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Lingua Asia: Decolonizing Heritage Language Education

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Abstract

The emergence of APIA programs within higher education has assisted in posing the question of what should be included in the K-12 history curriculum as it is lacking in Asian American history, African American history, and other marginalized groups' history and information. In tandem, heritage learning Mandarin classes, while they do attempt to bring the students' writing and reading levels up to their speaking levels, instead focus solely on Chinese history, culture, identity, and societal problems. This is valuable; however, what of the Chinese American identity? There has been a surplus of over 200 years of Chinese American history within this country, yet there is no learning opportunity for Chinese American heritage learners to learn in their mother tongue while also learning about their own Chinese American identity and the significance of this identity unlike Latin American Studies (LAS) which offer this and more. This project's goal is to set a standard for creating a syllabus that would reflect what is missing for Chinese American heritage learners: a class plan in which Chinese American history is taught in Mandarin. This project aims to provide tools for future Chinese American students to strengthen their ethnic and social identity through not only language education but also through the knowledge of their history.

Keywords: Decolonization, Chinese American, Education, Heritage language

Literature Review

Pedagogical Grounding

I write this project framework as a white, homosexual, non-disabled, cis-male who studies Asian Pacific Islander American (APIAS) and Chinese Studies at a Public white Institution in Williamsburg, Virginia. At the forefront of this project is the intersection of what it means to be Chinese American – an intersection in itself – in a country of their own where their mother tongue is deemed as "foreign". Underneath this intersection is a convoluted and complicated history, identity, and culture that is under-represented in its invisibility within both history and Chinese language classes. At the other side of the spectrum stands Latin American Studies (LAS), which teaches the fundamentals of history, what it means to be Latin American, and how to celebrate and speak its languages while taking all of the former into mind (Macedo, 2019). The key foundation of LAS is based on the decolonization of its countries and bodies, and taking ownership of one's marginalized self. The same may be said for APIA; however, its focus on the use of language to educate APIA populations and future scholars is what often separates the two programs from each other. Further, the political mobility of these programs stands to be a mechanism of unification and a model for each other to follow. However, the focus for the purposes of this paper is to understand how the APIA community can learn from LAS in the framework of language education being a tool for further decolonization. Furthermore, how can Latin American Studies be a blue-print for

the future cultivation of Chinese American identity and in broader terms the vast swath of cultures and languages that are under the identity of Asian Americans?

To consider next is the acquisition of a foreign language or one's heritage language. The problem with modern-day language teaching is that the framework is largely Western-centric, ignoring the value, identities, and further value of the subject being taught (Macedo, 2019). It places the selected language outside of a Western construct. For Asian languages, this is nothing short of an example of Orientalism (Said, 1978). It orientalizes them by putting them outside the categories of 'Western'. This imperiality of language then only reinstates the basis of colonialism, as the colonizer is the one who mandates the curriculum, subject matter, and which languages are to be taught, recognized, and celebrated. Therefore, "the imposition of an imperialist cultural tradition whose dire effects are still being felt today… [and] under colonialism this took the form of destroying people's language…" (Ngugi, 1993: 42). To break away from this colonialist approach means to break away from the program itself, or as Donald Macedo puts it:

> Accordingly, the challenge in the field of applied linguistics is to go beyond the usual straitjacket teaching of up-to-date methodologies and to rupture the yoke of colonialism and imperialism that informs and shapes the relationship between foreign language education and literary studies—a relationship unavoidably tainted by colonization since, to a great extent, most foreign language programs in the U.S., as mentioned, continue to be housed in foreign literature departments that, with rare exception, reproduce Western-centric dominant and imperial values—values that often devalue the "funds" of knowledge students bring to the classroom.

In today's world, languages are often only learned for use in capitalistic exchanges and monetary gains under the guise of neoliberalism (Macedo, 2019: 10). And those who do learn under the decolonized and uncoupled version only feel achievement, that they are

officially representing a culture by utilizing it only for their economic gain, and not under a guise that fundamentally appreciates the identity of a marginalized group and people (Tochon, 2019).

What constitutes the difficulty in uprooting these exploitative practices in America is its own entity, its state, and its own language (Scollon, 2004: 71). The modern era of nation-state mentality places one language at the forefront of its cultural identity. For America, it is English, a language of imperialism in its own right. America as an entity is diverse in that it is a nation of immigrants from all corners of the world, whether due to diaspora or displacement, shaping the demographics of today. This makes the teaching of language no longer a single cultural heritage, but instead a skill, or a "multifarious resource" for those that pursue it (Pennycook, 2019). This then sensationalizes globalism as the main reason for learning foreign languages. In Macedo's collections of essays on foreign language decolonization, Kramsch recognizes this within institutions such as the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) core goals:

- Communicate in the language of the people with whom one is interacting.
- Interact with awareness, sensitivity, empathy, and knowledge of the perspectives of others.
- Withhold judgment, examining one's own perspectives as similar to or different from the perspectives of people with whom one is interacting.
- Be alert to cultural differences in situations outside of one's culture, including noticing cues indicating miscommunication or causing an inappropriate action or response in a situation.
- Act respectfully according to what is appropriate in the culture and the situation where everyone is not of the same culture or language background, including gestures, expressions, and behaviors.
- Increase knowledge about the products, practices, and perspectives of other cultures.

While these core goals take into account the respect of the other culture, they fail to recognize understanding. The utilization of such words as “be alert” and the lack of phrases such as “appreciate values” diminishes the experience and importance of whichever culture and language is being engaged with. (ACTFL, 2014). Then how do foreign language (FL) programs move forward if these are the standards? Under the restraints of globalism, decolonization has become duplicitously more complex in that the group that is being decolonized is now in a struggle for identity. Native. Migrant. 2nd-generation. “Citizen”. All of these identities and more now hold the struggle for decolonization, and further, their own needs for decolonization are all different, but have the same goal: liberation (Kramsch, 2019).

