, their ability to speak the local language, and their past experiences in adapting (Cao, Zhu, & Meng, 2017, p. 94-95). This finding supports the idea that language and social immersion processes can be beneficial to international students. Furthermore, they found English, in a non-English language country, was an indicator of their social ties developed in the host country and affected their intercultural ties with host nation individuals (Cau, Zhu, & Meng, 2017, p. 92). This indicates that a setting with dual host cultural factors can affect aspects of acculturation for international students and the implications of this study suggests that a mentoring program utilizing host nation mentors would be beneficial for international students (p. 94). Likewise, a study of acculturation strategies by international students at a university conducted by Sullivan and Kashubeck-West found that, “that students in the Integration group reported statistically significant lower levels of acculturative stress” (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015, p. 5). This supports the idea that intercultural ties with host nation cultures help with issues concerning acculturative stress.

Similar findings to Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) were found by Kashima and Loh (2006). In a study involving sojourns from different cultures in an

Australian setting, Asian international students with what was identified as a high need for cognitive closure were shown by Kashima and Loh to have higher levels of stress in their lives. To measure the need for cognitive closure, the researchers measured each participant's levels of order preference, intolerance of ambiguity, predictability preference, closed-mindedness, and decisiveness. (Kashima & Loh, 2006, p. 477). As was confirmed with other studies, the closer sojourner students were with the host culture, the lesser the stress was experienced (2006, p. 482). This points towards the positive aspects of utilizing the integration or even the assimilation acculturation strategy. Programs that can help integrate these strategies can be beneficial in these cases.

Across the studies, it has been shown that acculturation experiences can be unique to each individual based on many variables. This could be from where an individual comes from, who the host country is, language ability, how they view their time in another country or how they approach acculturation with their own actions. Some aspects of the acculturation experience may be experienced more heavily for ICA students due to multiple factors such as social issues amongst peers while academics or language ability may for others. All in all, these studies help show how diverse acculturation issues can be and how international students can be affected.

Factors Affecting Acculturation

There are many factors that can influence acculturation, as has been seen in other prior studies mentioned. This section of the literature review details concepts such as social relationships, social support, academic performance, language, attitude, and mental health. These studies further describe the wide range of factors that can affect acculturation. Unlike the last section that focused on the experience of

acculturation, this section focuses on common factors that affect acculturation and the acculturation process.

Social relationships. How we bond and relate with people is important to anyone. This can be especially true when going through acculturation. With regard to social relationships, one study found that the aspects of self-efficacy aided foreign-born students of color at an American university in a physics program with their reactions to stereotypes and classroom discrimination (Fries-Britt, Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014). They were looking to understand the acculturation experiences of this group of people, specifically in this type of program at a university. A key point that aided in efficacy was peers. According to Fries-Britta (2014), students tended to gain in confidence when having foreign-born classmates due to the opportunity to learn about similar life experiences (Fries-Britta, 2014, p. 467). This creation of support network can be vital in one's success in education. When focused on the aspects of a major such as physics, students become so close and interconnected both in and out of class that acculturation stress can be eased due to the built upon relationships. This supports aspects of my own research in that students will get an opportunity to interact with people from other places, thus providing a possible opportunity to grow on a personal level. This may be a benefit in a peer-mentoring situation when a mentor is of local nationality and the mentee is foreign-born.

Within some contexts, aspects of culture may make social relationships difficult. In two separate studies, Yoon and colleagues explored the aspect of identity while going through acculturation. In one study, the participants were Asian youths, while in the other they were Korean women living in a medium sized city in California. In the first study, Yoon et al. (2010) found that Korean women felt long-

term isolation from experiencing racism. Trust became an issue due to these experiences (Yoon et al., 2010, p. 547). On the other side of these experiences, Yoon found that self-identified Asian youths from immigrant families in a Midwestern metropolitan city were more tolerant of racism and were more able to adapt to the circumstances (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 75). These findings hold that racism does play a role in acculturation, but to what extent is dependent on the population. As racism is a common theme in acculturation studies, this differing information may prove useful for my research.

Racism and discrimination were apparent issues in a study by Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher and Haslam (2016). Ramos et al. researched how discrimination, a common issue in acculturation studies, affects acculturation within the individual. Their study occurred in the United Kingdom with international students located there. They concluded that perceived discrimination affected how international students felt about leaving their own group of people and increased a person's willingness to stay away from host nationals (Ramos et al., 2016, p. 415). If the individual perceives discrimination, they would be uncomfortable forming relationships with individuals from the host culture, making it quite difficult to integrate. This study shows the importance of acknowledging long-term effects of discriminatory actions and how they can directly affect acculturation within individuals.

As in Ramos et al. (2016), one study by Magnet de Saissy (2009) discrimination can play a role in people's acculturation. Magnet de Saissy (2009) looked at Chinese immigrants in Northern Ireland with a focus on acculturation, self-efficacy, and social support. The social support questionnaire utilized in this study found that little connection in this particular context between social support and

acculturation but did acknowledge that local discriminations, particularly in employment, could play a role in the significance of integration within the local context of Northern Ireland (Magnet de Saissy, 2009, p. 298). Acculturation and social support can be affected by the location and local contexts.

The aspects of relationship building are a crucial part to acculturation. The studies in this section show that supporting people going through acculturation can reap benefits for those involved. As well, interactions that have staunch negative components, such as racism, can possibly result in negative effects for individuals. This is pertinent to my research because it demonstrates the power of positive relationships and the power of negative relationships. By implementing opportunities to create relationships, a desired outcome would be to minimize any or all of components of negative social relationships.

Social support. Social support refers to systems and people in place that allow others to become more comfortable when experiencing acculturation. This can include family, friends, clubs, activities, counselors, etc. The components for the studies in this section utilize aspects of support systems and the implications in having them.

Bertram, Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) researched multiple affects and facets regarding acculturation on Chinese international students in The United States of America. Their research included insights into social support. In their study, Chinese international students showed a large amount of reliance on their friends and family members for their social support. While normal and healthy, these social support groups utilized are very narrow in base. Potential social support members, such as college professors, were not highly utilized by Chinese international students

because they did not view these people as potential social support resources.

While Bertram, Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) looked into social support based on social role, Sullivan and Kushubeck-West (2015) looked into social support and levels of acculturative stress. Sullivan and Kushubeck-West (2015) found a connection between social support and lowered acculturative stress for international college students in the United States. This was especially so when social support came from host nationals. The research also showed that those international students that used the integration strategy or assimilation strategy had a higher level of host national support than those that chose the marginalization strategy or separation strategy (2015). This suggests that greater interaction with host nationals offer a better opportunity to utilize host nationals as a social support cast. Furthermore, each acculturation strategy was shown to have a specific “favorite” of sorts when connecting with social support choices. Participants that chose integration preferred host nationals, participants that chose assimilation preferred host nationals, participants that chose separation preferred home country social support, and those that chose marginalization preferred to have no social support systems in place (2015, p. 6). This study confirmed other acculturation studies by showing a connection between social support and acculturative stress.

As did Sullivan and Kushubeck-West show effects on acculturative stress in their study regarding social support, so too did Gomez, Urzua and Glass (2014). They analyzed aspects of leisure and acculturation amongst university level international students in America and showed that social support systems assist in the adaptation of students while experiencing acculturation. Students that participated in social events at their university positively affected their acculturation (2014, p. 21). This study

arrived at similar findings to the other studies showing that those who interact more have a stronger opportunity to engage and integrate. The study also provided evidence to suggest that participating in these social support opportunities had no negative effects on academic achievement (p. 21). This would counter such perceptions that come from many foreign-based students.

Social support can be shown in different formats and places in which it is received. A different study based in Germany found that both home and school environments could affect an adolescent's choice of acculturation strategy. If a school and/or home setting promoted the aspects of integration as a strategy then students experienced more positive experiences. However, students that had homes or schools with more discriminatory or exclusive minded settings experienced more aspects of separation and had lower sociocultural adjustment (Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, 2016, p. 27). Social support systems, both within the school and at home were found to be very important in the context of acculturation amongst early adolescent immigrants in Germany. Furthermore, forms of discrimination and exclusion, or at least the perceptions of, can greatly injure the efforts of others in the process of acculturation. To this degree, Smith and Khawaja provided details regarding a weekly culturally sensitive counseling session in which the participants found benefits such as gratitude regarding the opportunity to express their experiences and the opportunity to share their emotions in a safe setting (Smith and Khawaja, 2011, p. 709). This shared experience supports the notion that applying a form of counseling or even opportunities to express one's self for those experiencing acculturation can be beneficial.

Viewing acculturation from a teacher's point of view, that being how teachers

interpret the actions and behaviors of students experiencing acculturation is an area worthy of significant attention. Even the most educated and well-intentioned educator makes assumptions from time to time. These assumptions can unfortunately have negative effects on students and their ability to academically progress. When referring to immigrants of color at the university level, Fries-Britt, Mwangi, and Peralta (2014) encourage educators to avoid assuming these immigrants come underprepared for American universities (Fries-Britt, Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014, p. 469). Each person goes through acculturation differently, but nonetheless, each person has to adjust and get used to their new setting before they find success. Teachers should encourage new students to seek guidance. Fries-Britt et al. also suggest for students that have gone through what these new students are going through to take on leadership roles. This could be in the form of mentoring or something larger such as student government.

As these studies show, social support is a vital portion of the acculturation process. Having positive interactions and knowing there are others there to support people in their endeavors can make a positive impact. The aspects of a peer-mentoring program could likely provide a positive level of social support that is vitally needed for some during early acculturation times.

Academic performance. The aspect of acculturation affecting academic performance has the possibility of having both direct and indirect effects on individuals. Academic performance can be an obvious indicator of success or a need for help. The effects on academic performance can also greatly vary from culture to culture.

For instance, according to one study, Filipino Americans experienced a negative impact in their academics due to acculturation, while Chinese Americans did

not experience any negative or positive impacts from acculturation (Eng et al., 2008). This study found connections between ethnicity and acculturation. On the other hand, another study looked into reading achievement amongst seventh to ninth grade Latino students in America and found that reading performances were unaffected by acculturation (Garcia-Vazquez, 1995, p. 311). To this extent, acculturative effects on academics are dependent on ethnic backgrounds. What these two studies show is that there are other variables that have greater effect on academic performance, such as past academic confidence and success.

Similar to Eng et al. (2008) and Garcia-Vasquez (1995), a study conducted by Kim, Wang, Chen, Shen, and Hou (2014) looked at the academic trajectories of Asian Americans in relation to parental ethnic profiles. Specifically, students in the study were separated into a specific ethnic category (Chinese and American) based on their parental profile. The research showed that students with Chinese father profiles had a faster decrease in their grade point average than those with an American father profile (Kim et al., 2014). Likewise, those with Chinese parental profiles had lower English Language Arts performance than that of their American parental profile counterparts (Kim et al., 2014). This study shows more so how ethnicity and background can affect acculturation.

These studies have shown that acculturation can have an effect on academics, but that there are often other variables that can greatly affect aspects of the academic performances. It is for that reason that aspects of academic performance may not necessarily be a good component to research components of acculturation, but rather acculturation may be a good component to look into academic performance alongside other variables.

Language. A major component in acculturation is an individual's ability to grasp the host nation's language. Language ability directly affects many aspects of life and having a strong enough ability can affect how much a person can or cannot interact with their peers from the host nation. It is due to this that language becomes essential, that a person may be able to communicate and interact with others.

Within acculturation, comes a major aspect of the process, second language acquisition. Schumann (1974) looked into the aspects of second language acquisition and pidginization. Not only does language play an important role in communicating, but also acculturating and forming relationships within a targeted culture. Schumann points out that aspects of redundancy, alternate forms, and stylistic variations within language learning develops, are produced in language learners due to social identity and the desire to be identified. (Schumann, 1974, p.151). In this idea, Schumann emphasizes the connections between language, self-efficacy, and acculturation. In later studies of his that had a higher focus on acculturation, Schumann showed a cyclical concept that involved the limited growth of language (1990). Schumann said, "insufficient interaction with and input from target language speakers caused by low acculturation would result in a knowledge base that might contain representations of linguistic structure that are not correct by target language standard" (1990, p. 670). In essence, the less acculturation that occurs, the less language proficiency occurs. Interestingly enough, other studies have shown that language, being a key component of acculturative stress, can create moments of less opportunity to acculturate.

Just as Shumann (1974) focused on interaction amongst cultures with language, so too did Yeh, Okubo, Ma, Shea, Ou, and Pituc (2008). Yeh et al. (2008) focused specifically on Chinese immigrant high school students and how they

interacted and adapted with other groups. One of the largest factors of interaction amongst Chinese immigrant high school students and other ethnic groups came down to English proficiency. The implications of the findings showed that it was important to increase the English proficiency of international students to help in acculturating to the new cultural setting (Yeh, et al., 2008, p.789). Part of their research showed synonymous aspects of acculturation when compared to Schumann's focus in that students with lower levels of English had higher levels of intercultural competency (Yeh et al., 2008, p. 784). These studies are good examples of how important language acquisition is when experiencing acculturation.

In the reverse of Yeh et al. (2008), Spenader (2011) researched how acculturation affected language. A study conducted on four Americans in a study abroad program in Sweden looked at how those are affected by the target language. According to the study, acculturation can affect language learning, especially through the relationships formed between the American students and locals (Spenader, 2011, p. 392). Specifically to assimilation, the higher one was assimilated in the culture, the greater their oral proficiency was (2001, p. 292-293). Likewise, those that experience separation were of greater likeliness to have lower oral proficiencies. Both the aspect of relationships and acculturation strategy are important with the concepts presented by Spenader (2011).

Language plays into many factors in life, especially so when acculturation is involved. The level of fluency of the native language can be vital for people to be able to integrate. Bertram Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) found that, language hardships could affect acculturative stress. Due to a language barrier, Chinese international students in The United States of America found difficulties in their day-

to-day life. In a similar study by Kashima and Loh (2006), in Australia, Asian international students' English ability and time spent in the host country of Australia was a positive adjustment for sojourners. This provides more evidence that English experience and time spent in an acculturation setting help with acculturation and acculturative stress.

As the studies in this section show, language acquisition is an integral part of acculturating. Language can affect acculturation and acculturation can affect language. Language difficulties can raise acculturative stress, which can in part lead to other issues that directly affect the acculturation experience of individuals.

Attitude. A person's attitude towards a situation or experience can also affect how well one experiences it. Acculturation is no different. This can be especially so for an individual's self-efficacy. Attitude within the process of adjusting can take different forms and can be observed in different actions. A study conducted by Lee and Koro-Ljungberg (2007) regarding Korean middle school students in America found specific elements existing in their acculturation experiences. These identified elements were power struggles and bullying, misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding other minority groups, the desire to belong, and self-identity within the concept of academics and language acquisition. With all of these contexts and experience in focus, Lee and Koro-Ljungberg express a need for multicultural integration. They go on to express that, "the lack of understanding about diverse communication modes, values, and perceptions among culturally different families and between students and teachers leads to cultural misunderstandings and conflicts" (Lee & Koro-Ljungberg, 2007, p. 111). One suggestion Lee and Koro-Ljungberg make is to examine how to utilize teachers in the acculturation process, specifically,

finding ways to model and interact in a positive way.

In a result that lead to opposite indication than Lee and Koro-Ljungberg (2007), Du, Li, Lin, and Tam (2014) the results of their research on acculturative stress issues found that, cultural self-efficacy and collectivistic orientation and depression were mediators amongst each other. This study found that cultural self-efficacy could be a negative aspect in adapting to a new host culture for Chinese internal migrants (2014, p. 245). This is an interesting finding as it conflicts directly with similar studies that have focused on Western civilizations. Opposite of those findings, In's (2016) study on Korean international students focused on acculturation and hope. The studies found that acculturation and hope played significant roles in career decisions (2016, p. 536). This furthers the concept of self-efficacy's ability to shape individuals in their efforts.

Similar to In's (2016) work on hope, Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson found correlations between self-esteem and acculturative strategies of American youth in culturally diverse settings. This finding led them to the connection of social cognitive theory. This came from the aspect of assimilation, "that giving up one's ethnic culture can have a negative impact on the self-concept" (1992, p. 309). Furthering this idea of this study, David, Okazaki, and Saw's study on bicultural self-efficacy found that bicultural self-efficacy and mental health were related (2009, p. 222). With this being the case, observing and identifying a person's acculturative strategy and one's own perception of self-efficacy can be a strong predicting point for how successful an individual will be during acculturation.

Mental health. Mental Health is a wide range of issues involving concepts that affect the mind and attitudes of people. Acculturation can affect people as they go

through the process. Knowing important qualities of mental health and acculturation is essential in managing and assisting those having negative experiences within acculturation.

Stress. Acculturative stress has been defined by Berry as, “an individual’s initial psychological response to the conflict that often accompanies acculturation may result in diminished mental health status, which later improves with acculturation” (as cited in Salant & Lauderdale, 2003). This specific definition not only allows for a more focused investigation to the initial instances of acculturation but also a way to interpret the long-term shape of an individual’s acculturative experience.

A more in-depth look into acculturation adjustment took Berry’s framework and viewed acculturation through both cultures and through three domains that covered a wide range of acculturation features (Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999). This study found that people of Vietnamese culture had increased stress levels as they went through acculturation (1999, p.24). Evidence suggests aspects of stress could negatively impact a person’s acculturation experience. This specific view should be directed toward acculturation adjustment issues specific to people of Vietnamese descent in America.

Similar to Nguyen, Messe, and Stollak (1999), specific ethnic groups can experience acculturative stress in different ways and to different degrees. One study performed by Salant and Lauderdale (2003) expresses a concern that many acculturative scales overly rely on data and scales being used on the Hispanic community. The authors use evidence from other studies to show the unidimensional aspects of Asian culture, and suggest that future research continue to look into Asian

cultures with this specific concept in mind (Salant & Lauderdale, 2003).

In many instances, acculturation has shown to cause both stress and depression among those migrating to foreign countries. Levels and occurrences of these issues vary from culture to culture. Though exterior issues such as parental and academic pressures do add to depression and stress, the aspect of acculturating to Western culture can be an active cause in the stress and depression experienced by immigrants (Panelo, 2010, p. 153). Panelo's (2010) study on Asian Americans also points out that this is due to the conflict of the two experienced cultures and that psychological support can be beneficial within the process.