Extrapolating from here, what should be included within the curriculum? How should heritage language educators decolonize the process of learning ethnic languages? Teaching a language is so much more than just teaching grammar. It is a clash of identities; furthermore, looking at the complex social identity landscape in modern-day America, this clash of identities is much more prevalent (Tochon, 2019). As will be discussed through the analysis of the primary source interview conducted by the PI, this “clash of identities” describes both “Chinese” and “American” and everything in between. The methods in which American society perpetuates these two identities and their very meaning in itself makes the “Chinese American,” the “Asian American” identity is constantly contested by the viewer and those that inhabit these identities.

Under these terms then, the vast intersections of identities, status, and language are all juxtaposed against the barriers that colonialism still puts in front of HL students.

(Austin, Kramsch, 2019: 145). Decolonization efforts made by countries within language education are still tainted by the colonial nation due to the following reasons:

- The education systems of most developing countries, on almost all levels, remain rooted in the administrative structures of the former colonial rulers . . . [and] the fact that the structure and organization of the schools reflect a foreign model necessarily has an impact on the nature of the education provided.
- The curriculum of the schools and colleges often reflects orientations of the former colonial rulers or of other advanced countries which provide assistance or are for some other reason powerful in the affairs of the given developing country. Textbooks are imported from advanced countries, and occasionally expatriate teachers can be found in the schools and particularly in the universities. Curriculum and other qualitative aspects of education have sometimes been severely neglected in developing countries because efforts have been concentrated on quantitative expansion.
- The language of the former colonial power remains the medium of instruction in some developing countries. This is important for the nature of the educational system, the values inculcated, and the availability of education to wide sections of the population.
- Foreign aid and technical assistance such as help in designing curriculum, provision of physical facilities and other educational materials have all had an impact on educational systems in developing countries.

(Altbach, 1971)

Yet when thinking of America as a case study, focusing on the Chinese American identity and population, their history is riddled with exclusion, hate, marginalization, racial uplifting as the model minority, and erasure. How then do immigrant bodies act under a colonial power that historically used them as any other imperial power had? The answer to escaping the grip that America, as an imperial body, has on the marginalized communities is embracing the process of decolonial education, language, and history. In a post-colonial world, neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism have taken up the space in the power vacuum that is supremacy. In fact, the categorization of heritage language education is an inextricable direct outcome. The curricula focus on traditional Chinese culture as well as Chinese culture propagates the idea that Chinese Americans are more

so the former than the latter (Hsieh, 2020 and Macedo, 2019). Decolonizing these classroom structures to include topics on Asian American Panethnicity as well as the Chinese American identity itself would do the "Work on identity, power for social healing, and the politics of the personal" necessary for these young students (Tochon, 2019: 274). This in itself promotes the acquisition of an identity independent from the nation-state, that lies outside the economic guise of globalism. Instead, the focus shifts onto valuing identity, one's own history, and development.

What is fundamentally different for Chinese Americans, is the propagation of heritage learning language (HL) classes taught. Chinese HL classes are designed to increase the writing and reading levels of Chinese students and bring it up to their speaking and listening levels by doing so mostly through the teaching of Chinese culture and history (Liu, 2010; Hsieh, 2020). This, in itself, helps the students connect deeper with their language and ethnic identity. Yet, to understand the issue at hand further, it is important to dissect what is inside an identity.

The current structures of HL education need a pedagogical turn into Asian American studies and a convergence of old and new paradigms. Past studies have exemplified issues with traditional HL curricula involving problems with engagement and lack of nuance with material (Hsieh, 2020). Moreover, class structures stick tightly to a 2-hour work time on language building and a 1-hour block for cultural activities. Within these boundaries, there is equal opportunity to supplement Asian American history into either language-building or cultural blocks (Liu 2010).

Using these pedagogies and standards of learning as a starting base, understanding how they can affect individuals' identities is the next step. However, first, it is important to contextualize frameworks with previous literature.

Frameworks on Identity

Ethnic Identity

Within identity are two parts that lay out the intersections and complexities that allow us to understand our communities. Internal ethnic identity is set up to be understood in 3 dimensions: cognitive, moral, and affective. Cognitive refers to the ethnic person's self-images and images of one's ethnic group, knowledge of the ethnic group's heritage and history, and knowledge of the ethnic group's values. Inventories of cognitive values have been measured already for Latine communities (Kwan & Sodowsky, 1996) “The moral dimension, which is considered the most central dimension of subjective identity, refers to an ethnic person's feelings of group obligations… [which] account for the commitment a person has to his [other group solidarity that ensues" (Isajiw, 1990, p. 36). The affective dimension of identity refers to an ethnic person's feelings of attachment to one's own ethnic group. External ethnic identity refers to the social and cultural aspects of an ethnic person, and how they participate and exist within these spaces (Kwan, Sodowsky, 2021, 52-53). The importance of defining these distinctions is that language is internal, however, it affects the external. Thus, if heritage learners are only prescribed the set catalogs of Chinese history, mythology books, and traditional Chinese folklore, their own external ethnic identity becomes theirs.

Mary Waters posits that ethnicity in itself is an option in the discourse on white ethnics such as Irish-ness being more visible on St. Patrick's Day. Although her research focus is situated on European-Americans, certain concepts can be excavated and transplanted into this discussion on Chinese American identity. She first points out that for whites, ethnicity is not something that influences their lives until they want it to (Waters, 1990: 10-11). Whereas for any person of color, ethnicity, and race are some of the first things, "resembling a physical type." (Waters, 1990: 75). Ethnicity is not a marker of race and the converse is also not true, as many scholars have cited in their research on the formation of ethnic identity (Waters 1990; Tuan 1998; Espiritu 1992; Tsai 2002; Macedo 2019). Ethnicity in itself, especially for marginalized groups, is not an empty label. Ying states ethnicity is seen as "one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perception, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership." They are, in themselves, politically and socially powerful, mobilizable, and flexible. In a later section, the intersections of Asian American Panethnicity discuss the bounds of its flexibility and power (Ying, 1999: 194).

Waters' final point in *Ethnic Options* is that the awareness and pursuit to be conscious of one's ethnic identity is "a quest for community and a desire for individuality" (Waters, 1990: 150). It is here again that the efforts of decolonization are grazed upon. Important to note is the "element of choice" within this paradigm of self-selective ethnic identity. For Chinese Americans, to a certain extent, they do not have a choice due to societal standards set onto them such as the Yellow Peril or the model minority myth (Maeda 2020, Maeda 2009, Tuan 1998). These are only surface-level

stereotypes set by history and racial prejudices (Pew Research Center, 2012); the options that are explorable from here are for the ownership of the self and identity.

Furthermore, what is necessary to note is the relationship between an understanding of Chinese as one's HL and their own ethnic identity. A stronger understanding of Chinese for Chinese Americans correlates directly to a stronger sense of their respective ethnic identities (Yu 2015). With the pedagogy of incorporating Asian American history and identity education into these classrooms, a possible outcome is the further strengthening of ethnic identity and other forms of identity which will be discussed later.

To understand the complexities of Chinese American identity, theories on social and ethnic identity theory have been postulated and used for decades in the pursuit of understanding the socializations of groups and how they are formed. This section will focus on defining the main ideas of each theory as well as their application.. There will then be a discussion on how these pieces fit together to form what Yen Le Espiritu coined as "Asian American Panethnicity" (Espiritu 1992). Lastly, an analysis of Mia Tuan's research question, "Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?" through each of these theoretical lenses will be done while extrapolating concepts for this very project.

Ethnic Identity Formation Theory(ies)

Table 1 Criteria for the Identity Statuses

	Identity Status			
Position on Occupation and Ideology	Identity Achievement	Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion	Moratorium
Crisis	present	absent	present or absent	in crisis
Commitment	present	present	absent	present but vague

Erikson's theory of ego identity formation served as the basis for Marcia's concept of four ego identity statuses, describing how adolescents develop their sense of self (Erikson, 1968 and Marcia 1980). This perspective views adolescence as a phase of identity exploration that typically leads to commitment. The four statuses are "diffuse," where no exploration or commitment to ethnic identity exists; "foreclosed," involving commitment without exploration of ethnic identity; "moratorium," marked by exploration without commitment of ethnic identity; and "achieved," where exploration of ethnic identity results in commitment. Those with the achieved status tend to have higher self-esteem than foreclosures or those with identity diffusion (Marcia 1980).

Phinney et. al (2001) proposed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development in adolescents. The initial stage involves an unexamined ethnic identity, combining foreclosed and diffuse statuses from Marcia's model. The second stage entails searching for ethnic identity through a crisis, encountering issues like cultural differences, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. The third stage represents ethnic identity achievement, wherein individuals accept themselves, resolve conflicts, and feel more secure about their ethnic identity. However, achieving an ethnic identity doesn't

necessarily mean high ethnic involvement (Phinney et. al, 2001). Critics argue that the linear stage-based approach of ethnic identity formation theory overlooks its multidimensional nature and the influence of contextual and sociocultural factors. Incorporating these factors is suggested for a more comprehensive understanding of ethnic identity.

Separate from this theory of ethnic identity, is one postulated regarding HL education which will be used throughout this project. Lucy Tse (1998) describes four stages of ethnic identity formation in relation to the learning of education that is tied closely with Erikson's model but offers a nuanced point of view for this project. "Unawareness" is a brief stage and occurs during an individual's childhood when they are not yet aware of majority and minority groups. "Ethnic ambivalence/evasion" describes an aim to cede to "Americanization" and a rejection of the native/ethnic identity (Garcia et al. 1995). This is largely due to the standards of Whiteness and its legacy. "Ethnic emergence" is ascribed to those who are finding it hard to fully assimilate into the dominant culture and are open to challenge feelings of discomfort regarding their ethnic identity. "Ethnic identity corporation" is an acceptance of identity and gives the individual the ability to find comfort in this community and space. An example of when this can occur is when in the ethnic homeland, but also cannot incorporate their American experiences (Tse, 1998).

For this project, these two theories will be used in tandem when discussing ethnic identity and its development within participants' narratives. This will allow for the two theories to offer spaces of overlap for the other, as well as points of comparison and contrast.

Acculturation Theory

Acculturation is the process of cultural change experienced by individuals exposed to two different cultures. This concept acknowledges potential conflicts for ethnic minorities encountering two cultures, with a focus on maintaining ethnic identity amid constant mainstream culture contact. Immigrant youth or those with immigrant parents often face daily conflict and stress as their cultural values clash with peers or school culture. The decision to retain or relinquish their ethnic minority status becomes challenging. When significant disparities exist between cultures in beliefs, customs, values, and languages, substantial cultural and identity changes are expected (Lieber et. al, 2001).

Originally rooted in an assimilationist model, acculturation theory aimed for immigrants to quickly adopt dominant cultural norms to fit into mainstream society. However, this model's inadequacy in explaining conflicts and the reluctance of ethnic groups to fully shed their own culture's aspects led to criticism. Berry's acculturation model (1980) introduced four adaptation types. "Assimilation" involves adopting the mainstream culture while discarding ethnic identity. "Biculturalism" embraces both dominant and ethnic cultural identities simultaneously. "Rejection" rejects the dominant culture in favor of the ethnic culture, and "marginalization" rejects both cultures.

Berry's model offers insights into the possible adaptations for individuals exposed to dual cultures, particularly through the concept of biculturalism. This adaptation is considered conducive to positive psychological outcomes. In contexts like intergenerational conflicts within immigrant families, biculturalism offers a way for

children to integrate into mainstream culture while retaining their ethnic identity. For this study, this theory gives a measurable basis to use when analyzing qualitative data as well as how certain styles of curriculum can be useful in the progression of acculturation.

Empirical studies examining acculturation have shown that it is not a black-and-white narrative, For a group of 83 Chinese immigrants, the process of acculturation was a tug of war between the hopes to retain their ethnic identity and the pressure to assimilate (Lieber et. al. 2001). This research provides and contextualizes the fact that "acculturation" is not a black-and-white process. It is instead a myriad of stages in which assimilation and ethnic identity overlap, but also run in opposite directions. In the midst of it all, a "reconciliation process" takes place to determine the next steps for the individual, and if the loss of their ethnic identity, language, and other aspects are worth mourning.