Similar to psychological support being beneficial to the acculturation process that Panelo (2010) mentioned, Gomez, Urzua, and Glass (2014), through their study, found that recreational and leisure activities can aid in alleviating acculturative stress. The study even goes as far as to identify specific activities that they believe would relieve acculturative stress. These activities include yoga, walking, dancing, and intramural sports (2014). Obviously, each individual will deal with it in his or her own ways and different activities will have different results for different people.

Gomez, Urzua, and Glass (2014) researched and found ways to help alleviate acculturative stress, but Bertram, Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) found areas that caused acculturative stress. Bertram, Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) found that language barriers were a major cause of acculturative stress. Their study showed that the participants, Chinese international students in America, were particularly keen on the experience of language difficulties causing acculturative stress. This also included aspects of American culture that they did not expect to experience (2014, p. 118). This coincides with other research showing language being a key point of

acculturative stress issues.

The aspects of stress within acculturation are multifaceted, including aspects of these studies. Some studies have looked into what causes acculturative, while others look into possible ways to alleviate or help acculturative stress. In applying a possible peer-mentoring program, there could be opportunities to alleviate stresses, such as expedited language learning and opening opportunities to be involved in activities.

Depression. Since depression and the symptoms of depression can be associated in some cases to acculturative stress, it makes sense to have depression accompany mental health issues that accompany. Depression symptoms caused by acculturative stress is a common aspect of the acculturative process.

Du, Li, Lin, and Tam (2014) looked into the collectivistic orientation of Chinese internal migrants. They hypothesized that internal migrants in China that showed higher levels of a collectivistic orientation would show lower levels of acculturative stress (Du, Li, Lin, & Tam, 2014, p. 240). If this were the case, then depression symptoms should follow suit. For this study, measurements were taken at the six-month mark and the twelve-month mark. Results of the study found several areas of merit. First, collectivistic orientations were associated with a decrease in depression for Chinese internal migrants (2014). The study also found that the higher levels of acculturative stress experienced by Chinese internal migrants coincided with higher levels of depression symptoms (2014). Thus, the more stressed associated with acculturation, the more likely depression symptoms will coincide with the individual.

A study involving the same concept that Du, Li, Lin, and Tam (2014) was conducted by Roley, Kawakami, Baker, Hurtado, Chin, Hovey (2014) they researched

the relationship of acculturative stress and depression on Japanese Adolescent residents in the Midwest of the United States of America. As with other research, Roley et al. focus on the unique nature of specific ethnic groups; in this case it is Japanese adolescents. The findings found that Japanese adolescents in this study experienced less acculturative stress than other prior examined ethnic groups, but still had negative experiences that were directly related to acculturative stress such as depression, and conflict with family (Roley et al., 2014, p. 1301). This would be supportive of Berry's model of acculturation and coincide with the findings of Du, Li, Lin, and Tam (2014) but with a different ethnic group.

One study took the components of Roley et al. (2014) and Du, Li, Lin, and Tam's (2014) study concept to a larger level. They looked at 18 acculturative studies that focused on East Asians. Out of this study, several significant findings were noted. First, 72.2% of the studies used Chinese international students for their population to represent East Asian students (Li, 2014). Second, depression was the most common variable reported by these studies (Li, 2014). This study continues the idea that acculturation can lead to symptoms of depression.

In a similar way to depression, low self-esteem follows similar lines and issues. Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson (1992) found correlations between certain acculturation strategies and self-esteem amongst the participants of their study. Those that chose integration as an acculturative strategy were found to have higher self-esteem. On the other side, those that chose assimilation as an acculturative strategy were found to have lower self-esteem. Phinney found that integration and assimilation both had relationships with self-esteem. This showed a greater connection for an individual to both their own culture and the host culture. Phinney also found

assimilation to be connected to lower self-esteem, specifically among Asian subjects and subjects that were born outside of the United States.

(1992, p. 309). This is also significant to the aspect of self-efficacy, in that one can give up more than they bargained for when going through acculturation.

As can be seen, there are many factors that can affect a person's acculturation. Much of the factors affecting acculturation at the early points can be affected by both what an individual does and what people that interact with acculturating individuals do. These aspects can be both positive and negative. Concepts of mental health are particularly concerning as the negative components of mental health from acculturation can be detrimental to individuals.

Programs that Have Been Shown to Support Acculturation

Peer mentoring has been an approach to intervening in acculturation settings for years. This type of innovations has shown to be successful in different settings, levels, and affect multiple components to acculturation. These studies look into the multiple components of how peer mentoring affects acculturation.

In recent studies, there have been a multitude of examples of successful intervention programs that have been able to support acculturation efforts. The utilization of a mentoring program has shown to be one such approach that has benefits. According to a study by Yeh, Ching, Okubo, and Luthar (2007), peer attachment-trust and a desire to be close to people was much higher amongst people that partook in a mentoring program (Yeh et. al, 2007, p. 733). With this type of intervention, researchers found a means to increase trust amongst the immigrant students and their peers. This is significant as this shows a form of social support that delivers a positive outcome within the acculturation process. By utilizing components

of the mentoring program, aspects of trust as one becomes more familiar with their current setting can be crucial in moving forward and appropriately acculturating to a new location.

Similarly, Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed's study utilizing a peer program for incoming international students from Asian countries resulted in high social adjustment scores when comparing the results to nonparticipants (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998). Beyond the social implications, one study found positive psychological adaptations as a result of participating in a mentoring program. Some of the key components of this peer-mentoring program were communication between the mentor and the mentee, attend monthly activities, and have peer-mentors expand on how they want to interact with their mentee beyond the set minimum (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998, p. 541). These too, are components adapted into the peer program being implemented in my setting.

Thomson and Esses (2016) found that the psychological well being of new comers, international students in Canada, to their new environment was greater than those that did not participate in the mentoring program (Thomson & Esses, 2016, p. 881). Thomson and Esses (2016) believed their program was successful due to the semi-structured nature of the program. They did not supply their mentors or mentees with rigorous checklists or to do lists. Instead, they structured weekly meetings and scheduled engaging activities that could be fun or entertaining (Thomson & Esses, 2016, p. 883). This created a comfortable situation for both mentor and mentee, which could be perceived as inviting by avoiding mandatory aspects that could be seen as obligations.

Overall, this type of program has shown to be able to produce an outcome that

supports several needs of new immigrant students within the time frame of early acculturation. There is generally strong evidence that supports the concepts of peer mentoring, and the studies included elements that were utilized. Each of the studies reviewed shared similar aspects and reported successful components of their intervention. Those components are a part of my innovation and intervention, as they have shown to merit application due to their successes.

Summary

Within this review, contexts of acculturation, factors affecting acculturation, approaches to measuring, acculturation, and programs that have shown to support acculturation were the four key areas delved into. Acculturation is a topic that has been studied for quite some time now and in multiple different facets for many different reasons. However, not much has been researched regarding acculturation and integration with a focus on early-accultured academic achievement. As seen, many of the studies regarding acculturation have an emphasis on health and health related topics. Even more limited is the research specific to international boarding schools and international schools in Taiwan. To gain a general understanding more specific to my problem of practice in the context of acculturation and integration, one must research aspects of acculturation and integration within different communities and cultures. Much of the literature within this concept is also from settings within The United States of America and includes research on not just the students, but their parents as well. Being a boarding school located outside of The United States, Ivy Collegiate Academy's parental influence on the students' day-to-day, demeanor, and linguistics is very limited or nonexistent in some cases. However, psychological and sociological aspects of acculturation could be applicable within the local context due

to the nature of the theories in place.

The ability to measure acculturation was of importance due to how wide and differing acculturative experiences have shown to be. The studies in these areas found that linguistics and academic success were common measurements and that culture specific tools work best when researching acculturation.

The contexts of acculturation were focused on the intended subject matter. This review of the literature showed that aspects of both individual identity and life experiences play an integral part in how acculturation can affect someone. A couple of studies found that there is generally a desire from many people experiencing acculturation to associate with the host culture, even if prior experiences and feelings were generally negative. While at the same time, other studies showed positive experiences from maintaining one's own culture when going through acculturation.

The factors affecting acculturation were reviewed in order to better grasp the magnitude of the aspects of acculturation that both assist and hurt one's experience. A key component that came out of this part was the review was how impactful the people from the host culture can be. Positive experiences with host culture individuals can make acculturating an easier and more positive experience or they can drastically harm the process, and in doing so the individual experiencing acculturation as well. The opportunity to provide individuals with both social and academic support becomes a crucial concept. This idea is also important on how language impacts the experience. Language also showed that one's ability to use the host language affected relationships during acculturation. Mental health is a major focus when looking at factors affecting acculturation. Both stress and depression are experiences that are common with acculturation, but the extent differs for a variety of reasons. Finally,

attitude and self-efficacy were important concepts in individual and group acculturation experiences, however, different ethnic groups experience acculturation differently, which showed different results in different studies.

The programs that have shown to support acculturation were the driving factor in implementing the intervention. The literature showed successful interventions in different scenarios utilizing peer-mentoring programs as a successful means to assist immigrants in academic settings experiencing acculturation. These programs showed to have a powerful impact on improving the social aspects of acculturation. Psychological aspects were positively impacted too within the studies.

Acculturation occurs to anyone experiencing long-term exposure to a culture that is different to his or her own. People experience acculturation differently for a wide variety of reasons. Many of the concerns coming from acculturative issues include stress and other mental health issues that can directly affect the successes and comfort of people. Certain factors, such as language, play a larger role in acculturative experiences. Self-efficacy can be a driving determinate in one's own ability to acculturate, choosing a strategy to acculturate, and develop in areas such as language. Likewise, a person's acculturative strategy or language ability may determine one's own self-efficacy. Overall, the concepts of acculturation strategies and self-efficacy can play roles in determining the outcomes and successes of individuals in situations of different cultures.

Finally, one aspect of this literature review you will notice is that several studies were used to discuss the different aspects of acculturation outside of The United States of America. Acculturation occurs all over the world and in many different settings such as schools, universities, homes, foreign cities etc. One of the

most under-studied settings of acculturation is within the context of foreign cultural influence on a local culture and/or a third-party culture, for instance, the current setting of my school in which two dominant cultures coexist while other foreign cultures attempt to acculturate to the setting. This is possible due to both the local Taiwanese and the foreign American cultures being dominant, within the confines of the school, but in different realms (the academic and social components). A common setting for this scenario tends to be educational sites such as international schools, religious schools, and universities. A phrase to best describe this scenario would be foreign-based intercultural interaction.

Overall, the studies within this literature covered very specific criteria in what I used to design my own study. Acculturation is an issue that directly affects a population of students within my own school and creates aspects of stress, mental health issues, and can have dramatic affects on each of these students' academic performances and overall wellbeing. In addressing this issue within my own context, the use of a peer-mentoring program was put in place. The literature regarding peer mentoring in support of acculturative issues has shown to be effective in other scenarios with comparable populations. This study wanted to use these understandings to discover the significance of peer-mentoring used to address acculturation issues within my own context.

Regarding the literature, this study will add to the specifics of acculturation studies in Asia, specifically Taiwan. This study, though not initially meant to be, seeks understanding of the Korean adolescent experience in a Western education setting in East Asia. This study can help future studies look into the ever-growing acculturative experiences of people in Asia.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

In the last chapter, I reviewed scholarly details regarding acculturation and the many facets of acculturation, including aspects of general acculturation, international student experiences, and specific cultural differences regarding acculturation. This chapter contains the methods, research design, and tools used for this acculturation study within the framework of action research.

Setting

This study was conducted at Ivy Collegiate Academy in Taichung, Taiwan. ICA is located just on the outskirts of Taichung, Taiwan where mountain and farm meet city and skyscraper. ICA serves students from grades seven through twelve. There are currently 202 students enrolled at ICA. Of those 202, 60% are boarding students and 40% are day students. Roughly two thirds of the school population is male, while a third is female. The school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and is required to meet the standards set forth by this accrediting office. The curriculum is an American curriculum and is modeled after traditional American standards. The school is a college preparatory school that builds its curriculum and accepts students on the knowledge that they will be attending a university in The United States of America, Canada, England, or Australia. Some students do attend schools in Germany, Spain, Switzerland, or Japan; however, the vast majority of graduates end up in the United States. All classes, except for the mandated Chinese language classes and Chinese Mathematics classes, are taught in the English language.

As mentioned, ICA is also a boarding school. The boarding component of the school creates a school environment that is quite different from a day school experience. Students that board not only learn on campus, but eat, sleep, and socialize at the same place. Boarding students are held to a daily schedule that is quite predictable and do not have to worry about commuting to school. Boarding students also take care of themselves by maintaining clean quarters, doing their own laundry, and sharing nightly chores to ensure the dorm floor is clean. These students live and board with students of many different backgrounds and nationalities. Currently, 90% of our Non-Taiwanese students live on campus.

Ivy Collegiate Academy actively seeks and recruits students in foreign countries to attend the school. Television commercials, magazine ads, and radio commercials run year-round in South Korea and Japan. Representatives are sent to Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam multiple times a year for recruiting purposes. Also, ICA has established recruiters in Japan and South Korea that actively find potential students for ICA.

Participants

The participants in the study included new students undergoing acculturation and peer mentors. Acculturating students were chosen by meeting the criteria of 1) being a new student to ICA that has never experienced a Western education and 2) having never lived in Taiwan before. This could have resulted in students from several different countries participating, but ended up being participants from South Korea. This was a purposeful sample due to the participants being chosen because they meet the specific criteria. The rationale for choosing these participants was because these are the subgroup of students that have shown acculturative difficulties

and were more likely to not succeed in becoming a long-term member of the school, thus, affecting the retention rates of students from this subgroup. Based on these criteria, up to 20 acculturating students could have been possible participants.

There were four participants for this study: Jora, Keanu, Lilly, and Monica. Jora, at the time of this study, was a middle school boy from Korea. He liked K-Pop, art, and telling jokes. His hairstyle was always unique and preferred winter clothing no matter how hot the temperature is. Keanu was a high school boy at the time of the study and was also from Korea. He loved fantasy books and making friends. He was tall, confident, and obsesses over germs. Lilly was a middle school girl from Korea at the time of the study. She cared a lot of how she looks, is confident, and likes to wear dark clothes. She was a diligent student and enjoyed gossiping with others when she socializes. Monica was also a middle school girl from Korea at the time of the study. She tends to be a bit of a loner but cherishes the friends she has. She does not worry about what others think of her and generally makes her own path in life. She enjoys video games and watching videos online in her free time. All of the participants for this study started attending school at the beginning of the study in the Spring of 2019.

Peer Mentors

The peer mentors were chosen by meeting the criteria of being a participating liaison within a new club for assisting new students called the Welcoming Committee, a peer mentoring group created to help new foreign students. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, a recommendation sheet was sent out to all teachers asking for recommendations of students to be selected for the Welcoming Committee. The criteria asked for by the letter was any student they believe represents the values of the school and is a responsible student that would work well in aiding new students

adjust to ICA. Of the 47 teachers emailed, 32 of them responded. From the list of 22 students compiled, myself and two other teachers involved in the Welcoming Committee narrowed it down to twelve students. These twelve students were invited to a meeting on the last day of school and asked to volunteer for the upcoming school year. All twelve of the invited students accepted their invitations and joined the Welcoming Committee. Students within this grouping are of different ages, nationalities, genders, and lengths of tenure at ICA. This too is a purposeful sample due to the participants being chosen because they meet the specific criteria. The rationale for choosing these participants was because they were willing to participate in the collection of data and represented different age, genders, nationalities, and length of tenure at ICA, thus making a diverse group of twelve liaisons.

Innovation

The goal of this innovation was to improve the early experiences of new foreign students to Ivy Collegiate Academy in order to help them acculturate within the dual cultures that are well established at the school. Past cycles showed that students at ICA struggle greatly within the social structures of the school and their abilities to adjust to both the school and social nature of ICA dramatically affect a student's acculturation experience in initial weeks and months.

In order to establish a better entry situation for foreign students to Ivy Collegiate Academy (ICA), a twelve-week innovation was established. This innovation consisted of establishing a protocol for school staff to apply when a new student from a foreign country arrives at Ivy Collegiate Academy, creating and implementing a student-led Welcoming Committee, establishing guidelines and expectations for participating Welcoming Committee members, assigning peer

mentors to new students, and providing opportunities for socializing and meeting people. Training at the beginning of the school year was provided for participating members of the Welcome Committee. The training consisted of two daylong sessions prior to the beginning of the school year. In the mornings, the students would do interaction activities that built on the concept of teamwork and comradery. Specific training sessions were held throughout the rest of the mornings and into the afternoons. The sessions for the trainings were called Meeting the New Students, New Student Arrival Protocol and the First Responder, Roles of the Liaison, Encouragement, Formal and Informal Mentoring, and How and When to Help. Forms and supporting documents of the training sessions can be found in Appendices 1, 2, and 3. To help legitimize the committee and their mission, Welcome Committee members were provided with an official school uniform that is unique and helped identify the student as a member of the committee.

Students and participating teachers were brought into school one week prior to opening day of the new school year to participate in a training program that focused on their role within the committee and their expectations. This included having the students become familiar with the committee's mission statement, knowing the objectives of the committee, and preparing to work towards and meet the established goals of the committee. As part of the Welcoming Committee, students adopted the title of school liaisons. Each liaison was also given their new uniform to begin the school year. Liaisons were assigned to new students based on age and gender. If a liaison could not be matched utilizing age and gender then age took precedent over gender. There was not a scenario in which at least a same-age or same-gender peer could not be paired with a new student. Liaisons served, depending on time of year,

anywhere between one and four mentees.

Student liaisons were be called to duty in two specific scenarios throughout the school year. The first is when a new student is arriving. Upon arrival, one or two liaisons were assigned to meet, greet, and assist the new student as they move in and become acclimated. They check on them and have discussions with them. Each of the liaisons, during their training learn how to have conversations with new students and were given a list of leading questions to help conversation flow. Some of the questions are as simple as asking how their day was but can be more personal by asking if they are managing stress or if anything is specifically bothering them. The liaisons are instructed to have at least one conversation with their assigned students for at least 15 minutes each but more was welcome. In the beginning, the new student saw more frequent liaison support and discussions than later on as each student acculturates at a different pace. The other time liaisons are on duty is during social events. When the school has a dance or an outing, liaisons engaged and ensure the new student is comfortable and has been given the opportunity to interact with others.

To understand the effects of the innovation, I ask the following research questions:

RQ 1: How does new international students' cultural self-efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program?

RQ 2: How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?

RQ 3: Which acculturation strategies did students show in their interviews about their arrival and initial months at ICA?

Research question one is a quantitative research question while research questions two and three are qualitative research questions.

Methods

The research design for this study was a mixed method design. The mixed methods design used for this study was a convergent mixed method design. This design utilizes quantitative and qualitative data collection in which both types of data are equally emphasized. The results of the qualitative and quantitative data are kept independent of each other until interpretation of the results occurs at which it is mixed (Creswell, 2015, p. 543). Two total sets of quantitative data were collected throughout the entire study, one set from one survey instrument at the beginning of the study and one set from the same survey instrument at the conclusion of the study. These quantitative data pieces were accompanied by qualitative sources of data that were collected throughout the entire intervention, which were interviews.

Sampling Strategies

In this study, I used purposive sampling, thus choosing participants that meet the criteria and characteristics that I believed were essential to the study. For this study, the key criteria and characteristics I focused on were new students, specifically from South Korea and Japan, that had never studied in a Western education school before or had studied or lived in Taiwan before and were new to Ivy Collegiate Academy. This study ultimately had four participants participate, all four being from South Korea. This sample represented a growing population at ICA that has had limited interventions in the past to support their acculturative needs.

Data Collection

In answering question one - *How do new international students' cultural self-*

efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program? – A survey known as the Cultural Self-Efficacy Scale for Adolescents (CSES-A) was used as a pre and post survey. The CSES-A can be found in Appendix E. This scale was created by Elena Brionas, Carmen Taberero, Carlo Tramontano, Gian Vittorio Caprara, and Alicia Arenas. The purpose of the scale is to measure cultural self-efficacy in adolescents. At the beginning of the twelve weeks, the participating students took the CSES-A survey. The use of the survey a second time after the innovation was utilized to measure any changes within the individual’s acculturative experiences and their own self-efficacy. The CSES-A utilizes a five-point Likert Scale. The surveys generally should take around 30 minutes in all to complete.

In order to answer question two - *How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?* - I utilized student interviews. A semi-structured interview was utilized with four participating students. Individual interviews were held with the focus on experiences each person had regarding the Welcoming Committee. The interview questions can be found in Appendix D. Each interview lasted more than an hour and occurred at the end of the intervention.

In answering question three - *Which acculturation strategies did students show in their interviews about their arrival and initial months at ICA?* – I utilized the same student interviews as I used for RQ2 but used acculturation strategies as codes.

Data Analysis

CSES-A

A paired sample t-test was utilized to determine the mean difference between the acculturation efficacy at the beginning and at the end of the innovation. Analysis

of the CSES-A scale was applied to evaluate the reliability, validity, trustworthiness, and credibility of the scales within the study. A Cronbach's alpha test was used with each of the sub constructs of the CSES-A instrument to check on the internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were also implemented for this instrument, which showed the mean and standard deviation of each question to be analyzed.

Furthermore, A correlation matrix was created in order to find out if there were any correlations between the different items in the instrument. A total variance table was produced as well. SPSS 24 was used in doing the analysis of the results. Analysis of the outcomes from the initial CSES-A survey was compared to the analysis of the end of intervention outcomes to learn whether or not acculturative attitudes changed and to what degree they changed. These numbers serve in supporting qualitative data collected from the interviews in seeing if there was positive change in cultural self-efficacy.

Post Interview for Mentees.

During the 12th and final week of the intervention, each mentee participant was interviewed individually utilizing a semi-structured interview. Questions surrounded their initial perceptions, feelings, and experiences resulting from participating as a recipient of assistance from the Welcoming Committee. Each interview lasted a little more than an hour. The semi-structured interview questions provided qualitative data specifically reflecting the individual attitudes and reflections of the participant's experiences from their time as mentees in the peer-mentoring program known as The Welcoming Committee. These questions helped in addressing research questions one, two, and three. The use of grounded theory was implemented in order to code the transcribed interviews from each participant. The first round of

coding for the interview utilized Process Coding and the second round of coding utilized Focused Coding. The coding process focused on the participants' initial individual experiences and then the groups experiences expressed thematically. Student interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The transcripts were coded utilizing Process Coding for the first cycle and Focused Coding to find the focal points of the conversations in the second cycle. The first cycle of coding used descriptive coding for each of the participants. Once frequent words began to form and the first cycle of coding was completed, the second cycle began by using focused coding. Themes formed and were able to tell a story of the participants' experience.

Mixed Methods

For this study, I utilized a mixed methods approach for the data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used in providing data to better understand perceptions and experiences of new students receiving peer mentoring with a focus on cultural self-efficacy. The Quantitative data was collected via the CSES-A survey. This survey was used as a pre and post survey to measure the cultural self-efficacy change amongst students in a peer-mentoring program. The qualitative data was collected at the end of the intervention via a semi-structured interview. The interview questions aided in answering how students new to American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process. As a mixed methods research, the triangulation design was used to bring the qualitative and quantitative data together to compare, validate, and/or interrelate the results that guided the interpretation of the data collected. For this study specifically, codes from the interview and quantitative data from pre and post surveys were used to interpret individual perceptions while

undergoing acculturation and experiences when partaking in a peer-mentoring program. The quantitative data showed what, if any, changes of each participant's cultural self-efficacy occurred while the interview gave a deeper and more specific understanding of each participant's experiences. When looking at these together, seeing how cultural self-efficacy changes along with seeing the perceptions and experiences of the participants, allowed us to understand what new foreign students at ICA experience and what role the peer-mentoring program may play in their experiences and cultural self-efficacy changes.

Validity

In establishing validity for the qualitative data received from the interviews, I used the components of member checking, the concept of prolonged engagement in the field, and audit trails. In order to utilize member checking, the findings from the research were presented to the participants in hopes that they were able to analyze it and confer or counter any of the findings. Comments from the participants from this step were presented later upon completion. The utilization of prolonged engagement in the field, due to the interactions of action research lend to a very viable source of validity. I am and continue to be an active administrator that serves and works within and around the lives of the Liaisons. This step allowed me to gain rapport with the active members within all parts of the Liaisons, from teacher sponsor to students involved and so forth. Finally, audit trails were applied in a couple of different ways. First, the utilization of my dissertation committee members throughout the study was applied. Suggestions and remarks in bettering the study were utilized in all steps of the research. Similarly, local peers familiar with the research were able to see the collected transcribed interviews, the dissertation itself, and any data that helped trace

the study's progress.

Limitations

As with all studies there are limitations that are involved. One of the key limitations for this study is sample size. Ivy Collegiate Academy, by many definitions, is considered a small school. With small numbers, this includes a predictably small amount of incoming students, and an even smaller amount that meet the criteria to be a part of this study. Qualitatively, the use of four students may be agreeable to the research, but the application of this same pool size offers not as much to the survey and its' data.

Another limitation to this study is time itself. As students in an acculturative setting continue on with their lives and their studies, so do their acculturative adaptations. As this study is focused on the early parts of acculturation, it is fine within that context, but the long term components of acculturation and the impact on the participants would be an area of interest nonetheless.

Researcher cultural bias is a limitation for this study as well. I come from a Western upbringing and had been raised in a Western nation. Upon moving to Taiwan myself, I experienced acculturation from the lens of a Westerner in an Eastern society. The participants from this study, though coming from a different culture, are going from an Eastern culture and acculturating into an Eastern culture. My experience, for many reasons, would vary from their experiences and could influence my perspective of the events and experiences shared during the study's timeframe.

Fluency of language is a limitation that could impact this study. Though many steps are taken to minimize this, such as translations, I am limited in my ability to interpret constructs and concepts that might arise during data collection. The mutual

language of English may be used in the cases it is able to be and the utilization of a translator when needed, limitations are to arise due to language abilities.

Timeline

The data collection of the innovation in addressing the research questions took place over 12 weeks. The innovation was established and conducted by myself along with teachers willing to sponsor and work with the committee. The innovation also utilized the components and people mentioned. Table 2 shows the timeline of the actions and procedures during the twelve-week implementation of the innovation. The reason the timeline for this study started in May and included training in August is due to the insistence of the school’s headmaster that a new program be started at the beginning of the school year, and not in the middle. Data collection took place from February to April for new international students coming in in February.

Table 2
Timeline of the Study

Sequence	Action	Procedure
May 25	Recruitment of all student liaison participants completed	Consent forms and letters distributed, Consent forms returned
August 29-31	Liaison Training	Go over expectations, roles, guidelines
February 11-14	Recruitment of new student participants completed Initial student surveys distributed and returned	Consent forms and letters distributed, Consent forms returned Distribute and analyze
February 15	Initial student surveys returned	Distribute, receive, and analyze
March 25- April 12	Student Interviews	Hold interviews, record, transcribe, code
April 12	Final student surveys distributed and returned Obs	Distribute and analyze

Researcher's Role

My current role within ICA is the Dean of Students. My responsibility within the school is overseeing the students' wellbeing. This includes discipline, travel, residential hall operations, communicating with other administrators, organizing events, overseeing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), consulting teachers, preparing opening day, making reports, assisting the director of admissions, and hiring teachers. Without doubt my current role has a large umbrella, however it has been my intention to not allow my role influence or put pressure on any student to participate within my study. All students were ensured, on multiple occasions both verbally and in writing, that their data was confidential and stayed confidential. It is my priority as both an administrator and researcher to ensure my students feel comfortable and secure in being honest when participating in the study regardless of what is said or recorded. In order to facilitate a comfortable and secure establishment of participation, I read the recruitment consent form with the potential participants so that they understand my intentions. My role, as the researcher, was to assist the events put on by the Welcoming Committee, collect and transcribe the interviews, code the interviews, provide the survey to the students, and analyze the results of the survey at both the beginning and the end of the innovation. Possible candidates to be participants were not required to participate. All participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point should they wish to do so.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to examine the acculturative hindrances new students from foreign countries face and to examine how the application of the innovation of implementing a welcoming committee to assist and interact with them. For this study, three research questions were utilized to guide it.

RQ 1: How does new international students' cultural self-efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program?

RQ 2: How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?

RQ 3: Which acculturation strategies did students show in their interviews about their arrival and initial months at ICA?

The intervention consisted of establishing a protocol for school staff to apply when a new student from a foreign country arrives at Ivy Collegiate Academy, creating and implementing a student-led Welcoming Committee, establishing guidelines and expectations for participating Welcoming Committee members, assigning peer mentors to new students, and providing opportunities for socializing and meeting people. This chapter presents the results of the innovation based by the data type, which also coincides with the research questions themselves. Research question one was examined utilizing qualitative data and research questions two and three were examined utilizing quantitative data.

RQ 1: How does new international students' cultural self-efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program?

Survey data was used in answering RQ 1: How do new international students' cultural self-efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program? The survey was implemented twice, once before the innovation began, and again immediately after the innovation concluded. The data collected from the surveys was then used to compare pre and post scores. The data was also used to test for significant differences and changes between from before and after the timeframe of the implementation of the innovation.

Cronbach's alpha. To measure the internal consistency of each construct and the entire CSES-A survey, Cronbach's Alpha was used. Cronbach's Alpha is used in measuring reliability when items are not scored simply as right and wrong (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005, p. 163). Reliability specifically refers to how consistent the scores are as they are administered (2005, 153). Both the pre-test and post-test Cronbach's Alpha scores can be seen in Table 3. The reliabilities of each construct ranges widely and lower scores, as well as negative values, can likely be accredited to a small sample size for this investigation (Nichols, 1999). In this case, there were only four participants. It is possible that the sample mean and the population mean when looking at the number of items, is not equal (Taylor, 2013). This is likely the case for these calculations after checking multiple times for any potential coding errors on my part.

Table 3
Participants Reliabilities for pre and post CSES-A survey (n=4)

Variable	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Speaking to People of a Different Culture...	.597	.797
Living in a Different Culture...	-1.625	.615
Approaching a Different Culture...	.641	.542
Entire Survey	.657	.818

Descriptive statistics. Before and after the innovation, the CSES-A survey was used to measure each participant's perception of their own ability to conduct themselves within a culturally diverse situation. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were run for both the pre and post surveys.

Table 4

CSES-A Survey Comparison of Means and t-tests of the three constructs for a pre-test and post-test (n=4)

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean		t	df
	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Difference			
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
Speaking to People of a Different Culture...	2.6	.5416	4	3.45	.5508	4	-1.3274, -.3726	5.667*	3	
Living in a Different Culture...	2.795	.14434	4	3.77	.35037	4	-1.43063, -.52437	6.865*	3	
Approaching a Different Culture...	3.16	.41263	4	3.627	.26850	4	-.90470, -.03030	3.403*	3	

*p<.05

The survey has three constructs under which the questions fall: Speaking to People of a Different Culture (1), Living in a Different Culture (2), and Approaching a Different Culture (3). The means and standard deviations of each construct were calculated for both the pre-test and post-test. Significant gains in the means were made for each construct. Constructs one and two saw increases in their standard deviations, but did not increase beyond a normal distribution of more than one or less than negative one. Construct three saw a decrease in standard deviation but did not decrease beyond a normal distribution. Overall, all three of the constructs of the survey showed a higher score after the implementation of the innovation.

By utilizing a pre-test and post-test, a paired sample T-test was implemented in order to see if there was significant differences in the outcomes of the pre-test and the post-test. I calculated the means from each of the three constructs of the CSES-A survey for both the pre-test and post-tests. The results of the Paired Sample T-Test can be seen in Table 4. It includes the pre-test and post-test means, standard deviations, the difference, the standard error, and both the t and p values.

There was a significant difference in the scores for Speaking to People of a Different Culture's pre-test ($M=2.6$, $SD=.5416$) and Speaking to People of a Different Culture's post-test ($M=3.45$, $SD=.5508$) conditions; $t(3)=5.667$, $p=.011$. There was also a significant difference in the scores for Living in a Different Culture's pre-test ($M=2.795$, $SD=.14434$) and Living in a Different Culture's post-test ($M=3.77$, $SD=.35037$) conditions; $t(3)=6.865$, $p=.006$. As with the other two constructs, there was also a significant difference in the scores for Approaching a Different Culture's pre-test ($M=2.795$, $SD=.14434$) and Approaching a Different Culture's post-test ($M=3.77$, $SD=.35037$) conditions; $t(3)=6.865$, $p=.006$. These results suggest that new international students' cultural self-efficacy did change over the course of time while

participating in a peer-mentoring program across all three constructs. Specifically, these results suggest that cultural self-efficacy did increase from the beginning of the intervention to the conclusion of it.

Looking further into the descriptive statistics, each of the question's means and standard deviations were looked into as well. This can be seen in Table 5.

Question numbers are labeled with a number followed by a Q and a C and a number to show which construct the question is with.

Table 5

Participants' descriptive statistics and t tests per question for the pre and post CSES-A survey (n=4)

Outcome	Pre-Test			Post-Test			95% CI for Mean Difference		t	df
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
Q1C1	3.00	1.155	4	3.50	.577	4	-1.42, .42	-1.732	3	
Q2C1	2.75	.957	4	3.25	.500	4	-1.42, .42	-1.732	3	
Q3C1	2.50	.577	4	3.25	.957	4	-1.55, .046	-3.00	3	
Q4C1	2.50	.577	4	3.75	.957	4	-2.773, .273	-2.611	3	
Q5C1	2.25	.957	4	3.50	.577	4	-2.773, .273	-2.611	3	
Q6C2	3.25	1.708	4	4.00	1.414	4	-2.752, 1.252	-1.192	3	
Q7C2	2.00	.000	4	3.75	.500	4	-2.546, -.954	-7.00*	3	
Q8C2	3.00	.000	4	4.50	1.000	4	-3.091, .091	-3.00	3	
Q9C2	3.00	.000	4	4.00	.816	4	-2.299, .299	-2.449	3	
Q10C2	2.50	.577	4	4.00	.000	4	-2.419, -.581	-5.2*	3	
Q11C2	2.50	.577	4	3.25	.500	4	-2.273, .773	-1.567	3	
Q12C2	2.50	.577	4	3.50	.577	4	-2.299, .299	-2.449	3	
72 Q13C2	2.75	.957	4	3.00	.816	4	-1.773, 1.273	-.522	3	
Q14C2	3.00	.816	4	3.50	.577	4	-1.419, .419	-1.732	3	
Q15C2	3.00	.816	4	3.75	.500	4	-2.273, .773	-1.567	3	
Q16C2	2.75	.957	4	3.50	1.291	4	-1.546, .046	-3.00	3	
Q17C2	3.25	.500	4	4.50	.577	4	-2.046, -.454	-5.00*	3	
Q18C3	3.50	1.291	4	3.25	.500	4	-1.273, 1.773	.522	3	
Q19C3	3.50	1.000	4	3.75	.957	4	-1.046, .546	-1.00	3	
Q20C3	3.00	.816	4	3.25	.500	4	-1.046, .546	-1.00	3	
Q21C3	3.50	.577	4	4.00	.000	4	-1.419, .419	-1.732	3	
Q22C3	4.00	.816	4	4.50	.577	4	-1.419, .419	-1.732	3	
Q23C3	2.00	.000	4	3.25	.500	4	-2.046, -.454	-5.00*	3	
Q24C3	3.25	.500	4	3.75	.500	4	-1.419, .419	-1.732	3	
Q25C3	2.50	.577	4	3.25	.500	4	-1.546, .046	-3.00	3	

*p<.05

Of the 25 questions from the survey, four of the questions showed significant gains. There was a significant difference in the scores for question seven's pre-test (M=2, SD=0) and question seven's post-test (M=3.75, SD=.500) conditions; $t(3)=-7.00$, $p=.006$. There was another significant difference in the scores for question ten's pretest (M=2.5, SD=.577) and question ten's post-test (M=4, SD=0) conditions; $t(3)=-5.2$, $p=.014$. Another significant difference occurred in the scores for question 17's pretest (M=3.25, SD=.500) and question 17's post-test (M=4.5, SD=.577) conditions; $t(3)=-5.00$, $p=.015$. Question 23 was the fourth and final question to show significant differences between the pretest (M=2, SD=0) and the post test (M=3.25, SD=.500) conditions; $t(3)=-5$, $p=.015$. These results suggest that cultural self-efficacy growth strongly occurred regarding asking cultural information, creating conversation topics with people of their cultures, working in groups of females from different cultures, and speaking a different language.

But with a small sample size of four participants, the quantitative data only tells portion of the story. Understanding specifically how students experienced the intervention of the Welcoming Committee provides a more detailed and thorough understanding of the quantitative changes that occurred.