Participants in a separate study compare this process to the commodification of Western Chinese food: "[I'm] like Western Chinese food, a facade, but American" (Kuo 2001: 15). Within this same project, sentiments of being too white-washed, too Asian, too Chinese, and too American describe an after-effect of acculturation in which there is a feeling of not belonging both with in-groups and out-groups. "I don't feel quite American" is a further example of this and helps to qualitatively understand the processing of acculturation (Juo, 2001: 17).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory explains why some minorities might disassociate from their ethnic group to assimilate into the mainstream culture. It suggests that individuals in low-status groups employ strategies to improve their social standing and self-esteem (Erikson, 1968). The theory posits that individuals seek positive self-concepts and high self-esteem, leading them to identify with comparatively superior groups in society. Those in low-status groups adopt various strategies to alter their social position. If they perceive permeable boundaries between their group and high-status groups, they may assimilate into the mainstream. When boundaries are impermeable, they might reinterpret their group positively, emphasize advantageous traits, or even compare themselves with lower-status groups.

In summary, ethnic identity formation theory focuses on stage development, acculturation theory addresses conflicts arising from exposure to different cultures, and social identity theory examines identity through intergroup relations. It proposes that individuals choose identities based on groups' social status and boundaries. Similarities emerge between ethnic identity formation theory and acculturation theory. "Rejection" and "assimilation" correspond to early stages, indicating limited identity exploration. "Marginalization" aligns with a lack of group choice. "Biculturalism" corresponds to the highest stage of identity formation, mirroring integration in acculturation theory, where individuals explore and integrate two cultures.

What is interesting about this last step of “biculturalism” is how it assumes equality between the two cultures. An interview from Tuan’s study recounts one

participant stating they "picked and chose Chinese culture that would *work* in America" or another account tells the story that "[his] father is truly Chinese American because…he does not even speak Chinese." This ideation of equality in this cultural relationship is a false dream. These two experiences demonstrate a clear withdrawal from their Chinese ethnic identity, and a lean into the American (Tuan, 1998: 50).

The use of this theory is to use it as a basis to build on the new type of social identity that is truly one of "bicultural" means. To level this, a later discussion on the metamorphic process of language identity and new forms of language will be done to understand and qualify modern social identities.

Asian American Panethnicity

To understand these theories in a scheme of communal identity, the formation of Asian American identity lies at an interesting intersection of politics, history, and exclusion. To understand the formation of Asian American identity, it is first important to contextualize the history and the process of how this identity came to be formed, politicized, and reclaimed through historical analysis.

Though there are many ways to understand and contextualize the formation of Asian America, law and naming conventions are at the core of this dialogue. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was the first immigration act signed barring a specific ethnic group from entering America. Of course, the Page Act in 1875 can be seen as its precursor, there was no direct wording that specified the barring of Chinese as a "racial" or "ethnic" group from immigration. Following this legislation were multiple

immigration policies favoring Western Europeans over any Japanese (Gentleman's Agreement of 1907), any within the ideation of what America considered to be Asian within the parameters of quota (Quota Act of 1924), and later the granting of independence to the Philippines only to include them within the terminology of the Asiatic Barred Region (Tydings-McDuffie Act).

Table 2. State by Year of First Asian Anti-Miscegenation Law: Language Used to Label Groups and Modifications

State	Year	Asian Groups Excluded	Anti-Miscegenation Statutes and Amendments
Nevada	1861	Chinese	Nev. Terr. Laws ch. 32, sec. 1, 3 (1861)
	1912	Mongolian (Yellow) and Malay (Brown)	Nev. Rev. Laws sec. 6514 [249] (1912)
Idaho	1864	Chinese	Idaho Terr. Gen Laws at 604 (1864)
	1921	Mongolian	Idaho Laws ch. 115 (1921)
Arizona	1865	Mongolian	Ariz. Terr. Laws ch. 30, secs, 3, 4, 5 (1865)
	1912	Mongolian, Malay, and Hindu	Ariz. Terr. Laws ch. 17 (1931)
Oregon	1866	Chinese	Ore. Laws at 10, secs. 1-2 (1866)
	1893	Mongolian	Ore. Laws at 41 (1893)
California	1880	Mongolian	Cal. Code Amend. ch. 41, sec. 1 (1880) amending Cal. Civ. Code sec. 69 (1872)
	1933	Mongolian and Malay	Cal. Stat. chs. 104, 105 (1933) amending Cal. Civ. Code secs. 60, 69
Utah	1888	Mongolian	Utah Laws. ch 45, secs. 2, 5, 14, 15 (1888)
	1939	Mongolian and Malay	Utah Laws. ch. 50 (1939)
Mississippi	1892	Mongolian	Miss. Code Ann. sec. 2859 (1892)
Missouri	1909	Mongolian	Mo. Rev. Laws sec. 4727, 4728, 8820 (1909)
Montana	1909	Chinese and Japanese	Mont. Laws ch. 49 sec. 1-7 (1909)
Nebraska	1913	Chinese and Japanese	Neb. Laws ch. 72 (1913)
South Dakota	1913	Mongolian, Malay, and Korean	S.D. Laws. ch. 266 (1913)
Wyoming	1913	Mongolian and Malay	Wyo. Laws ch. 57, sec. 1-2 (1913)
Virginia	1924	Nonwhite, Mongolian, Malay, and Asiatic Indian	Va. Acts ch. 371, sec. 1-7 (1924)
Georgia	1927	Nonwhite, persons of color, Mongolian, Chinese, Japanese, and Asiatic Indian	Ga. Acts No. 317 (1927) Codified in GA. Code Ann. secs. 53 [106], 53 [312] (1933)
Maryland	1935	Malay	Md. Laws ch. 60 (1935)

Note: Compiled from Martyn (1979).

Sohoni, 2007

A further look into these ideations of Asian Americans can be looked at through anti-miscegenation laws through the 19th and 20th centuries in 14 states (Sohoni, 2007: 597). Although terminologies such as "Mongoloid, Malay, or Chinese" are used to distinguish the different ethnic groups from an American point of view, the common factor is geographic origin: Asia.

Furthermore, the National Census Bureau contributed heavily to the monolithicization of Asian Americans under inaccurate, racist, and outright illogical groupings of incoming immigrant groups from Asia. In 1870, "Chinese" was the first trace of Asian American identity within the collection mechanisms for the census. During

the exclusionary period, the Japanese replaced the Chinese in labor, and then the Filipinos did the same for the Japanese after the Gentleman's Agreement in 1907. Thus, the census also moved with these new demographic shifts shaped by legislation by including Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Korean under "Color or Race" in the race section of the 1930 Census. However, Koreans often floated between "Other" or having an actual checkbox on the census form due to their smaller population. By 1970, five Asian Pacific groups had made their way onto the census: Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hawaiian, and Korean.

A marker for the beginning of Asian American Panethnic political identity is the disputes over the 1980 census counts of minority populations (Espiritu, 1992: 115). Several Asian American coalition groups called for the formation of the Asian-Pacific American Advocacy Committee for census collection processes. In 1976, the Census Bureau invited twenty-one Asian Americans to a meeting and gave them two options. The first was to form a committee that would advocate for the Pan-Asian population, the second was to have each ethnic community leader interact with their community and form independent groups. The members voted to form the Panethnic Committee. This decision signifies two things. It describes the formation of an ethnic identity through common experiences and also demonstrates the political formation of Asian America (Maeda, 2009).

This identity theory is included for many reasons. The first reason is how scholars have come to understand the formation of identity over a temporal scale. While most of the students in HL education systems are 2nd generation Chinese Americans, Rumbaut

(1997) found that most of those who are 1st generation or 2nd generation will align with their origin nation identity. Over time, generations will use their hyphenated identity (e.g. Chinese American), and later a possible outcome is using the pan-ethnic identity. Secondly, this identity formation theory is special in the way that it can be defined as a political identity. Yes, it was created in that context, but how it is utilized in modern contexts can largely vary as instead a monolith-izable agent, discounting any nuance in the myriad of "Asian American". It is also used as a celebratory agent. The APM project at William and Mary defines this and is an exceptional example of the terminology "Asian American" as celebratory. Thirdly, what about in the context of HL education? Again, here we are faced with a lack of understanding and a lack of utilization of Asian American content in HL spaces. This will be discussed in a later section

Tying Identity to Language

Through this section, multiple theories of identity and ethnicity formation were discussed. How at all does this tie to the formation of new language schools for Chinese American youth? One scholar that must be highlighted is Tse's (1998) work on describing the formation of identity concerning the acquisition of heritage language. Her four stages that are proposed: unawareness, ethnic ambivalence, ethnic emergence, and ethnic identity corporation are tied directly to the heritage language. However, this heritage language curriculum that is being measured in her study is standard, traditional, and not engaging (Hsieh 2020). So the question asked here then is, what about a curriculum that highlighted the Chinese American identity, the Asian American identity?

How does that affect the cycle of ethnic identity and the self-determination of identity? This question is only answered in the application of this research in the classroom..

Forever Foreigners?

However, the formation of Asian America also came under the pressures of American society to conform to the propagation of a model minority in 1966. Under this dialogue, Asian Americans began to consciously look at their identity, their race, and their hyphenation under an American system that favored whiteness as something to leave behind (Waters 1990, Tuan 1998, Espiritu 1992). Did they achieve the title *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?* In this section, the building and breakdown of identity will be analyzed in relation to the black power movement and legislation.

During the early 1970s, Asian Americans looked towards blackness as a concept to organize themselves politically in protest of the Vietnamese War and the context of the civil rights movement (Espiritu 1992, Chang 2003). What was also transformative during this period was the establishment and then mobilization of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). The TWLF provided an outlet for marginalized college professors, students, and allies to unionize and set demands for an ethnic studies program. It was in this context that Asian Americans learned to "perform blackness" (Maeda, 2009: 5).

This experience documented the struggle of Asian American identity against whiteness, an emerging Asian American identity, a transnational identity and sympathy towards Asian bodies in Vietnam and abroad suffering from Western imperialism and colonialism, and the great formation of Asian American identity. To understand the

struggles faced against whiteness, imperialism, and colonialism in a broader sense, first, it is important to define whiteness or, more accurately in historical terms, what whiteness was not.

In *Ozawa v United States,* the definition of "what whiteness was not" was clearly defined to uphold the terminology of citizenship to be granted to "free white persons." Ozawa was the "perfect candidate to become an American citizen…[he] attended the University of California…settled in Hawai`i…spoke English at home and sent his kids to Sunday school." However, he did not qualify for citizenship simply because "clearly of a race which is *not* Caucasian." This shows a distinctive and definitive difference between what is deemed "white" and even based on "Caucasian-ness." One would think then that having biological origin from the Caucasus region would grant citizenship; but, this was once again not the case for Bhagat Sing Thind as he did not fit under a "common sense" definition of whiteness (Maeda, 2009: 23-26).