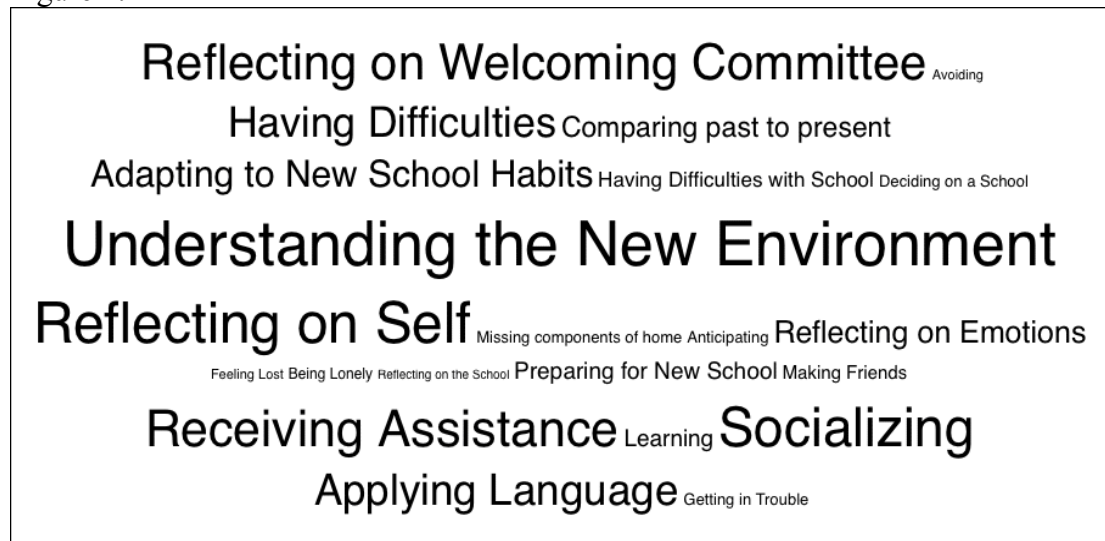
RQ 2: How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?

In order to answer research question two, "How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?", the use of a semi-structured interview was implemented 8 weeks after the beginning of the intervention of the use of a welcoming committee. After new foreign students participated in the Welcoming

Committee intervention, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. Each of the four interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded. Coding was applied through the use of coding software by the name of HyperRESEARCH. For each of the two sets of codes, a table was used to show the respective themes and assertions.

The set of codes to answer RQ 2 was created utilizing two cycles of codes and two after cycle transitions. The first cycle of codes used for the first set of codes was Process coding. Process coding was used because it is very applicable to studies involving routines and human life (Saldaña, 2016, p. 110). These types of codes were specific to concepts of acculturation and the experiences of the participants in this study. After codes were assigned, I proceeded to use a Coding Frequency Cloud through the application of Code Landscaping to visually represent the applied Process codes from the prior cycle. The Coding Frequency Cloud is shown in Figure 2. This after coding application makes the more frequent assigned codes appear larger than the codes that are less frequently assigned. The use of a Coding Frequency Cloud was applied to enable a deeper look into the set of codes prior to engaging in the second cycle codes. Saldaña expresses this technique as a way to, “see both the forest and the trees” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 222). For me, this allowed me to see which codes were more constant in arising during the interviews. This allowed for a better concentration on specific themes that would be made going forward with the second cycle.

Figure 2.



The second cycle of the first set of codes utilized Focused Coding for this step.

Focused Coding was used to create categories from the codes created in the first cycle. By using Focused Coding method, four focused themes: Nostalgia: Past to Present Historical Recall, Living in a Different Culture, Approaching People at ICA, and Speaking to People at ICA. Codes and themes were then synthesized in order to frame what was being said within the context of what the research question was asking. In essence, the interviewees' explanations were used to form the assertions that came from the interviews. Table 6 displays the codes, themes, and qualitative findings driven from the codes.

Once coding was completed, the themes were becoming apparent. Three of the four the codes fit directly into the three constructs of the CSES-A used. These constructs were used as themes but included a more local connection that was specific to ICA. The first theme, Nostalgia: Past to Present Historical Recall, consisted of codes that reflected the ideas and perceptions the participants brought with them from their past experiences. The second theme, Living in a Different Culture, included codes that reflected the perceptions of the participants and events that made lasting

impacts on them. These codes in this theme were particularly reflective of early experiences of the participants. The third theme, *Approaching People at ICA*, emphasized interactions the participants had with others, particularly the Welcoming Committee members. The fourth theme, *Speaking to People at ICA*, reflected the perceptions and expressed difficulties participants had when they interacted with others at ICA and what they perceived as the reasons for those issues.

Table 6

Theme-Related Components, Focused Themes, and Assertions Based on Interviews of Four New Foreign Students Following the Intervention

Codes	Themes	Qualitative Findings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deciding on a School 2. Preparing for New School 3. Comparing Past to Present 4. Missing Components of Home 5. Reflecting on the School 	<p>Nostalgia: Past to Present Historical Recall</p>	<p>1. New foreign students used past experiences and contexts to frame initial perceptions when arriving to ICA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the New Environment 2. Learning 3. Adapting to New School Habits 4. Feeling Lost 5. Anticipating 6. Avoiding 7. Getting in Trouble 8. Having Difficulties 9. Having Difficulties with School 	<p>Living in a Different Culture</p>	<p>2. New foreign students to ICA underwent new experiences that affected their perceived understandings and often found assistance from the Welcoming Committee.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving Assistance 2. Reflecting on the Welcoming Committee 3. Reflecting on Emotions 4. Reflecting on Self 	<p>Approaching People at ICA</p>	<p>3. New foreign students received help in a multitude of ways from a variety of people and found the Welcoming Committee to be a benefit to them.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Socializing 2. Being Lonely 3. Applying Language 	<p>Speaking to People at ICA</p>	<p>4. New foreign students found initial contacts with others to not be easy and heavily relied on Welcoming Committee members to initiate first contact.</p>

Finding 1 - nostalgia: past to present historical recall. The first finding from the interviews was that new foreign students used past experiences and contexts to frame initial perceptions when arriving to ICA. One idea that was obvious was that

an individual's past experience plays a large role in how each person initially behaves and reacts in their new setting. Much of this was very obvious from the participants and was more apparent in the initial days of arriving at ICA and the first days of school. Often times, participants found themselves reflecting on their prior knowledge and behaviors to dictate their initial actions with people, in new settings, and their interactions. Nostalgic reminiscent thoughts were abundant. Students would often start a statement with a recall and use it to explain or even justify their thoughts and actions at that particular time. The theme consisted of codes that reflected the ideas and perceptions the participants recalled from their prior knowledge and understandings they brought with them. There were five codes that encompassed the focused theme of Nostalgia: Past to Present Historical Recall. The components were Deciding on a School, Preparing for New School, Comparing Past to Present, Missing Components of Home, and Reflecting on the School.

Deciding on a School. Participants were asked during the post intervention interview how they and their families decided on attending ICA. More than just discussing the decision-making process, aspects of what drew them and their families toward eventually enrolling at ICA became obvious. Jora said, "It was a different system and way of school than what I had. They [my family] liked it and decided that is what they wanted for me." While this participant expressed the decision was based on a perceived difference of educational style, another participant, Keanu, expressed a very different reason for coming. That participant stated,

My father's company moved to Taipei and he looked for a school for me.

There were about 4 schools he liked. He also thought I would not do good on some of the school's tests and the price for this school were good for him. My father's company is changing. My father did not want to break the family up.

We all moved with him here. Time with family is important.

Keanu expressed a decision that was made with the priorities of keeping the family together, success potential, and cost. Still, another participant, Monica, had a different rationale for attending ICA. That participant said, “My cousin came to here for summer camp. He liked it and my family and his family made the decision to send me here. No one asked me how I felt about it or if I wanted to leave Korea.” In this case, she expressed a decision made by family without their input. This clearly bothered them and was still bothering them up to the time of the interview.

Participants recognized their past experiences as something different to what they were entering into. These recalls of how they arrived helps establish their unique prior experiences and shows the early paths to how they arrived at ICA, their present home and school.

Preparing for New School. Participants were asked about what they did to prepare for attending ICA prior to moving to Taiwan. Three of the four participants expressed that they focused on improving their English and two discussed components of taking extra English language classes prior to moving to Taiwan and attending ICA. Keanu said, “I went to an English prep school before coming. I did essay practice every day, every night, until 10 o’clock at night. Because after 10 is illegal.” Another participant, Lilly, similarly said,

I went to a private English school before coming here. But before that I would study English at home on my own. It was not easy so I went to an English school. I knew I was going to study somewhere from Korea one day so I knew I needed to be prepared. Those classes helped me for coming here.

Monica reiterated the English component by saying, “I worked on my English and I feel that was good for me.” One participant focused on mathematics. Jora said, “I

took an extra math class after school and that helped a lot. Every day after school. I would go until 10 every night and go home.” Each participant and their family anticipated a situation that would be unique and different from they had experienced already. Each student, with this anticipation and a desire to be successful, made decisions prior to their move to strengthen him or herself. These steps they took were based on assumptions and likely played into their initial reactions and perceptions.

Comparing Past to Present. Throughout the interviews, all participants verbalized comparisons when discussing what they experienced at their old schools in Korea and what they experience at ICA in Taiwan. Monica said, “There was a lot of people. My classes had, maybe 30 in a class. Some people were kind. Some people were not.” Similarly, Jora thought about classes when comparing past to present by saying, “All my classes had 30 students. And we had 7 classes instead of 8. The classes were also 45-minute classes. Not 50 minute.” He further expressed, “The teachers would come to the class. Here, we move. In Korea, the teacher moved.” Likewise, Keanu stated, “The good thing is that the classes are small. I only have, like, 14 in my classes. Compared with Korea where I had 40, it is nicer.” He also expressed a difference in independence by saying, “There was no interruptions at school and I could do pretty much what I wanted to do at school.” Lilly expressed a major difference in school culture regarding bullying. She said, “Smoking and bullying were very common in my last school. I had a lot of bad kids at my school.” The comparisons in class sizes were universal with all participants and the components of school culture comparisons provide an interesting contrast that likely affected the participants’ perception of their education as they experience a new school and possibly how they acculturate. In these instances, each participant went from a Korean school to ICA and moved from South Korea to Taiwan. These

significant changes in setting were universal amongst the participants, but the perceptions and reactions were unique to each individual. All of the participants reflected on their past school experiences and used that experience to frame their likes and dislikes of their new setting. Sometimes, preference was obvious for past experiences while sometimes preference for their current experience was more preferable.

Missing Components of Home. Initial concerns of homesickness arose in several of the participants. These concerns were identified as concerns that appeared in the early days of the participants moving from their home country to Taiwan and attending ICA. Keanu stated, “The first few days were tough. I did not have my parents. I did not have friends. But now it is much better. I have become more comfortable with it.” When I asked if he missed his parents he responded, “Not missed. It was just hard to adapt.” Lilly went into some detail of how she tried to cope with not being with their family anymore. Lilly explained, “I used to call my mom a lot. I tried to feel like I was at home by doing this. To make it feel more at home.” Monica expressed her more current feelings regarding family. She explained that she still missed her family and that when she moved to Taiwan, no one asked Monica how she felt about coming to Taiwan and going to a new school.

Several participants expressed a fonder feelings and desires for experiences that are no longer available to them due to their new setting. Three students missed the interactions they had with their parents. This in itself, is interesting to think about when discussing teenagers. When these participants were in South Korea, they were able to see and talk with their parents daily. Now, they cannot, and they yearn for those interactions. It is worth noting that these students are still adolescents and this experience is their first long-term experience being away from their parents. This

aspect of new independence can affect their experiences, especially in Monica's case due to her feelings of abandonment.

Reflecting on the School. At multiple points during the interview, students were asked questions that allowed them to reflect and express their perceptions and feelings of their current school, ICA. One of the more common critiques generally came about classes and boarding life. Jora quickly pointed out, "Math. It is easy. I already did it in Korea." While Keanu expressed issues with his experience in both classes and boarding by saying,

"Lights out time is too early for me. I like to go to bed late. The homework. It was a lot! I ask to stay up now and my dorm parents usually say yes. But at the beginning I did not know I was allowed to do that. I would go to bed, not being able to sleep, and I would wake up in the morning to try to do more homework. It was a lot and I did not always finish."

Lilly expressed an ease for boarding. She explains,

"I thought there would be many strict rules for being boarding. But, it went better than I thought it would. So like, more naturally. I already did many of the rules at home. It was just learning the rules and I did not think that was hard."

Participants liked to use past experiences to explain their rationale for their current situations or actions. One participant expressed his academic success in one subject was due to his academic experience prior to moving to Taiwan while others found comparable aspects of living habits and their past home lives. Both difficulties and ease were expressed. Much of the reflections in these cases came from aspects of school life that focused more on non-academics. Participants expressed more issues surrounding school rules, dormitory habits, and problems of social nature. This may

be due to many reasons, which may include an academic comfort level in many of their classes regarding grades and basic academic expectations that tend to be more universal. Participants also showed an ability to adapt, eventually, to their identified experiences. They did not always perceive them as easy to do so, but they identified moments in which the transition occurred.

Finding 1 helps answer RQ 2 by expressing a needed foundation in understanding what the participants' prior experiences were and how it affected their acculturation processes throughout the intervention. All of the participants came from South Korea, but each have unique life experiences, unique views on their life, and have had different experiences that affected how they engaged and acted in their new setting.

Finding 2 -- Living in a Different Culture. A second qualitative findings is that new foreign students to ICA underwent new experiences that affected their perceived understandings. Similar to aspects of the past and what was discussed in Finding 1, the new experiences they have can affect them and their views on their world and surroundings. Each of the participants were put in a new environment, interacted with new people, struggled at times, and found success at times. By living in a different culture, that of Taiwan and the surrounding American culture, these participants received experiences that shaped their perceptions. There were nine codes that encompassed this theme. This theme included codes that reflected the unique observations of each of the participants and occurrences that made memorable impacts on them. These codes in this theme were particularly reflective of early experiences of the participants. The nine codes were Understanding the New Environment, Learning, Adapting to New School Habits, Feeling Lost, Getting in Trouble, Having Difficulties, and Having Difficulties with School.

Understanding the New Environment. Throughout the interview, questions were asked in which the answer would hopefully help describe how the participants perceived their new environment. One question had students go into their feelings and initial impressions upon arrival. Jora expressed, “I was scared just scared about what people would think of me. It is scary when you are new.” When I asked him about the more specifics of what he was scared of he elaborated on his fears of language usage at ICA. He said, “I knew there is a lot of English and a lot of Chinese here. That is scary because it feels like a lot of language.” As we discussed this fear he admitted that he had studied Korean and English, but had never studied Chinese before. Other students also expressed more of a pressure to use English. When asked about initial impressions of ICA, Lilly said, “It was pretty good. Because it is an American school I felt pressure to speak English with everything. So like basically, it was pretty nice.” She further elaborated by saying, “I worried most about my language and my ability to use it with friends and teachers. I worried about making friends. I felt like I might not be able to be too social.” Keanu expressed frustration from classroom culture and classwork regarding language use. When asked about something he found particularly difficult about ICA he said,

My classes. Often, I am the only Korean in my classes. When people speak Chinese in class it makes it very hard and I do not like not knowing what they are saying. If do group homework, and there are 4 people, and 3 are Taiwanese, the group does not consider me. And I feel left out. I feel like I am left alone.

This particular experience shows an individual’s understanding of a situation, their frustrations with it, and the feeling of separation he perceives due to his inability to communicate, and the rest of his classmates unwillingness to collaborate using their

common ability to speak English. One area multiple students described was that, though not severe, they had gotten in trouble for breaking rules they were ignorant to. As an example, Keanu discussed one of these rules and how the Welcoming Committee helped him by saying, “I did not turn off the AC for 3 days, I kept failing room inspection and I did not know why. They asked for me and told me to turn it off when I go to class. It made a big difference! Because I didn’t have free time! Important!”

When it came to the participants’ experiences with their new environment, there were a lot of negative perceptions involved. Anxiety, fear, frustrations, and negative consequences were all associated with the participants getting accustomed to their new surroundings. Much of the experiences seem to show where acculturative stress the participants experienced arose. In many cases the need for further communication was evident. Even with assistance from peer mentors it was obvious that issues were unique to individual experiences. The implementation of a peer mentor that can get to know the individual becomes quite valuable in assisting new foreign students in these cases due to the different situations that can often be unpredictable. All of these are common when trying to learn and work within a new environment.

Learning. Through the application of the innovation, participants expressed on many occasions lessons they learned from the Welcoming Committee. These lessons, often simple in nature, generally were essential understandings to daily practices at ICA that relieved stress from the participants. Among the lessons identified by the participants were how to get one’s laundry done, using Google Classroom, showing them how to stay informed of upcoming events, how to gain permission to stay up past bed time, avoiding social trouble, and other general school

rules. When asked, Jora shared his experiences by saying, “Yes. He helped me with my clothes. He taught me how to get them clean.” Similarly, Monica said, “Rules. The rules. When to go to dinner, what to not do, why I am in trouble.” In this case, the Welcoming Committee is not the focus, but the experience and growth gained from the Welcoming Committee members is.

Much of this code came from the reflections of the learning curve the participants experienced. The participants expressed frustrations with rules that were new to them, new to their life, but have always been around in their new contexts. Jora did not view the idea of laundry as a natural habit, but a rule. He saw the idea of having clean clothes no longer as a given but something that must happen, more a rule than a naturally healthy habit. Keeping his clothes clean and doing it himself was something he had not experienced in Korea. Someone always did his laundry for him. Now he was in a situation that he had no background experience in but knew he needed and felt he was required to do.

Adapting to New School Habits. Particularly at the beginning of the innovation, participants of this study were learning and adapting specific aspects of ICA and the daily customs of their new school. In many instances, participants were ignorant to a custom or policy of ICA and once they became aware of it, they were able to apply it or participate in it. Prior cycles of my research indicated this was a crucial area that needed immediate addressing. The Welcoming Committee meetings often centered around this criteria in order to help expedite student adaptations to their new environment. One student expressed ignorance to rules that allot extra homework time when needed. Once he became aware of the policy, he was able to schedule and do his homework in a scenario that was more conducive to him and his study habits. Some of the lessons were more geared towards the social nature of ICA. Lilly said,

It is kind of personal. But a lesson they taught me that was very important was about gossip. They taught me that I need to be very careful with what I say because it spreads very quick. So you should not 'bluh bluh bluh bluh' or everyone will know. So yeah, it was great they told me that.