Table 1
Immigration Quotas Based on National Origin
(Annual Quota for Each Fiscal Year, Beginning July 1, 1929)

Country or Area	*Quota*	*Country or Area*	*Quota*
Afghanistan[a]	100	Muscat (Oman)[a]	100
Albania	100	Nauru (British mandate)	100
Andorra	100	Nepal[a]	100
Arabian peninsula	100	Netherlands	3,153
Armenia	100	New Guinea, Territory of (including appertaining islands) (Australian mandate)[a]	100
Australia (including Tasmania, Papua, islands pertaining to Australia)	100	New Zealand	100
Austria	1,413	Norway	2,377
Belgium	1,304	Palestine (with Trans-Jordan) (British mandate)	100
Bhutan[a]	100	Persia	100
Bulgaria	100	Poland	6,524
Cameroon (British mandate)	100	Portugal	440
Cameroon (French mandate)	100	Ruanda and Urundi (Belgian mandate)	100
China[a]	100	Rumania	295
Czechoslovakia	2,874	Russia, European and Asiatic	2,784
Danzig, Free City of	100	Samoa, Western (mandate of New Zealand)	100
Denmark	1,181	San Marino	100
Egypt	100	Siam[a]	100
Estonia	116	South Africa, Union of	100
Ethiopia (Abyssinia)	100	South West Africa (mandate of Union of South Africa)	100
Finland	569	Spain	252
France	3,086	Sweden	3,314
Germany	25,957	Switzerland	1,707
Great Britain and Northern Ireland	65,721	Syria and the Lebanon (French mandate)	123
Greece	307	Tanganyika (British mandate)	100
Hungary	869	Togoland (British mandate)	100
Iceland	100	Turkey	226
India[a]	100	Yap and other Pacific Islands under Japanese mandate[a]	100
Iraq (Mesopotamia)	100	Yugoslavia	845
Irish Free State	17,853		
Italy	5,802		
Japan[a]	100		
Latvia	236		
Liberia	100		
Liechtenstein	100		
Monaco	100		
Morocco (French & Spanish Zones and Tangier)	100		

SOURCE: *Proclamation by the President of the United States*, no. 1872, March 22, 1929, 46 Stat. 2984.
[a] Quotas for these countries available only for persons born within the respective countries who are eligible to citizenship in the United States and admissible under the immigration laws of the United States.

Ngai, M. M. (2004). Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

The propagation of these values was continued through legislation mentioned in the last section until 1965. The Hart-Cellar

Act permitted immigration from the previously known “Asiatic Barred Zone” and Eastern European countries that previously held quotas that were 2% of America’s population in 1890 for these minority groups. It is to be noted again that that very same quota act was put into order in 1924, using data from 1890 (Espiritu, 1992). This was an obvious attack on all minority and marginalized groups in America at that time.

Within this framework, Asian, and later, Asian American, were socially constructed terms to group many people of diverse cultures, countries, and backgrounds together. But it is important that the latter term still exists today as a political body. The Civil Rights movement in itself acted as a mechanism for Asian American identity to be solidified into a vehicle for change and politicization. This was done through the support of the Black Panthers and Asian Americans’ willingness to be unionized for the rise of Asian America. Concurrently, the US government’s utilization of terms such as “Model Minority” and “Wiz Kids” was to pit minority groups against each other and water down the escalation of the Civil Rights movement (Maeda 2009, TIME, 1987).

However, solidarity was not lacking between racial and ethnic groups even with the mass propagation of the model minority. “If you can’t relate to China, you can’t relate to the Panthers" was a slogan that African American activists often used when discussing the rights of Asian Americans (Maeda, 2009: 77). This also gave birth to the “Yellow Panthers” and strong solidarity seen through posters in rallies and protests stating that “Yellow Peril supports Black Power” (Maeda 2009 and Chang 2003). This provided an outlet which Maeda describes as a way for Asian Americans to “Make it [in America] on the backs of Blacks” by mobilizing with them (Maeda, 2009: 94). This built-in solidarity

through community organization marked a key point for the creation and facilitation of Asian American political identity.

From here, the very conception of Asian American identity is clear. So how does Mia Tuan's famous question "Forever Foreigner or Honorary White?" come into play? While the political blooming of the Asian American identity was under way, simultaneously, the creation of the term "model minority" was under work to monolithicize the Asian American community under terms that should benefit any group: "family-oriented, self-reliant, hard-working and problem-free." This statement was geared against African Americans as a weapon of comparison. It also was wildly inaccurate, as it only considered Asian Americans who were "skilled laborers' " or of a high educational background (1965 Hart-Cellar Act). It did not capture the economic aftermath that the Japanese faced after internment but instead posed them as a group that kept their heads down (Lee, 2015). Additionally, the tokenization of Asian Americans as "honorary whites" is concurrently a result of Asian Americans leaning toward becoming this model minority (Maeda 2009, Tuan 1998).

"Forever foreigner" is, in fact, the same side of the same coin. An interview answer from Taun's research highlights this concept: "I'm not your typical American when people think American" (136). Or, a separate answer describes discontent with the conceptualization of what "American" means: "I may be Chinese, but I'm American too" (151). Through the understanding and feeling of being seen as "forever foreign" from the outside based solely on race, "honorary white" is also not a viable option for Asian Americans. The use of "forever foreign" denies the actuality of advantages that Asian

Americans have over other minorities within America; while the use of "honorary white" denies the unique combination of nativism and racism Asian Americans experience on a day-to-day basis (Tuan, 1998: 163).

Shifting Paradigms in HL Education

The purpose of this section is to outline the struggles of HL education on a macro level. Once a bigger picture is analyzed, the complexities and hurdles of Chinese HL education will be described and possible solutions given. Finally, a look into the prospects of the inclusion of Asian American history into Chinese HL education will be postulated under themes discussed in Macedo's *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education: The Misteaching of English and Other Colonial Languages.* The previous sections' purpose was to provide a historical and legal context on the makeup of Asian American history and demographics. It also allows this dialogue to interplay with themes of identity, race relations, and the feeling of being portrayed as "forever foreign."

Chinese Heritage Language Schools

Chinese HL schools, dating back to the 19th century, were established by immigrant communities in ethnic enclaves to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage (Liu, 2010; Zhou & Kim 2006). The schools themselves serve a dual purpose. Firstly, they nurture the heritage language by enriching the students' capabilities in reading and writing. Secondly, they act as a space for community building (Liu, 2010; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Operated typically as non-profit entities, Chinese heritage language schools sustain themselves through tuition fees and fundraising efforts (Liu, 2010).

Classes, often held on weekends, comprise two hours of language instruction and one hour dedicated to cultural activities such as tai chi or calligraphy (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Instructors are often community members, including parent volunteers and students from high school or college. Supplementary programs, such as math, reading, science, or SAT preparation, are also available for enrolled students (Liu, 2010). These schools play a vital role in maintaining language proficiency and cultural traditions within immigrant communities (Liu, 2010; Zhou & Kim, 2006).

Challenges in HL Education

The struggles of forming an FL education curriculum, let alone an HL education curriculum, pose a challenge. However, when looking for a solution, the following needs to be considered:

> The answer is complex, including a variety of structural and institutional constraints, curricular and methodological problems, and a lack of social support. Underlying all of these factors, however, are issues related to power relationships and to the view of foreign languages as just that: foreign and, hence, alien and somewhat suspicious. In short, what we have attempted to demonstrate . . . that to a considerable extent, the real and perceived failures of foreign language education in the United States are, in fact, evidence that such programs are accomplishing specifically what the broader society implicitly expects of them. Foreign language education, in fact, is destined to fail for the vast majority of American students because it is expected to fail.
>
> (Reagan & Osborn, 1998, p. 58)

When applying this statement to the realm of HL education, identity must also be taken into account as language is one of the core elements in creating external ethnic identity. Thus, removing the idea of a language outside of English being *foreign* is the goal for the future of HL education. By de-foreignizing, decolonizing, and de-imperializing language,

it makes it known that these ethnic minorities, although by definition not the majority, are certainly not pollutants (Okihiro,).

To this, a closer look at LAS needs to be done. Within LAS curricula are classes that teach history, culture, and arts are even taught within different dialects and languages of the Latin American community. In addition, diasporic studies are offered as a means to de-foreignize the ideas and the bodies of the Latin American community. At the same time, this assists in the decolonization of themselves (Macedo, 2019). What is important to note is that there is a positive relationship between the building of social and ethnic identity and having literacy in one's ethnic language (Yu, 2015). So these same steps must be taken within the scope of the APIA community that have been successful within the Latin and Mexican American communities alike.

Unstable Structures in Chinese HL Education

When talking about Chinese HL education, the first thing that needs to be discussed is the makeup and structure of Chinese schools in America. First, the hiring of teachers is virtually a nonexistent process. What this means, is that most of the educators are volunteers. The volunteers, however, are also recent immigrants to America (Zhou & Kim, 2006). This will also be demonstrated through the primary source interviews. Additionally, their connection to 1st generation and 2nd generation Chinese American students is undefined – there is no distinct tie to being "Chinese American." This also helps to explain how the content for Chinese schools is theorized and distributed.

The content's goal for Chinese schools involves raising the speaker's reading and writing capabilities. The content itself however is based on Chinese history, mythology, and cultural readings. What this largely does for Chinese American students is bring them closer to what the "Chinese" side of their identity means and looks like. Yet, this lacks nuance in the domain of what being Chinese American, and further what being Asian American truly means in a modern context.

What this structuring has also done is created a theory on identity formation that was briefly discussed in the Formations of Ethnic Identity section. The process of ethnic identity development unfolds in four distinct stages: unawareness, ethnic ambivalence, ethnic emergence, and, ethnic identity formation. This staging is fully influenced by the structuring and active participation within a Chinese school's curriculum. Yet, it could be strengthened by incorporating Asian American history into the classroom, bridging the gap between the two identities of being both Chinese and American, and Asian and American. What the current structures and curricula do is make it so that Chinese American students feel that they don't belong to an ethnic homeland group but also cannot incorporate their American experiences into a complete identity (Tuan 1998, Tse 1998).

Latin American Studies as a Blueprint

The inspiration for this research is based on the conceptualization of Latin American Studies. Formed after the success of the Third World Liberation Front, Latin American studies was one of the only programs that taught a marginalized identity in its ethnic language. To look at a thriving case study, William & Mary's Latin American

Studies program currently offers the following classes in the ethnic language of Spanish including classes like International Political Economics, Bilingualisms, The Latino Novel, etc.

The breadth of classes taught in what is also a language of the colonizer is also something to be celebrated for Latin-American-identifying students (Macedo, 2019). The only classes taught within the same institution in Asian languages are housed within Modern Language departments. The same may be said for many of the higher education institutions that follow ACTFL standards of learning (Macedo, 2019: 1-49). Thus a power vacuum is left for Asian American Studies to be taught in the same regard under different languages. The problem is that there is nothing to fill this vacuum at the moment.

Exportables for Chinese HL Education

Now that LAS is the main source of inspiration when it comes to curriculum development, where do we go from here? What can be taken from this rich and resourceful pedagogy to be supplemented into this paradigm shift in Chinese HL education?

Firstly, Tochon highlights 4 key principles critical to decolonizing language education. These are imputed here due to their directness and accuracy in the context of this project:

1. Critical to language education are the notions of status, hegemony, homogeneity, lingua franca, and language war. Furthermore, a few key languages not only support an agenda for international communication, they support globalization of capital, which represents a neo-colonial force in the sense that Foucault (1975)

gave to this term, associating it with the colonization of the mind. This point relates to language market issues.

2. Language teachers have to question their role as proponents of an indoctrination system, with simplistic rules reducing languages to structures and standardized performance assessments for bureaucratic purposes. Bureaucracy is part of a dehumanizing agenda that treats humans like robots that must respond to well-specified goals. Bureaucracy hinders forms of emancipatory learning that could focus on proficiency and cross-cultural understanding. This point relates to the planned economies of schooling.
3. The necessary conditions to do any better do not seem to be met in today's schools; a peaceful evolution is required in world language education (WLE) to free teachers and students alike from industrial and technical thinking that supports forms of assessment which handicap creative learning and restrain the teacher's freedom to adapt the curriculum to every student.
4. Limiting views of schooling are currently criticized, but the unschooling trend is being revived by forces that capture children's minds with profitable tools in the name of online emancipation and differentiation through privatization. The emancipation work must focus on a change of mindset.