This particular participant also acknowledges later in her interview that she believed the Welcoming Committee was directly responsible for teaching her and helping her with the daily components of ICA. Monica expressed early difficulties adapting to ICA. She expressed this by saying, "At my old school I was allowed to not do something if I didn't want to. But here, if I didn't I got in trouble." Monica later expressed that the Welcoming Committee helped her in this area specifically, along with other daily aspects of ICA. She even went as far to say, "The rules of school. They were very helpful with this because I did not know them. This school has very different rules than my last. I thought I would have a hard time getting used to these rules but it was easy I think because of the help."

The school culture in itself is unique and can be trying to any new student. The participants expressed ideas of joining and being a part of a school that was different from theirs back at their homes. Because ICA is a boarding school, the academic, social, and home components of life are intertwined. These participants had to adapt to a scenario in which almost completely new guidelines were introduced to them. In many cases, it was the Welcoming Committee that aided these individuals to better acclimate them to their new surroundings. The participants identified the Welcoming Committee as an early and often source for needs and queries. As they adapted to their new school, their peer mentor guided them. What they did with it and what direction they went were dependent on the individual participants.

Anticipating. Early on, participants expressed their assumptions of ICA and uncertainties. Keanu said,

When I first came here I thought there would be more foreigners, but there was not as many as I thought. And most of the students were Taiwanese, which surprised me. I was also surprised they could all speak English.

Monica expressed, “Everything was new and I did not know anything.” Participants made assumptions and anticipated. Sometimes their assumptions were correct, while at times they were not. This played a lot into their interactions and how they perceived their new home.

The participants came in with preconceptions and their own notions of what their life would be like in their new setting. Keanu assumed that the foreign student population would be higher, thus having more people with a similar background to him and native language. When he realized this was not the case, he reassessed his situation and changed his notions of the situation. Monica, still feeling upset about being moved to her new scenario, was a bit more closed-minded. Her anticipations were not as fully thought out as she had not fully come to terms with her new situation. Both Keanu and Monica had very differing anticipations that affected their perceptions and experiences. One had major preconceived ideas fully in place, while the other had none to a limited amount.

Avoiding. When it comes to the act of approaching people, Monica expressed the opposite, she showed aspects of avoiding others. When asked about her efforts to reach out and meet others, she said, “Mmm, not really. I did not know them and I did not want to. Also, I was not sure what language to talk with people. Did everyone want to use English?” She further showed evidence of avoiding others by saying, “But when I was being stared at a lot I felt very uncomfortable. I would look

away and wait for them to leave.” This participant, because of her unique perception and experience, is worth noting because of the difficulties she had. She was put in a situation, in an environment, that she did not want to be in and made choices to not accept her situation. She made choices that she needed to make to help herself and work her feelings with herself. She, at that time, was not open to outsiders assisting her. No other participant expressed this experience.

Monica would avoid situations in their new environment. Incidents of avoidance usually involved the participant expressing some level of discomfort. This discomfort generally came from situations that were new or included some aspects of uncertainty involved.

Feeling Lost. For Monica, an obvious expressions of feeling lost was apparent from her interview responses, especially during the initial couple of weeks of attending ICA. She initially indicated this while discussing her initial reactions to being at ICA when she said, “No! I am not sure what I thought. I just knew I was coming here but I did not know what here was.” She continued on this line of discussion by describing her experiences in class early on. She said,

I was scared about my English in class. I was scared about making friends. I was scared about getting in trouble. I did get in trouble a couple times too but people would help me and I figured it out pretty quick.

Throughout all the interviews, this participant expressed a higher level of loneliness than the other participants. Her experience, unique as is everyone else, seemed to show longer connections with separation than other participants.

Though not universal to all participants, the level in which this individual experienced a disconnect is worth noting. Her past and the lack of say she had in her future played a strong role in her attitude towards moving to Taiwan and interacting

with others. It created a fear and feels of abandonment that resonated with her in much of her interactions with others. This is important because it serves as evidence that not everyone comes to ICA on his or her own free will and may not be open to interactions in a setting they are not familiar with.

Getting in Trouble. As with many acculturative experiences, the component of disciplinary issues would arise. Three of the four participants expressed moments at ICA in which they got in trouble, often times for actions or lack of actions in which they were ignorant to being an issue that would risk getting into disciplinary issues. Jora shared this very fact of getting in trouble, not knowing why, but then being assisted or informed by the Welcoming Committee. He said,

Sometimes I would get in trouble and not know why. Someone would tell me what was happening and why. When I met with the welcome committee I got a lot of information. They would talk a lot and sometimes I would ask questions. That was nice.

Two other participants expressed almost exact scenarios.

Trial and error. Many of the disciplinary issues experienced by the participants came from being ignorant of the rules and just doing what was a natural habit for themselves. The Welcoming Committee strived to minimize this aspect and made a priority to include rules, expectations, and helpful habits in interactions based on the findings of earlier action research cycles.

New participants, even with the knowledge of school rules, found themselves victims of their own habits that they tried to apply but found themselves having problems. One participant expressed an old habit of homework being optional. This, being the case at their old school, was not the case at ICA. Once the idea of homework being necessary became an understanding, the act of completing

homework became more consistent, though not perfect. This is the type of adaption that can improve with time.

Having difficulties. Participants often found components of their new school difficult that had nothing to do with class or schoolwork. These difficulties are best looked at as non-academic issues. For example, Monica expressed social issues regarding her peers and unwanted attention she was receiving. This participant said, “When I came, I came with other Koreans and we talked a lot. Other kids were looking at us a lot. I got to know a couple of people but many people did not talk with me.” Later, she explained that she appreciated meeting and talking with people, but it tended to be under specific terms, terms in which others reached out more than her. This can be understood when she said, “When people came to me I felt good. But when I was being stared at a lot I felt very uncomfortable. I would look away and wait for them to leave.”

Lilly expressed difficulties she had with her roommate and classmate, Ann, and the relationship they had together. When discussing her difficulties, she explained,

Because of Ann. Ann and I are very different people. We are totally opposite people. It has been stressful to get along with her. If I do not go with her we are both lonely. I have friends but not many so there is time when I spend with Ann. Sometimes she is not very nice and that makes me feel stressed.

In this case, Ann was Lilly’s roommate and shared several classes with her throughout the day. Their lockers were very close to each other as well. This mixture of being new and not knowing many people along with a shared daily schedule likely created these feelings she experienced. Later Lilly continued to explain her relationship issues with a more specific example:

I really really liked my Literature class with Ms. Lemon. I felt she treated me so nice and made sure I was comfortable. She taught very well and it made me really happy. But, the problem became Ann. Ann would cry like once in two weeks. If she was depressed, the whole class couldn't move on. She kind of caught up a lot of time from the classes. I think I understand Ann. I am patient with her, but it is still make me angry to wait.

These social issues seemed to come from a need to be sociable with someone, even if that someone was not a person they would normally associate with. As she acculturated into the school, she was able to venture beyond that relationship that gave her difficulties.

While the last example was the most verbalized, others expressed similar issues with acculturating early on. Keanu opened up the interview by saying, "The first few days were tough. I did not have my parents. I did not have friends. But now it is much better. I have become more comfortable with it." He also expressed habitual components of ICA that he found difficult, such as have a bedtime, specifically because he preferred going to bed late but felt compelled to go to bed at the designated time.

Social needs are a basic need for people and being the new kid to a new school in a new country can be very difficult. Struggles in this area can affect social behavior and academic outcomes. The issue of loneliness came up again in this theme related component. Also, difficulty in adapting to the school habits and rules in a timely manner can add stress when confronted, much like what Keanu experienced.

Having Difficulties with School. When a foreign student initially begins attending an American boarding school in Taiwan, academic difficulties can occur due to acculturative issues, especially early on. All four of the participants in this

study expressed academic issues early on. Sometimes the issues were getting used to the amount of time one has to get to class while others were more with what occurs in class. Jora said,

At first, I was not comfortable in class and my teachers talked so fast. I knew what they were saying but I did not. You know? Burt I guess saw I was having a hard time. So Burt checked on me every day in every class to make sure I knew what the homework was and what I was to do for homework.

Burt, an active member of the Welcoming Committee saw a struggle occurring with a new student. Though he was not directly assigned to work with this student, he nonetheless used his training and worked with him to assist him as he became accustomed to ICA.

Keanu described an issue he had early on in which he was actually failing a class and how a Welcoming Committee member assisted him in getting his academics straight. The issue stemmed from his lack of knowing. He explains,

Before, I failed and I had to go to the library and miss track. Malcolm went to Dr. Coral and talked for me and help me. He talked to him about how I was new and still trying to figure everything out. Because he did this, I was able to go to track and have more time to get my grade up.

As has been the case in many scenarios discussed, difficulties the participants experienced were often ameliorated with assistance from others, particularly those in the Welcoming Committee. Monica expressed an issue they were having that, as of the interview date, was still an issue, but she also offered an explanation on how she adapted to it. She explained this by saying, “Like, school announcements, I miss a lot of them. I still do, so I do not know where to go or what to do so I just follow what others are doing. It looks right.” In this scenario, the individual adapts their best

without help to an issue and tries to integrate, or at least look like they have integrated in hopes of blending with the crowd.

When focused on academic issues specifically, three of the four participants expressed early difficulties or interactions that caused academic issues. The Welcoming Committee again found ways to assist and address issues that came up, which turned out to be helpful to the participants as they became more comfortable with school life.

Participant experiences were greatly affected by their new environment. Often times this interaction with their new situation led to difficulties and the Welcoming Committee would often assist in these matters. This helps answer RQ 2 by sharing experiences the participants had with the Welcoming Committee when difficulties arose and helped identify many positive outcomes from those interactions.

Finding 3: Approaching People at ICA. Another finding from the analysis of focus group data was that new foreign students received help in different ways from a variety of people and found benefits from the Welcoming Committee. This finding focuses on the experiences of receiving assistance from others in a variety of settings and events. One of the main concepts behind a Welcoming Committee is reaching out to the targeted audience and helping them when they are in need of assistance. This finding showed that while the Welcoming Committee was helpful, certain other people were helpful to new students as well. Particularly, this theme emphasized interactions the participants had with others. There were six codes that encompassed this theme: Receiving Assistance, Reflecting on the Welcoming Committee, Reflecting on Emotions, and Reflecting on Self,

Receiving Assistance. Throughout the interviews there were a multitude of examples of the participants receiving assistance. Some assistance came from their teachers. Lilly explained this and said,

Ms. Lemon I will talk about. I changed my activity out of basketball because basketball was too hard. I went to fencing and it was too harsh. I did not like that. I was looking for Mr. Slide to change my activity and Ms. Lemon volunteered to take me for a self-study. It helped me a lot and made me feel very comfortable.

Monica also shared how a teacher assisted her by saying, “Yeah, some have been helpful. Ms. Flower would ask me things about not class and check on me. I really liked that.” In these instances, participants identified times in which assistance came from people outside of the Welcoming Committee. While not universal, the experiences of having others in your environment care enough to help when needed was important to the participants.

Reflecting on the Welcoming Committee. A common theme that arose was the effects and actions taken by the Welcoming Committee during the intervention. Some of the reflections of the Welcoming Committee expressed negative or not useful aspects of the Welcoming Committee. Jora expressed a particular disdain for the formalized meetings that took place. He said,

The meetings are not special. You just go to the meeting and you are talking to them. You ask several questions and they answer them. Every time we meet there is a topic everyone talks about with their person. It gets a little boring sometimes. Things are better and it is good. It is just the same and boring sometimes.

Monica expressed an issue with the meetings as well by saying, “Sometimes talking goes too long. I feel like I would like to have talks but just not as long. One thing is here we do not have much time and sometimes they take too much of it.” These feelings towards the meetings show that while they may be helpful, an aspect of buy-in and helpfulness may be lost in some because of the lack of entertainment innate in the current structure and the time in which these meetings occur, which is normally a free time for most students.

Other reflections of the Welcoming Committee expressed a more positive experience. When asked how the Welcoming Committee was a benefit to them, Jora said,

It let me make friends very fast and I knew I always had someone that could help me. When I got here I was afraid of being lonely. But, I am not. I was afraid of class. But I had people help me. It made me feel welcome.

Lilly put it bluntly, “There were not any situations I did not get help. When I ask for help, they always give me help. It made me happy.” She further stated,

I felt very comfortable with them. I felt very comfortable talking with them. I think they helped me a lot. If not for them I think I would not have adapt so well as I did to my environment. I felt very safe.

For Monica, the social component that was provided by the Welcoming Committee was important. She indicated this by saying, “I like that I got to meet people with them. It makes me feel good to have people to talk to even when the conversation is boring.”

Monica continued and expressed a desire to meet more often. This student, also the same one that said these meetings were boring said, “Meeting times should be more often because, like, some days I forget to ask something. But there is only one

meeting a week and so I have to wait a week to ask the question and I forget.” This was interesting because the student clearly found the meetings to boring, but boring does not mean not helpful. Though they are boring, she found value in these meetings and expressed a clear desire for more, likely because the information received from the meetings were helpful to her.

A particularly interesting case regarding the Welcoming Committee arose regarding a misunderstanding of who the Welcoming Committee is and what their outreach entailed. Initially, Keanu claimed the Welcoming Committee did not do much for him, but when I identified several members of the Welcoming Committee, he immediately made connections on how they helped him and completely changed his perspective of the Welcoming Committee. Once he realized who the members that helped him were, he laughingly said, “Really? Wow. Yes, they have been helpful! They taught me about school rules. A lot of that and where to go and when. I think Steve helped with this too.” I later acknowledged to him that Steve was also a Welcoming Committee member, and Keanu was pleased about that as well. It is a positive feature to be able to have feedback that shows the implementation of an innovation that can make a positive impact on people. But I must wonder, what was the disconnect as to why someone could go through a program like this and not be able to automatically identify the people that worked with him. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Keanu received assistance extensively but did not recognize the assistance as assistance coming from the Welcoming Committee until I shared that knowledge with them in the interview. When initially asked about the Welcoming Committee, this participant expressed a negative connotation towards his experience by saying, “They just give me a survey paper. I don’t feel like they do too much for me. I think Jerome

and Butters have been helpful. They are prefects and I have liked what they have done for me.” I expressed agreement that the mentioned people that helped him were indeed prefects, but were also on the Welcoming Committee. Once that was established the participant had a very strong change in perception and attitude towards the assistance he received and laughingly said, “Really? Wow. Yes, they have been helpful!” He further iterated, “They taught me about school rules. A lot of that and where to go and when.”

One area that participants indicated as an area to help future Welcoming Committees was to pair new students up with people from their own country if available. Of the participants that were interviewed, Lilly did have a Korean student as one of her Welcoming Committee Members. About this, she said,

I was so happy that my Welcoming Committee was Korean. Like, if it was not Korean, I am not sure how I would have felt. I would have been stressed. My Welcoming Committee would talk to me in Korean a lot and that made me feel good. They would ask me if I had any problems. They would ask me with deep emotion and it would make me always feel better. Because when you feel, pressure, and they talked to me, it would feel nice. And once I started talking with them they were able to help me change classes and get the right kind of classes I needed. I was in the wrong Spanish class and needed to be put in a lower one. I was very thankful about that.

Jora, who did not have a Liaison from his home country, suggested, “But they need to talk to people from their country. If they are from Japan, they should check with them to see what to do. It is easier.” Similarly, Monica when giving a list of improvements said, “I also think Koreans with Koreans is the best. I mean, new students work better with same people because they understand more.” This strongly

indicates a comfort level for new students in finding people that have had gone through a similar situation and come from similar backgrounds.

Jora received assistance from the Welcoming Committee in both formal and informal ways. Jora summarized his assistance by saying,

They helped a lot with the school's rules. They gave a lot of information. It was very important. Sometimes I would get in trouble and not know why. Someone would tell me what was happening and why. When I met with the welcome committee I got a lot of information. They would talk a lot and sometimes I would ask questions. That was nice.

Jora further iterated these experiences and ideas by acknowledging he still received help even to the date this interview was given and by specifying assistance from a particular Welcoming Committee member by saying,

He helps me with class things and we talk a lot after school. One thing he does not do is help me with dorm things. He is a day student. He does not know about dorms. Sometimes he will bring someone that lives in the dorms and they will help me.

Jora also pointed to school components he received assistance in by saying, "The way and how to use Google Classroom. Like, which house was mine, when there is a house competition which one I go to." Lilly was very blunt and straight to the point with her expressions of receiving assistance from the Welcoming Committee. During the interview she said, "There were not any situations I did not get help. When I ask for help, they always give me help. It made me happy." She further iterated, "They told me what I should do and what I shouldn't do. So I did that. I saw a lot of changes for my daily changes and I think my Welcoming Committee helped me the most with that." Furthering the aspect of received assistance from the Welcoming Committee,

Monica explained, “There were some meetings I went to for new students. I got to talk with students here and they would ask me questions or tell me some things that helped me.” She continued by saying,

The rules of school. They were very helpful with this because I did not know them. This school has very different rules than my last. I thought I would have a hard time getting used to these rules but it was easy I think because of the help.

Near the end of her interview she summarizes what the Welcoming Committee assisted her most with by saying with a laugh at the end, “Rules. The rules. When to go to dinner, what to not do, why I am in trouble”

This section covers a lot of experiences the participants had and is a main focus of the study. It also gets directly to the research question regarding perceived experiences when interacting with specifically the Welcoming Committee. These experiences show that the Welcoming Committee was an involved and active organization and worked diligently to help new students. The ways in which they helped were diverse, often meaningful, and participants found the help to be sincere. Sometimes it was boring, sometimes it was not what the participants expected, but generally, these experiences helped the participants become more comfortable with their new home.

Reflecting on Emotions. In order to approach others, several participants looked within themselves and reflected on who they were and what their emotions were in efforts to show empathy and understanding of their new setting. A common emotion that came up was aspects of fear, especially at the beginning of their tenure at ICA. Jora said, “I was scared just scared about what people would think of me. It is scary when you are new.” When reviewing his time at ICA, he also said, “When I got

here I was afraid of being lonely. But, I am not. I was afraid of class. But I had people help me. It made me feel welcome.” Lilly expressed the same feelings when she said, “At first when I came to ICA everything was scary to me. I mean, like, everything” She further explained,

When I was in my first class, I was scared of everything. I was scared of English. I was scared of new Taiwanese friends, I was scared I could not understand what teacher says. I was very afraid of it.

Keanu bluntly said, “Everything seemed big. I was scared.”

The participants also expressed positive emotions. When asked about the feelings he felt after making friends, Keanu said, “It made me feel good. I was not alone.” Speaking on the same topic, Lilly said, “When they said hi back to me I was very happy about that!”

Participants often expressed their emotional feelings towards encounters and experiences they had. Sometimes their expressions of emotions showed a sense of gratitude towards others for reaching out or helping them. These reflections of emotion show the importance of interactions with others, and though sometimes it is a little act, it can make large emotional impacts that can affect much of a person’s experience, especially in a new setting.

Finding 4: Speaking to People at ICA. Finding four expresses that New foreign students had issues with initial contact and relied heavily on others in this matter. Communication is a form of interaction, and for the participants of this study, it was one that was used often and played an important role in defining their experiences. This theme was made from observations and perceived difficulties participants had when they interacted with their peers and teachers. This also included

their perceived reasons for these issues they had. There were two codes that encompassed this theme. The two codes were Socializing and Applying Language.

Socializing. Making friends, an important social component of moving to a new place, came up in the interviews. Particularly, students explaining their experiences of making friends at ICA were of focus. Lilly eloquently explained their process of making friends and described how it worked out for them by saying, “So like, we would say hi, and we started by asking about each other. And we started to make comments about each other and then we would spend a lot of time with each other.” She later explained, “I tried to be brave. I would say hi to people when I saw them. Sometimes they would say back. Sometimes no. When they said hi back to me I was very happy about that!” Her interview concluded with strong advice for future ICA students from foreign countries by saying,

I would say, you shouldn't be weak in this school. You should look strong.

You should cover your mouth. And and and, if you want friends you have to go first instead of waiting on them. I think that is a proper way to make friends. Yeah.

Monica echoed this idea by saying, “Everyone should be themselves. You will make friends. Maybe not what you expect or how many but it is okay. And you will be scared but it will be okay.”

When socializing with people, though initially difficult, positive outlooks were found amongst the participants about their opportunities for speaking with others. Jora states, “People were nice. The next day, a lot of people came to my room and said hi and spoke some Korean to me, like ‘anyosayo’. It was nice of them.”

Monica experienced a bit more of a difficult start in making friends by saying,

About, 2, maybe 2 or 3 weeks after I got here I had not made many friends. I

had 1 friend mostly. And we did not always get along. We would fight a lot but it was okay. It was always nothing serious and we would make up. In class, my classmates were nice but not my friends. You know?

Monica also expressed that she found the Welcoming Committee meetings provided her with opportunities to socialize. She said, “I like that I got to meet people with them. It makes me feel good to have people to talk to even when the conversation is boring.”

Participants expressed a lot of opportunities to socialize and interact with others. When a participant expressed an early experience in which people came to say hi, it was often the Welcoming Committee members doing this for two reasons: First, to make sure the new student does not feel alone and feels welcome; second, in hopes that others around the school would pick up on the friendly gesture and make their own initiatives to greet the new students which is how and why they were trained in these matters.

Applying Language. The component of language was often on the minds of the participants among the early weeks of attending ICA. When asked what he worried most about, Jora said, “Language and friends.” When he was asked specifically about his fear of language he responded by saying, “I knew there is a lot of English and a lot of Chinese here. That is scary because it feels like a lot of language.” When asked about his language background he expressed that he had not studied Chinese at all but had studied English and Korean specifically. Keanu expressed similar feelings by saying, “I was afraid that I could not understand teachers.” Keanu also expressed discomfort when his classmates were speaking in their native language of Chinese when he said, “The hardest thing is from the students. When the students are speaking Chinese it is hard and I feel isolated.” Lilly

expressed similar concern regarding Chinese when she said, “I did not know that this school would have this much Chinese being used. I was like, ‘wow, okay’ when I saw. It was a surprise.” Monica was asked what she expected, prior to arriving, regarding the use of Chinese. She responded, “I am not sure what I thought. I just knew I was coming here but I did not know what here was.”

The academic applications of language and vocabulary came up as well. Jora used his geography class as an example. He said, “Mr. Hick. I do not know the words in the class. They were too hard. I did not even know these words in Korean. Now it is not as bad, but it is still hard.” Monica expressed opposite ideas when she said, “Because it is an American school I felt pressure to speak English with everything. So like basically, it was pretty nice.”

Multiple participants expressed shock and surprise when they discovered how many of their classmates knew English. Keanu said, “I was also surprised they could all speak English.”

When it came to making friends, language was essential. Lilly really grasped the language component well and summarized it when she said,

At first when I came to ICA everything was scary to me. I mean, like, everything. I did not feel comfortable with my language ability. My English I thought was not strong and my Chinese was nothing. I started making friends and they all spoke English with me. I learned from them, both some English and a lot of Chinese.

The concept of language can be widely seen throughout each of the participants’ interviews. Aspects of usage, acquisition, initial use, anxiety, etc. language was a major factor in the participants experiences. This was even so with how and who they interacted with and included Welcoming Committee help as well.

Because of the setting, these students had to experience several languages as well. Their social experiences often included Chinese while their academic experiences were in English, both languages of which were not their native language. With the participants, their fears regarding language were often higher than the realities of their experiences with it. This was due not to their abilities, but to their confidence in their new environment surrounded by native speakers of other languages.

RQ 3: Which acculturation strategies did students show in their interviews about their arrival and initial months at ICA?

Another set of codes, based on my theoretical framework, was used to answer Research Question 3. As my theoretical framework focuses on acculturation, I examined what acculturation strategies the participants of this intervention used. Because action research is iterative, this will be important not only for this study, but for future cycles of research and future programs at ICA.

The types of codes used for this cycle were descriptive codes based on the four strategies identified by Berry (1997): Assimilation, Integration, Marginalization, and Separation. These codes were applied to see which strategies, through the interview, were used more often. Table 7 displays the acculturation strategies as themes and the assertions driven from the codes. Figure 3 shows a frequency graph that shows how often each of the four strategies was identified within the interview.

Figure 3. Frequency of Strategies.

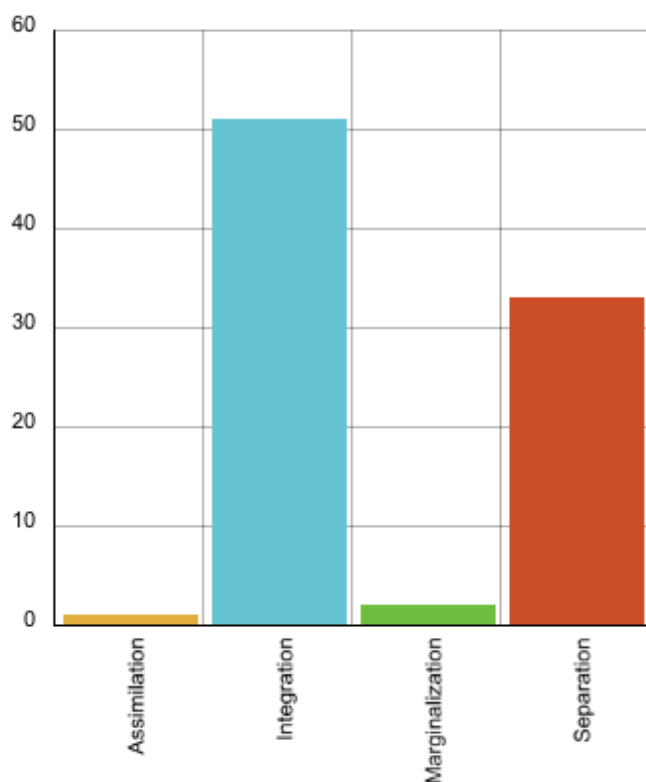


Table 7
Focused Themes, and Assertions Based on Interviews of Four New Foreign Students Following the Intervention and the Four Acculturation Strategies Identified by Berry.

Themes	Findings
Assimilation	1. The assimilation strategy and aspects of this strategy were never identified nor used by the participants.
Integration	2. Aspects of the integration strategy were often identifiable as being used by all participants at some point, including when interacting with the Welcoming Committee.
Marginalization	3. The marginalization strategy was not used very often, and when it arose it often showed fear of loneliness and isolation.
Separation	4. Attitudes of the separation strategy were identifiable in all participants, particularly in the early weeks of the intervention.

Integration. All four of the participants expressed aspects of utilizing the integration strategy between the time they arrived at ICA and the time in which they

participated in the interview. Integration can be viewed as actions and attitudes that support a willingness to be bicultural within their setting. Jora used his experiences with the Welcoming Committee to express their willingness to grow and adapt to their new setting. He expressed this several times but one example was when he said, “They would talk a lot and sometimes I would ask questions. That was nice.” Keanu expressed similarly, “They taught me about school rules. A lot of that and where to go and when. I think Steve helped with this too.” Keeping positive attitudes and using the Welcoming Committee as a resource throughout their early times showed a willingness to participate and be a part of the new cultures and the components being expressed to them during these meetings.

Appreciation in accommodating and integrating new students in by the participants was expressed as the Welcoming Committee did their work and progressed with the assigned new students. Keanu, regarding this, said, “It made me feel good. I was not alone.” Lilly said, “There were not any situations I did not get help. When I ask for help, they always give me help. It made me happy.” She further explained at a later point,

I felt very comfortable with them. I felt very comfortable talking with them. I think they helped me a lot. If not for them I think I would not have adapt so well as I did to my environment. I felt very safe.

Monica expressed interactions with the Welcoming Committee by saying, “There were some meetings I went to for new students. I got to talk with students here and they would ask me questions or tell me some things that helped me.” She later expressed that these interactions were helpful. Further discussions of the Welcoming Committee showed more integration opportunities for her when she said, “I like that I

got to meet people with them. It makes me feel good to have people to talk to even when the conversation is boring.”

Some students expressed interactions they had with their peers that showed components of integration. One was regarding language. Lilly said, “I started making friends and they all spoke English with me. I learned from them, both some English and a lot of Chinese.” Similarly, she showed willingness for early interaction by saying, “I tried to be brave. I would say hi to people when I saw them. Sometimes they would say back. Sometimes no. When they said hi back to me I was very happy about that!” She similarly gave advice that promoted the aspects of integration when she said, “...if you want friends you have to go first instead of waiting on them. I think that is a proper way to make friends.” Monica expressed moments with their roommates by saying, “My roommates were helpful too. They tried to help me keep clean and make sure our room did good.”

Integration can be an opportunity for students to experiment with others and their new setting, which does not always mean positive results. Monica showed that complications arise, but kept a positive attitude towards her changes:

I was scared about my English in class. I was scared about making friends. I was scared about getting in trouble. I did get in trouble a couple times too but people would help me and I figured it out pretty quick.

Integration was, by far, the most common acculturation strategy used by the participants. Much of the time, participants were willing to interact and accept aspects of other cultures without trying to mold situations into an expected outcome.

Separation. Though integration was a common strategy used by the participants, separation was also identifiable as a strategy used by the participants.

Similarly to integration, all four of the participants showed a use of this strategy at some point during their engagements with others.

A common component that brings students to the separation strategy is fear. This was expressed multiple times. Jora said, “And I was scared just scared about what people would think of me. It is scary when you are new.” Keanu student said, “I was scared that I could not get along with people because of culture difference. I was afraid that I could not understand teachers.” Lilly said, “When I was in my first class, I was scared of everything. I was scared of English. I was scared of new Taiwanese friends, I was scared I could not understand what teacher says. I was very afraid of it.”

Keanu expressed early difficulties by saying, “The first few days were tough. I did not have my parents. I did not have friends.” He continued to discuss issues he was having with being at a new school and said, “Yeah. So it was hard at the first.” Lilly discussed her way of holding on to her culture and what she was used to. She said, “I used to call my mom a lot. I tried to feel like I was at home by doing this. To make it feel more at home.”

Lilly gave an example of socializing with another Korean student, even though it was not a good relationship, because she felt the need to be with someone and was not making friends at the time. She explained,

Ann and I are very different people. We are totally opposite people. It has been stressful to get along with her. If I do not go with her we are both lonely. I have friends but not many so there is time when I spend with Ann. Sometimes she is not very nice and that makes me feel stressed.

Monica showed a particular disdain for initially being at ICA. When she was asked if she had tried to talk to anyone she responded by saying,

Mmm, not really. I did not know them and I did not want to. Also, I was not

sure what language to talk with people. Did everyone want to use English? No one knew Korean except “anyo say o”. I did not know Chinese.

She also showed an unwillingness to initially change how she interacted with others. She showed this in a classroom setting when she said, “In class I would not do something. At my old school I was allowed to not do something if I didn’t want to. But here, if I didn’t I got in trouble.” She further expressed this when she explained,

I do not like to present in class. I hate it. But, some of my classes make me do it and sometimes I do not want to so I will not. It surprised me that it was part of my grade and that I was being punished for not. I guess now I understand why they want me to but I still do not like it at all.

Monica also expressed friendship issues that could be seen as a use of the separation strategy when she explained,

Yes. About, 2, maybe 2 or 3 weeks after I got here I had not made many friends. I had 1 friend mostly. And we did not always get along. We would fight a lot but it was okay. It was always nothing serious and we would make up. In class, my classmates were nice but not my friends. You know?

The Separation strategy was used often and came in second is use only to integration. The use of this strategy helped reflect many of the issues the participants experienced that made them feel separated and alone sometimes, even with the implementation of the peer-mentoring program.

Assimilation. Throughout the interviews there were not any significant identifiable discussions or moments in which the participant’s acculturation would have been identified as assimilation, or assimilating to other cultures. This would make sense since past cycles of the action research have shown a similar outcome regarding the assimilation strategy.

Marginalization. Only two of the participants expressed examples of marginalization and both occurred very early, on the first day of school. Keanu discussed how he was in one of his classes and was very lost. At first, he recognized that he did not know a lot of the English words that were being discussed in class. Then when he began looking them up he realized he did not know Korean words either. He expressed fear and a sense of being lost. Likely, this came from not knowing what was being taught and not knowing what the others in his class knew. He also expressed his feelings that he was being marginalized in class. He did so by saying,

My classes. Often, I am the only Korean in my classes. When people speak Chinese in class it makes it very hard and I do not like not knowing what they are saying. If do group homework, and there are 4 people, and 3 are Taiwanese, the group does not consider me. And I feel left out. I feel like I am left alone.

He continued along this line of discussion by saying, “The hardest thing is from the students. When the students are speaking Chinese it is hard and I feel isolated.”

Monica shared similar feelings, especially early on when she said, “No one asked me how I felt about it or if I wanted to leave Korea.” She also said when discussing her feelings about interacting with people, “I did not know them and I did not want to. Also, I was not sure what language to talk with people. Did everyone want to use English?”

Marginalization is inherently difficult to define when looking at specific situations. Even Berry, in a recent interview, expressed this difficulty by saying, “This “lack of clarity” is actually part of the meaning [and measurement] of marginalization in my work. It refers to not being certain where a person is in their cultural spaces,

being unattached with either [or any] cultural group” (Emamzadeh, 2018). It is within this lens that I see these two experiences being within the idea of marginalization. These two clearly were not certain of their standing within their new cultural spaces and that can be a powerful feeling.

Summary

Overall, this chapter showed that the individual experiences of the participants, similar yet unique, portrayed experiences that reflected specific aspects of being a new foreign student at ICA. These experiences reflected the four findings: new foreign students used past experiences and contexts to frame initial perceptions when arriving to ICA, new foreign students to ICA underwent new experiences that affected their perceived experiences, new foreign students received help in a multitude of ways from a variety of people and found the Welcoming Committee to be a benefit to them, and new foreign students found initial contacts with others to not be easy and heavily relied on others to initiate first contact. When looking into the specific acculturation strategies utilized by the participants, the use integration was more apparent than the others, separation occurred but was used more in the earlier days of the intervention, marginalization was identifiable to only one participant and assimilation was not identifiable within the interviews.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a peer mentoring system at reducing acculturation stress and supporting acclimation within an international school in Taiwan. The purpose was to also find out what can be done, from a school point of view, to help students in acclimating and acculturating to both Taiwan and the American education system within the confines of an international boarding school. More specifically, it is to address these issues in the local setting of ICA and continue the cycles of action research that have been ongoing for 3 years. As an action researcher, I conducted this study to elevate and improve the conditions and experiences of new students at ICA. To address these issues I created a Welcoming Committee made up of veteran students called Student Liaisons. The research questions for this study were:

RQ 1: How does new international students' cultural self-efficacy change over the course of participating in peer mentoring program?

RQ 2: How do students that are new to an American education at an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process?

RQ 3: Which acculturation strategies did students show in their interviews about their arrival and initial months at ICA?

Integration of the Qualitative and Quantitative Data

This study utilized a mixed-method study design in which quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to triangulate findings. The Triangulation design brought together the pre and post surveys regarding cultural self-efficacy, interview

codes that recorded the participant's experience, and interview codes that recorded acculturation strategies used by the participants, to develop a more detailed and richer understanding of the new foreign students' experiences.

Research Question 1

For research question 1 I used the CSES-A survey to conduct pre and post surveys and the survey was about cultural self-efficacy. These questions looked into a person's perception of their own abilities to effectively function in culturally diverse settings. The collected quantitative data from these surveys indicated that student cultural self-efficacy increased in all three of the constructs of the survey. Looking deeper into the data results, all but question 18 in construct three showed an increase. However, of the 24 questions that increased from pre-test to post-test, four of the questions showed significant gains from pre-test to post-test results. Two of the four questions were from construct two and two of the four questions were from construct three. When it comes to answering research question 1 of how cultural self-efficacy changes over the course of partaking in a peer-mentoring program, the answer is simply that cultural self-efficacy improved. This data alone does not provide details of how the participants improved their perceptions, nor does it explain why the participants might feel better at the end of the innovation. The qualitative data collected from the interviews at the end of the innovation supports the conclusion that cultural self-efficacy increased and provide a more detailed explanation regarding the hows and whys.

Research Question 2

For research question 2, I interviewed all participants at the end of the innovation. This question was about how new foreign students perceived and experienced the Welcoming Committee during their initial time of attending ICA.

Four findings emerged from this interview that helped me understand the new students' experiences and perceptions. These findings were that new foreign students used past experiences and contexts to frame initial perceptions when arriving to ICA, new foreign students to ICA underwent new experiences that affected their perceived experiences, new foreign students received help in a multitude of ways from a variety of people and found the Welcoming Committee to be a benefit to them, and new foreign students found initial contacts with others to not be easy and heavily relied on others to initiate first contact.

The first finding reflects the participants' natural instincts to conduct themselves and interpret events in the ways they would normally in their past settings. While many aspects of their life at ICA were similar or even the same, there were great examples where initial expectations did not meet the need of the situation. All of the participants did something to prepare for the academics they assumed they would encounter and took a very strong academic approach to preparation. Participants did not indicate much thought being put in place regarding the cultural aspects of moving to a foreign country. Initial reactions to their arrival opened up a lot of discussion regarding what they thought they would experience and what was the reality of their new situation. Reminiscing of what they experienced at their past schools and comparing it to their current situation was a common preface in replies. Knowing that participant cultural self-efficacy was lower in the initial days of their time and that it increased after two months, participants showing their initial thoughts is helpful in better understanding their perceptions at the beginning and why their cultural self-efficacy was lower. Construct two, Living in a Different Culture, which had significant gains from the pre-test to the post-test, envelops the idea that participants' expectations affected their perceptions, but as they gained a better grasp of the

realities and ways of their new home, cultural self-efficacy improved. This was also a focal point of the Welcoming Committee, disseminating information that new foreign students would need to know in order to understand their new home. Participants expressed finding value in this type of information and felt as though they benefitted from receiving it.

The second finding expressed that new foreign students had experiences in those initial weeks at ICA that affected their perceptions. In essence, their perceptions were being shaped by their new surroundings and experiences. The acquisition and experience of new languages had a heavy impact on the participants during this time. No longer were they in a setting that was in their first language, but rather they were now surrounded by English and Chinese language use. Chinese communications, often in social settings in and around the dormitories, pushed the participants to adapt to different communications than they were accustomed to. As with any new school, there were tools and habits, and a way of doing things that were certainly new to the new students. School rules, school wide tools such as Google Classroom, and how to handle social troubles were key concepts introduced to these students and were worked with on both a formal and informal basis. The Welcoming Committee meetings often centered around this criteria in order to help expedite student adaptations to their new environment. As would be expected, proactive actions were not 100% preventative in avoiding issues. When participants experienced difficulties such as academic or disciplinary issues, it was often the Welcoming Committee that reacted and assisted with the issues occurring. Participants recognized both the proactive and reactive assistance as beneficial, thus aiding them in acclimating to their settings. It is this type of feedback from the participants that melds well with the results of the CSES-A pre-test to post-test increases in cultural self-efficacy. These interactions and

issues have a large presence in the items asked of construct 2, Living in a Different Culture, of the CSES-A. Construct 2 of the CSES-A's pre-test and post-test results showed the greatest mean increases of a plus 0.975. These numbers, along with the accounts associated with what the participants expressed, have shown that the implementation of the Welcoming Committee likely aided in the increases in cultural self-efficacy.

The third finding was that the participants received a multitude of assistance and found the Welcoming Committee to be of benefit to them. This finding is one of the more important findings in this study as it supports the direction of the ongoing action research and aides greatly in the triangulation of the results. Each of the participants expressed that the Welcoming Committee served as a beneficial organization that aided them in the early weeks they were at ICA. With the Welcoming Committee's focus of assisting new foreign students, it would make sense that participants found it beneficial and that, if committee members performed their duties appropriately then new foreign students would benefit, possibly substantially, from their interactions with the Welcoming Committee. New foreign students received help and guidance in many realms. This included dorm life, classroom issues, uniforms, social issues, language, discipline, activities, Taiwanese culture, school rules, night market etiquette, laundry, and interacting with peers, etc. The participants shared their feelings regarding this and it always came down to the relatively same idea that their experience was good because they became informed about issues they had been ignorant to and they always had someone they could rely on to go to and get help from anytime it was needed. As cultural self-efficacy is all about interacting in diverse settings, the tool of a Welcoming Committee showed its benefits in this area. Sew foreign students' confidence in themselves grew within their

new environment as students became more aware and confident in their interactions with others from other cultures.

The fourth finding was new foreign students found initial contacts with others to not be easy and heavily relied on others to initiate first contact. This was an interesting phenomenon I did not expect to see, but when reflecting on my own personal habits and the purpose of the Welcoming Committee, it makes sense. It is not an easy feat to join ICA as a new student, especially when coming from a foreign country. It is not uncommon for students in these scenarios to rely on others and take a follower role in trying to figure everything out. New foreign students to ICA relied on the kindness of others and their willingness to make the initial move to meet, greet, and get associated with them. This initial contact, clearly important to the participants, was also a component of what the Welcoming Committee was trained to do and act upon. When students arrive at ICA, they are greeted by their liaison and are aided in moving in. Throughout this, the liaison does what they can to get to know the new student, help them, and help them meet other people. Due to different times and days in which our new students arrive at school, this can be a step that is more active than others when it comes to meeting and greeting. One of the areas that made contact and friend forming difficult was aspects of language. The participants of this study all spoke Korean as their first language and English as their second while many of the people they were around spoke Chinese as their first language and English as their second, or as for teachers it was English as their first. With English as the common language of many most people, I assumed that conversation was more than just a possible attainability, but this was not always the case. While English differed from participant to participant, all were quite competent in this area, but that did not mean that their roommates, classmates, neighbors, or activity members were. Several of the

participants also expressed concern with their own applications of the English language in their new settings. Even though they are all very competent in English, they were still hesitant in using English in different settings, especially with native English speakers.

Language generally played a role in many experiences the participants had. Using the lens of linguistic study, a future expansion of the research could be implemented with possible action research cycles. Cultural self-efficacy was also likely greatly affected by this finding. Contact and face time with others from other cultures had not occurred extensively when the pre-test was given, Interactions, communication, and different degrees of contact with others from different cultures had occurred at an much more extensive level by the time the post-test had been given. While not the only source for this type of interaction, the Welcoming Committee implemented many opportunities of interaction and played a role in giving the participants time to interact with other cultures. These interactions were described as valuable and helpful which in turn added to their cultural self-efficacy.

Research Question Three

For research question 3 I used the same interviews I used for research question 2 but applied a different set of codes to better understand the acculturative strategies the participants utilized throughout their initial weeks at ICA. The integration strategy was the most commonly applied acculturation strategy by the participants. When entering a new and different cultural situation, one's attitude can play a major role in their successes and abilities to acculturate in a timely manner. Often, participants were willing to attempt and apply aspects of life and living that have shown to be successful and beneficial in Taiwanese culture among the student residential side and practices expected in the classrooms of American teachers. This included study

habits, homework completion habits, communication in the classroom, and seeking help. Being able to do this, in a scenario that has so many cultures interacting, is no easy feat. That said, the second most common acculturative strategy used by the participants was separation. In these cases, the decisions of the participants to use separation often started out of fear, in which case the participants would make decisions that they may have commonly made back in their home countries. The separation strategy was most commonly described by the participants in the earlier weeks of their arrival to Taiwan. As time went on, the integration strategy became more prevalent in later interactions and descriptions of experiences. As the separation strategy is more associated with one's own culture, it would make sense that the participants' cultural self-efficacy was lower at the beginning when separation was more apparent. Likewise, it would make sense that integration, a strategy associated with balancing one's own culture with that of other cultures, was observed at later chronological experiences when cultural self-efficacy was measured to be at a higher degree overall and for each construct.

When looking at the quantitative data and the qualitative data together, it is easy to see how the implementation of a Welcoming Committee aided in improving cultural self-efficacy and has improved the overall experiences of new foreign students to ICA. Through the implementation of a Welcoming Committee, new students were able to be guided, nurtured, and connected to a new world, a new home. These experiences with the Welcoming Committee helped students become familiar and comfortable in a new setting and shaped the perceptions of their new home.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to examine the acculturative hindrances new students from foreign countries face and to examine

how the application of the innovation of implementing a welcoming committee to assist and interact with them. In this section I suggest two implications for practice from my experiences within this study.

First, the overall concepts and concerns regarding acculturative stress and the academic issues associated with it should be addressed to the entire school's faculty, and the mission of the Welcoming Committee should be a shared mission amongst faculty. Getting the students to agree and serve within the Welcoming Committee was easier than expected, and an overall shared concern was identified early on. Though most people did not know necessarily what acculturation was, they knew that issues many new students were having were associated with cultural difficulties that could be assisted if directly addressed. ICA's faculty has a strong American approach when it comes to the school and classes. This is by design, but does not mean cultural needs and acculturative stress should be ignored. Quite the opposite is true: The benefit of teachers being aware and taking actions to help students experiencing these difficulties could greatly impact students and positively affect their experiences in many areas.

Second, more school-wide efforts need to be taken to celebrate the cultures of the people attending ICA. We have students from all over the world but we never recognize the cultural events of Thai, Korean, or Japanese students. While the school does put a strong focus on cultural explorations and empowering students in the diversity of cultures and the world, having a greater focus on the cultures of our students would go a long way in showing the overall acceptance of them and their culture.

Implications for International Studies and Acculturation

This study and intervention was inspired by existing research. This study has implications specifically for international schools with diverse student communities. This study is most applicable for members of schools interested in assisting students through acculturation and minimizing acculturative stress. This study aligned well with past studies of acculturation. Specifically, ICA is a school community where two dominant cultures are apparent in two separate scenarios but all within the same arena of the school community. The local culture of Taiwan is dominant and apparent within all social contexts of the students' lives while the American culture is dominant in the academic setting. When students from foreign countries attend ICA they must go through the acculturation process but within a context that, while not unique throughout the world and in other international schools, is specific to the local context, that being ICA's school community. This study showed potential benefits of a Welcoming Committee for this specific purpose. The use of a Welcoming Committee for foreigners in an academic setting could be beneficial in similar settings.

Implications for Future Cycles of Action Research

In future cycles of action research, one area that I and others involved would like to look into more thoroughly is use of liaisons that are foreign students themselves. While firsthand knowledge of Taiwanese expectations and cultural interactions was very beneficial, the use of students that come from the same countries as the new students was suggested by the participants as possible important step. The benefits of this step might include another layer of comfort given to new students, a sense of empathy as these students have gone through what the new students will be going through, and the use of new students' native language. Further

future cycles beyond that may look into greater aspects of dorm life and the social components of attending ICA.

There were some areas that the Welcoming Committee would like to do to improve their own services as we continue to improve upon how we address our mission. First, finding ways to spice up the meetings seemed to be a common thread. Several participants expressed that, while helpful, the meetings were boring. The feeling that these meetings not come off as boring, repetitive, or mundane are important. Also, Welcoming Committee members are interested in creating how-to videos for the new foreign students. Liaisons would create fun and interesting videos that teach and reference important concepts of living at ICA and would help introduce Taiwan as a whole to new foreign students. Discussions of exactly how to do this and how it would be presented are ongoing.

Implications for Use

The use of peer mentoring, especially in acculturation scenarios, can be beneficial for new foreign students. This study showed that such use of a peer-mentoring program for acculturation uses can be applicable in similar settings in which a Western education is being offered in an Asian country in which foreigners to that nation attend school. This study's participants were all Koreans and the setting was in Taiwan. Acculturative applications in regional Asian nations should find similar effects, but the needs of the foreign student would likely differ in degree and category based on the host nation and the nationality of the foreign student. In order for a school looking to apply a peer mentoring program for acculturative issues, schools should consider length of implementation, mentor expectations, and what areas of acculturation to address. Aspects of living with their family and living at a boarding school should be considered as well. The value of a peer-mentoring program

for this use i worth further study to learn specific applications from country to country and nationality to nationality. Nonetheless, the applicability, especially with the increase in students experiencing acculturation throughout the region, is region-wide.

Lessons Learned

When I was initially asked where my interest lies within my school, I naturally gravitated to a situation I witnessed that hurt to see and became an all too common storyline. Seeing students struggle to integrate into their new situation and knowing we could be doing more to support them in this time of need was a guiding light that I felt needed to be seen through. As I took on this journey, several lessons were learned along the way.

Change is Ongoing, Not Easy, and Never-Ending

If you are not looking for change or ways to improve as a school, you are doomed to fail as a school. While my study reflects a tiny part of who my school was and is, it goes without say that this implementation and application of support for students is worthwhile. Students have been and continue to be directly and positively supported by this implementation. This was not an easy task and took the support of multiple faculty, staff, and administration to ensure that this implementation had a chance at making a difference. Furthermore, as with the spirit of action research, this cannot be the end of it all. As a school, we need to continue to look into ways of improving, changing to the needs of our students, and supporting them in new ways.

The Effects of Support can be Powerful

I initially saw acculturation effects in my roles as soccer coach, where I witnessed my soccer players not enjoying their experiences and struggling with areas of their life that they had full control over in their past settings. In the new setting of

ICA, many aspects of their lives had changed. And on top of that, they are still children. As busy as school gets, it can be easy to forget the need of support systems to be put in place. Not having opportunities to receive support can greatly impact students in a negative way, just as having opportunities to receive support can greatly impact students in a positive way. While never surprised, it always amazes me the lengths administration and faculty at ICA are willing to go to support our students, our children.

Limitations

As with any study, limitations occur and should be considered. Limitations are aspects of the study that could decrease the confidence in the findings that were accrued. These limitations may raise concerns regarding validity and reliability. The potential limitations for this study included sample size, data collection process, no control group, the experimenter effect, and maturation.

Sample Size

One of the more obvious limitations of this study was the small sample size. This study was originally designed for ten to 15 participants, but recruiting only amounted to four participants willing to participate that could secure proper parental permission. This sample size affected the study in several ways. First, it caused a calculation issue with the quantitative data when the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for one construct. In this case the construct showed a negative value when the internal consistency should have been between zero and one. Obviously, the study would have benefitted from more participants. Though four is a small number, the four participants did represent 33.3% of the midyear new foreign students. At the same time, this allowed me to focus deeply on these four specific students. The qualitative analysis that was included in this study was deeper with four students than I could

have likely achieved with 15 participants. I was able to look at each participant as a case and I was able to see patterns across them specifically, which is important in acculturation studies.

No Control Group

Having a control group for this study would have allowed for a more concrete understanding of the effects of the implementation of the Welcoming Committee. It would have allowed a comparison of experiences and acculturation of those having the support of the Welcoming Committee those without. However, I decided against having a control group for two reasons. First, this is an action research innovation. Action research uses cycles of studying and implementations of innovations in order to improve one's own practice. Not including students in the innovation did not seem practical in this particular action research because of amount of participants I was able to secure for this research. Second, I felt a moral obligation to make sure all of the new students to my school were allowed to benefit from the innovation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this innovation came as a result of not having any support systems in place for new students and of the amount of new foreign students that were leaving ICA prior to completion of the first semester or even the first school year.

The Experimenter Effect

The experimenter effect is a possible limitation to the study. I was the person that conducted all of the interviews. I am also a school administrator and the person at my school that deals with student discipline. My position and the job my position requires me to do may have affected the answers I received from all of the participants. Students may not have been completely forward about issues they had with other students or actions they took that they believed might have been illicit. In hindsight, I could have taken some steps to avoid this limitation. Having someone else

perform the interview could have helped avoid this limitation. I did limit this effect somewhat by having a teacher be the sponsor of the Welcoming Committee itself, thus interacting with the participants the most in that role.

Maturation

Maturation in an acculturation study is a possible limitation that could have occurred. Generally, acculturation of individuals changes over time. There is a chance that the acculturative experiences and the cultural self-efficacy of the participants would have improved over time regardless of the implementation of the innovation. This connects to the lack of a control group in the experiment and goes hand in hand.

Researcher Cultural Bias

Researcher cultural bias is a limitation for this study as well. I come from a Western upbringing and had been raised in a Western nation. Upon moving to Taiwan myself, I experienced acculturation from the lens of a Westerner in an Eastern society. The participants from this study, though coming from a different culture, are going from an Eastern culture and acculturating into an Eastern culture. My experience, for many reasons, would vary from their experiences and could influence my perspective of the events and experiences shared during the study's timeframe.

Final Conclusions

The world we live in is becoming a smaller place. Thanks to technology and the constant change of how nations interact, the opportunity to go somewhere outside of one's culture is becoming more prevalent and easy to do. People today are experiencing acculturation and are undergoing acculturative stress at levels never seen in the past with trends showing that this will continue to increase. Whether it academic opportunities or careers, countries all over the world are homes to people that did not originate there. We also know more about acculturation today than what

we knew in the last century and will continue to learn more about acculturation and its affects. As acculturation understandings expand, so too do the ways of supporting those experiencing it. This study showed how the implementations of a support system, where supported was limited, made positive impacts on people and ensured a situation in which they would not feel alone. The implementations of this study should be looked into at all educational settings that have a diverse population that is not familiar with the local culture. As the world continues to become a smaller place and acculturation becomes a more common experience, implementing support for those experiencing it can greatly improve the individual and manifest a better situation for all.

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APPENDIX A
STUDENT MENTOR CONTRACT

Mission.

The welcoming committee’s mission is to help any new student to ICA acclimate to the schedule, environment, and social structures to help new students feel more comfortable and more accepted.

Job Description.

New Student Liaisons will be asked to meet many expectations in order to meet the mission statement goals as stated above.

New Student Liaisons will be required to...

- Meet with their assigned students to introduce themselves
- Sit with their assigned students at breakfast and dinner
- Help answer questions about ICA to assigned students
- Explain the schedule for a typical ICA week to assigned students
- Explain dorm floor rules and responsibilities
- Check in with assigned students and ask how their classes are, what people they are getting close with as friends, see what questions they have about ICA, etc.
- Help students find resources at ICA like tutoring or when/where to buy school materials
- Encourage assigned students to attend extracurricular events (e.g. camping trips) or attend these events with assigned students.
- Report back to Mr. Daubert about their assigned students a minimum of two times a month
- Assist the front office with new students “first day procedures” throughout the year
- Help plan, organize, and execute social events at ICA

Cause for Termination.

Any New Student Liaison may be terminated from their position at the digression of Dr. Cheska, Mr. Ayers or Mr. Daubert for the following reasons...

- Not meeting the expectations set forth by the job description above
- Receive any discipline from honor committee as a result from misbehavior

Benefits for New Student Liaisons

New Student Liaisons will be granted the following benefits for their participation in welcoming committee.

- Worked volunteer hours will be stated on a signed certificate for college admission and other application purposes.

If you agree to the following terms and conditions please print and sign your name below with the today’s date.

Printed Name

Signed Name

Date

APPENDIX B

WELCOMING COMMITTEE MATERIALS

Welcoming Committee Materials

Your Name: _____

Your Grade: _____

New Student 1: _____

New Student 2: _____

New Student 3: _____

Welcoming Committee Weekly Checklist

Below are the things that I would like for you to do every week until you are finished with your new student. You must complete these to complete your job as a New Student Liaison.

1. Meet with your new students at least one time for 10-15 minutes (**cannot be done during breakfast or dinner**).
2. Take notes about your meetings with your new students in your Contact Log
3. Write down how long you met with your new students in your Contact Log.
4. Sit with your new students at breakfast and dinner and write down when you did this in your Contact Log. Please also write down anything you talked about at breakfast or dinner in your Contact Log too.
5. Schedule a 15-minute meeting with Mr. Daubert to talk about your new students and to turn in your contact logs.
6. Encourage new students to take weekly online survey.
7. Take NSL weekly online survey.

Welcoming Committee Leading Questions

Below are some questions that you can use to ask your new students in your weekly meetings if you have a hard time thinking of questions to ask. Please make sure you use different questions every time you meet so you don't always have the same questions with the same answers.

You'll also notice that these questions are not questions that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no."

You can also talk to your new students in Chinese/Korean/Japanese/etc. depending on what they are most comfortable with, but please make sure your notes in your contact logs are in English (since Mr. D cannot speak Chinese/Korean/Japanese/etc.). Thanks!

- How was your day today? Tell me what was your favorite/least favorite part of today?
- What was your favorite class today? Why?
- What was your least favorite class today? Why?
- Who is your favorite teacher? Why?
- Who is your least favorite teacher? Why?
- What do you think about ICA so far? What do you like/not like? Why?
- How have you been handling the work in your classes?
- How have you been asking for help at ICA? (Suggest office hours/tutoring/talking to teachers)
- How have you been at keeping up with your homework at ICA? Have you missed any assignments? How do you record your homework?
- How is living at ICA in the dorms? What do you like/don't like? Why?
- How do you like your roommate? What do you like/don't like? Why?
- How has it been following the rules at ICA? Do you have any questions or are you confused about anything?
- How are things with your family back home? Do you miss being at home? Do you talk with your family much?
- How is your stress at ICA? What do you do about managing your stress? What do you do during your free time to relax from the day?
- Have you made any friends yet at ICA? Who are you friends with?
- Have you experienced any bullying at ICA? Could you explain more what is happening?
- What adults do you feel close with at ICA (teachers/administrators/dorm parents)? Why do you feel close with them? Do you talk with them a lot?
- What do you need from me this week? How can I help you this week?
- **MR. DAUBERT MAY ASK YOU TO ASK SPECIAL QUESTIONS, MAKE SURE YOU ASK THEM AND WRITE DOWN THEIR ANSWERS.**
- **YOU CAN ALSO USE YOUR OWN QUESTIONS AND THESE QUESTIONS CAN LEAD TO NEW QUESTIONS. YOU ARE IN CHARGE, DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.**

Welcoming Committee Contact Log ([ONLINE](#))

Breakfast and Dinner Seating Log:

Monday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Tuesday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Wednesday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Thursday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Friday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Saturday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Sunday:	Breakfast → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dinner → <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

First Responders Procedure:

New students join ICA very often. When a new student is scheduled to come to ICA, we need to have an NSL come down to the office to help them move in and make sure they know what is happening before they start school. When this happens, please follow the procedure below so you know what to do.

1. Mr. Ayers will get a call saying there is a new student coming to ICA
2. Mr. Ayers will tell Mr. Daubert that there is a new student and when they will be at ICA
3. Mr. Daubert will send out a message on REMIND asking for someone to volunteer to come help the new student.
4. The NSL will text back Mr. Daubert if they want to help (it can be more than one)
5. The NSL will go to the office and talk with Mr. Ayers about the new student
6. The NSL will be in the office when the new student gets to ICA
7. The NSL will give the new student their welcoming gift and welcome paper
8. The NSL will help the new student get their keys and will help them move their things into their room
9. The NSL will talk with the new student and the parents, welcoming them to ICA and telling them about their room, the school, the schedule, and whatever else you want to talk about

10. The NSL will go through the Welcoming Checklist to make sure the new student understands the basics of how ICA works
11. **IF THERE IS TIME**, the NSL will give the new student a tour of the school and point out important locations around campus
 - a. The Benches
 - b. The New building 1st floor (library, tech lab, copy machine)
 - c. The Old building 1st floor
 - d. The Main Office
 - e. The Student Lounge
 - f. The Dorm floor where they live (laundry machines, dorm parent rooms)
 - g. The Old building 5th floor
 - h. The Commons (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
12. The NSL will describe the English testing the new student will take in the office on the first day
13. The NSL will answer any questions the new student has
14. Finally, the NSL will ask Mr. Ayers where the new student needs to be at this time

Welcoming Committee Welcoming Checklist

Use the checklist below to help you when you have your first conversation with a new student. These are the things we have found that new students should know to help them be successful at ICA and to help them feel more comfortable and confident.

1. Introduce yourself (name, grade, how long you've been at ICA, what floor you live on/if you're a day student)
2. Ask that your new students introduce themselves (name, grade, school they were at before, how much English they know)
3. What is the ICA time schedule?
 - BREAKFAST:** 7:00-7:55am
 - Period 1:** 8:00-8:50am
 - Period 2:** 8:55-9:45am
 - ASSEMBLY:** 9:50-10:05am
 - Period 3:** 10:10-11:00am
 - Period 4:** 11:05-11:55am
 - LUNCH:** 12:00-12:35pm
 - Period 5:** 12:40-1:25pm
 - Period 6:** 1:30-2:20pm
 - CLEANING TIME:** 2:20-2:30pm
 - Period 7:** 2:30-3:20pm
 - Period 8:** 3:25-4:15pm
 - Activity:** 4:30-5:45pm
 - DINNER:** 6:00-7:00pm
 - Study Hall:** 7:00-9:00pm
 - Free time:** 9:00-10:00pm
4. Explain ICA Classes
 - a. What is the teaching style at ICA?
 - b. What does student participation look like at ICA?
 - c. How much homework do you get every day?

- d. What you should bring to class every day at ICA?
 - e. What is the cellphone rule at ICA?
 - f. What is the rule about speaking English in class?
 - g. What is the library lists and how do you get on the library list?
 - h. How long is passing period?
 - i. What is cleaning time?
 - j. How do you find your cleaning assignment?
5. Activity time at ICA
- a. How to sign up for activity?
 - b. What is the difference between M/W/F, Tu/Th, Sat/Sun activity?
 - c. What are the rules for activity time? (being on time, bringing food, getting on the dorm floor)
 - d. What is Student Government and how can you get involved?
6. Study Hall at ICA
- a. What time is study hall at ICA?
 - b. How do you meet with teachers during study hall?
 - c. What do you do during study hall if you are a boarding student/day student?
 - d. What is the rule with cell phones during study hall?
7. General rules at ICA
- a. What do you do if you are late to class?
 - b. What happens if you are late too much?
 - c. What happens if you are late to school? (day students only) NEW RULE
 - d. What happens if you miss school? (day students only) NEW RULE
 - e. What do you do if you are sick?
 - f. How do you go to the doctor/dentist?
 - g. What do you do if you are being bullied, who can you talk to?
 - h. Can you bring food/bags in the new building?
8. Breakfast/Dinner at ICA (Boarding students only)
- a. What time is breakfast and dinner?
 - b. What is sign-in for dinner? (Boarding students only)
 - c. Talk about how new students should sit with an NSL (A new student should never sit alone)
 - i. Decide with your new students how you want to make sure they eat with you. Do you want to meet before and walk down together, meet in the commons and sit together, etc.)?
9. Weekends at ICA
- a. What is the difference between open and closed weekends?
 - b. What are Saturday classes?
 - c. What is Saturday night activity?
 - i. Talk about getting supplies for dorm/school
 - ii. Do you have to go to the Saturday night activity?
10. Uniforms at ICA
- a. How do you know what uniform to wear?
 - b. What happens if you are not wearing the right uniform?
 - c. Where you can get extra uniforms?
 - d. What is the formal uniform at ICA? When do you wear your formal uniform? Black socks and stockings.

11. Where to get help at ICA
 - a. How can you sign up for Stugo tutoring?
 - b. How can you ask a dorm parent for help?
 - c. How can you ask teachers for help in class?
 - d. What do you have to do to go see a teacher for study hall
12. The House System at ICA
 - a. How do you know what house you are in?
 - b. What are house competitions?
 - c. When will teachers tell me to meet for house meetings?
13. What are the questions your new students have for you about ICA?
14. Dorm specific rules will be covered by prefects on the dorm floors.

APPENDIX C

OUTLINE FOR WELCOMING COMMITTEE TRAINING

What does it mean to be an NSL?

- Why do we need NSLs at ICA?

What is your job as an NSL?

- How will you get your assignments?
- When will you get your assignments?
- What are welcoming events?
- What are first responders? (same below)
- What are NSL and NS surveys?
- What are NSL meetings? How often will we meet?

What I expect of you as an NSL

- See NSL document.

How to be an effective mentor for new students

- Research online.
- Come up with questions to ask on the first day.
- Come up with ways that we can support new students.

What is a first responder?

- Work on this with Pat

First responder schedule and expectations

- Work on this with Pat

Hard conversations to have with your new student

- Practice with each other
- Come up with questions together
- Come up with strategies together

When to get a teacher involved

- Safety concerns
- Conversations that you feel uncomfortable having
- Who to talk to?

Check ins and meetings for NSLs

- Expectation for how often you have to talk with your NS
- Expectation for how you report your conversations
- What to come to meetings with

Surveys

- All online
- Time is an issue, the sooner they are taken the better
- You can help your NS take the survey but they must take the survey themselves
- Honesty is what we need here to improve

Welcoming events brainstorming

- Come up with event ideas to integrate new students into current population
- Come up with time frames

Being a prefect and an NSL at the same time

- Work on this with Pat

Volunteer hours survey.

- Online survey
- Record weekly how many hours you log and what you were doing during those hours
- They will be audited by me and added together (don't put a ton of hours for something small and quick to get easy volunteer hours)

What's next?

- You get your assignment
- You get your notebooks
- You get your shirt
- Greet your NSs
- Start your conversations with NSs
- Explain what your job is with NSs

APPENDIX D
POST INNOVATION INTERVIEW

Interview Questions for Mentees

1. How was it that you became a student of this school?
2. What were some of your first impressions?
3. At first, was there anything about attending ICA that you were worried about?
4. Was there any experience that was particularly difficult for you?
5. Were you receiving help and support from anyone during this time?
6. What aspects of school life were easy for you to get used to?
7. What aspects of school life were difficult for you to get use to?
8. Please explain to me what the Welcoming Committee is.
9. What kind of interactions did you have with the Welcoming Committee?
10. Was the Welcoming committee helpful for you? If so, how? If not, why not?
11. What were some of the best experiences you had with the Welcoming Committee?
12. Do you believe the Welcoming Committee did enough to help you adapt to our school? How so?
13. Do you believe the Welcoming Committee did enough to help you adapt to Taiwan? How so?
14. Do you believe the Welcoming Committee was helpful? Why or why not?
15. What were some of your best memories of engaging with Welcoming Committee members?
16. What was the hardest part of coming to ICA? Did the Welcoming Committee try to help you in this area? How?
17. What was the hardest part of coming to Taiwan? Did the Welcoming Committee try to help you in this area? How?
18. What could the Welcoming Committee have done better?
19. What were the most important lessons you learned from your Welcoming Committee experience?
20. How did you benefit, if at all, from the help provided by the Welcoming Committee?
21. Is there anything else you would like to talk about regarding the Welcoming Committee and your experience with them?

APPENDIX E

PRE AND POST INNOVATION CSES-A QUESTIONNAIRE

Cultural Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES-A)

	Cannot do at all		Moderately certain can do		Certain can do
Speaking to people from a different culture, I can...					
Realize what I know about that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Use the information I have on that culture to understand people from that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand what I am being told.	1	2	3	4	5
Make myself understood when speaking to people from a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Maintain a conversation when most of the people are from a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Living in a different culture, I am able to...					
Make new friends.	1	2	3	4	5
Ask information on terms related to that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Mix with classmates from a different culture from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
Take part in social activities of the people of that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Create topics of conversation with people from that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoy the activities of the people of that culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Overcome homesickness.	1	2	3	4	5

Overcome nostalgia for my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
Overcome nostalgia for my family.	1	2	3	4	5
Overcome loneliness.	1	2	3	4	5
Work in groups of boys from different countries.	1	2	3	4	5
Work in groups of girls from different countries	1	2	3	4	5
Approaching a different culture, I can...					
Understand other religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand another type of family different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand how couples relate in a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand the art of a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand the music of a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Speak a language different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
Learn a language different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
Understand a language different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW AND SURVEY FORM

Peer-Mentoring and International Students with Acculturation

Introduction:

My name is Aaron Ayers and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Katie Bernstein, a faculty member in MLFTC. I am asking for your help regarding this study by participating in an interview and two surveys. You will be asked questions about your experiences and feelings at Ivy Collegiate Academy in Taiwan regarding acculturation, acculturation factors, and the peer-mentoring program. Your responses will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone. Participating in this study will include no more than a total of two hours of your time.

Participant Demographic Items

The intended participants for this study are foreign students between grades 8 through 12 that are new to Taiwan and Ivy Collegiate Academy. Anyone participating will be ages 14-17 and are able to give consent with parent consent. There are no anticipated risks in participating in this interview. Participation is voluntary and should you decide you do not want to answer or continue you may resign from participating at any point. Your answers will not be shared with anyone. Your information will remain confidential.

Questions and Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this interview, please feel free to contact Aaron Ayers at adayers1@asu.edu or at 0989-753-180 in Taiwan or (886) 989-753-180 outside of Taiwan. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study you can contact Dr. Katie Bernstein at 480-965-2314. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Thank you for your time and potential participation in this study.

Sincerely,
Aaron Dee Ayers, Doctoral Student

APPENDIX G
PARENT CONSENT FORM

Peer-Mentoring and International Students with Acculturation

PARENTAL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent:

My name is Aaron Ayers and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Katie Bernstein, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on how students new to an international school in Taiwan perceive and experience peer support during the acculturation process and how cultural self-efficacy changes over the course of participating in a peer-mentoring program. The purpose of this study is to better understand the current situation with respect to the adaptation problems many students new to an American education face within their first year at Ivy Collegiate Academy. The population of focus for this study is grade 8 through 12 students from foreign countries new to Taiwan and Ivy Collegiate Academy. Interviews and surveys will be conducted and results will be recorded for my dissertation at Arizona State University.

I am inviting your child's participation in an interview and two surveys, concerning your child's knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about student difficulties in their first year of an international boarding school in Taiwan and their experiences in a peer-mentoring program. We anticipate the interview to take around 1 hour and the survey to take no more than 30 minutes. We are also asking permission to record the interview with your child. Only I will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to have your child participate or to withdraw your child from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. It will not affect your child's grade, treatment/care, etc. Likewise, if your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published, but your child's name will not be used.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about the difficulties students face adapting in their first year of an international boarding school. Interview and survey responses will also inform future iterations of the study. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your child's responses will be confidential. Only I will have access to their audio recordings and transcriptions. Each participant will be given a random pseudonym that has no connection to themselves, their name, or their personality. These pseudonyms will be used throughout the research, thus ensuring anonymity throughout and beyond the timeframe of the research. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your child's name will not be used. A masterlist of participants will be kept and secured with the data on my computer. This masterlist will be used to help in connecting the survey data to the interview data. The masterlist will not have actual names in it but will contain information such as grade, gender, and nationality. The masterlist will be destroyed 6 months after completion of data collection.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study you can contact Dr. Katie Bernstein at 480-965-2314. You can also contact me, Aaron Ayers, at aayers1984@gmail.com or 0989-753-180.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dee Ayers, Doctoral Student
Katie Bernstein, Assistant Professor

By signing below, you are giving consent for your child _____ (Child's name) to participate in the above study.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

If you have any questions about you or your child's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you or your child have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

APPENDIX H
STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Peer-Mentoring and International Students with Acculturation

My name is Aaron Ayers. I am a student at Arizona State University working on my doctorate.

I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about acculturation and the applications of a peer-mentoring program at Ivy Collegiate Academy (ICA). I want to learn about the experiences and effects a peer-mentoring program has on new foreign students to ICA. Your parent(s) have given you permission to participate in this study.

If you agree, you will be interviewed and complete two surveys. You will be asked about your experiences as an international student. You will also be asked about how you felt about those experiences within a peer-mentoring program. You will be asked to discuss about how you have managed to acculturate and what has worked for you. Answering these questions will take about 1 hour and completing the survey will take no more than 30 minutes each time. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. I am also asking your permission to record the interview. Only I will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information during the interview. Let me know if, at any time, you do not want to be recorded and I will stop.

You do not have to be in this study. No one will be disappointed or angry at you if you decide not to do this study. Even if you start the study, you can stop later if you want. You may ask questions about the study at any time.

If you decide to be in the study I will not tell anyone else how you respond or act as part of the study. Even if your parents or teachers ask, I will not tell them about what you say or do in the study.

Signing here means that you have read this form or have had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study.

Signature of subject _____

Subject's printed name _____

Signature of investigator _____

Date _____

APPENDIX I
ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL LETTER


January 20, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Aaron Ayers has permission to conduct interviews and surveys with students at Ivy Collegiate Academy after they consent to participate. The interviews and surveys will be confidential and he will not use the participants' names in any reports or data.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,


Dr. John Cheska
Headmaster
Ivy Collegiate Academy
Taichung, Taiwan



APPENDIX J
IRB APPROVAL

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Katherine Bernstein
 Division of Teacher Preparation - Tempe
 -
 kbernstein@asu.edu

Dear Katherine Bernstein:

On 2/14/2019 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Peer-Mentoring for New International Students: A Study on Utilizing a Peer-Mentoring Program to Assist New Students Experiencing Acculturation
Investigator:	Katherine Bernstein
IRB ID:	STUDY00009525
Category of review:	(6) Voice, video, digital, or image recordings, (7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation Materials, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • CSES-A Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Administration Approval Letter, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • IRB Protocol Form, Category: IRB Protocol; • Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Student Assent Form, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB approved the protocol from 2/14/2019 to 2/13/2020 inclusive. Three weeks before 2/13/2020 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 2/13/2020 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the "Documents" tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Aaron Ayers
Aaron Ayers
Katherine Bernstein