(Tochon 2019: 264-265)

These 4 principles highlight a few things. They undertake the responsibility of defining a key aspect of Latin American studies: dialect. The various forms of the Chinese language are not exclusive to this challenge. To illustrate the possibility of these types of curriculum planning, Mandarin would be used inside the classroom as the main dialect. The employment of a decolonial perspective will also allow for other dialects to be nurtured within this setting (Macedo, 2019; 35). What is exportable from dialect to dialect, unlike Spanish, is the written form. This allows students to read, think, and write within whatever dialect of Chinese they employ. It will also allow for the opportunity to speak with their parents on whatever topics are being taught about Asian American history in their dialects. This linguistic structure that Chinese has, makes the transformability and flexibility of curricula like this much more utilizable. This further creates an adaptability of curricula on a student-to-student basis. Assignments can be

instructed to allow the student to either explore their parents' dialect or use Mandarin to interview them on their experiences growing up, immigrating, or how they experience America. The above methodology allows for students to multilingually explore their identity as Chinese-Americans. What is realized out of using the above methodology, is an emancipation of the mind. It allows for the students to multilingually explore their identity and own self as Chinese Americans.

While this rhetoric is important to this research, one thing that is ignored is the relationship between parents as community centers and educational bodies to influence their children. Esther Kim of William & Mary cites that in Texas children wished that their parents were more aware of historical APIA issues so that it could be easily discussed within the household and on a broader spectrum (Kim, 2023). Thus this project is not just a tool for the classroom, but also one for the household.

Additionally, a special relationship exists between Latin American identity and Asian American identity. Kling states that for Latin American communities there is a dependency on identity rather than the individual country as a formation of a greater pan-ethnic community (Kling, 2019). From the previous analysis of Panethnic Asian American identity, this conclusion can also be drawn. Yet the complexities within Asian American identity are not easily defined in language, history, or experience.

Another problem with conceptualizing such a large task is that there are not many educators in the field of HL education who are also scholars in Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander History, identities, and cultures (Macedo, 2019). Additionally, how to provide the same services in different languages adds difficulty in accessibility and again educator numbers. However, we must start somewhere in the pursuit of

decolonizing Asian American history through the adoption and adaptation of ethnic language as its vehicle, both in the classroom, in the household, and in the mind.

Research Methods

1. Participant Recruitment

After gaining IRB approval for this project in August 2023, I first went to the majority of Chinese American spaces on campus. Originally, the goal was to go to William & Mary's Chinese Student Organization (CSO), the Taiwanese American Student Association (TASA), and the Asian American Student Initiative (AASI). However, after just going to the CSO, I received 20 responses to my survey asking about interest in participation and basic demographics. These questions and visualizations can be found in Appendix I. At this point, I felt that this was enough participants and chose to not go forward in recruiting from TASA and AASI to make this project as successful as possible. Another basis for this reasoning is the overlap between these three clubs as there are not many Chinese Americans, let alone Asian American spaces at William and Mary, a predominantly white institution (PWI). In the survey, I ask if they had gone to Chinese schools, and how they viewed their ethnic identity, social class, etc. I also make sure to keep them informed that they did not need to have any experience going to Chinese school growing up. This allows for the participant pool to be of diverse experiences and give a holistic Chinese American experience. The results from this form are in the Appendix.

After the 20 students filled out the survey, I sent out an email directly with a spreadsheet that they could fill in the time to meet for an interview. Thereafter, only 15 of the participants scheduled an interview. The interviews took place during the week of

9/10/1023 to 9/16/2023. One of the participants contracted COVID-19 and could no longer participate, totaling the number of interviewees to 14.

Participants were made aware of the potential sensitivity of topics such as identity, and lack of representation, and any personal experiences that they chose to share were completely voluntary and not forced. I make sure to make it a safe space for all participants as the questions target their experiences in social spaces, Chinese schools, and in America as a larger construct. I attempt to make this a conversation focused on them. In doing so, the participants can freely spaek on their identity, question it, and delve into new parts of themselves. Reflectively, participants seemed to want to also talk about these topics but hadn't had a space to do so, making it a positive space for them to do so.

2. Interview Question Model

The original idea to conduct interviews came from the questionnaire that was included in the Appendix of Mia Tuan's "Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?" I adapt some questions to fit the topic of this research and later construct questions that are be key to this research and HL curricula. Tuan's items largely focus on the emergence and conceptualization of Asian American and Chinese American identity, how these identities are perceived and acted upon in social spaces, and how the people within these communities experienced growing up (Tuan). These types of questions mirrored my research but needed to fit into a structure for college students.

The questions model had two possible outcomes. The first track waiss a total of 13 questions that are for students who had experience in Chinese school. The second track is a total of 12 questions for students who did not go to Chinese school. Both

include follow-up questions when necessary. The necessity to ask follow-up questions is based on further explanation and extrapolation. The difference in question tracks is to flesh out the experiences of the two groups and understand the complexities of each student.

The first set of 5 questions is the same for all participants for consistency of information on topics such as their family and community growing up. These items focus on how each individual grew up, and how they feel represented, both in the classroom and in their respective communities. The middle section then split depending on their experience with Chinese school or lack thereof. The last set of 4 questions then focuses on identity. How do they occupy spaces as Chinese American students in a PWI, and how does the terminology "American" retain to them were example questions in this section.

3. Interview Structure

The interviews are held in the Swem Library and the Sadler Student Center on William and Mary's campus. All of the interviews are conducted in person. An hour is blocked out for each interviewee to give flexibility and to alleviate any pressures on time for the interview. The scripted questions are formatted flexibly and participants are asked to expand on certain questions if there is more content or context needed to get a holistic answer. This also makes the interview structure light-hearted and conversational, making the participants answer questions naturally.

The equipment I use to record the interview was a USBM-10 - RØDE NT-USB Microphone checked out from Swem Library and my personal MacBook to store the password protected audio files. To transcribe the files, I use Descript, a software for transcribing and editing. After the transcriptions are complete, I go through them

manually editing any changes that the software has made or any notable errors. Each interview varies in time and content between 9 minutes and 45 minutes.

4. Positionality Statement

When garnering interest from the participants to take part in this research, I make sure to notify them of my identity. I am a white homosexual low-income male who has worked and studied in Asia for about half of my undergraduate education. Through these intersections and experiences, I feel comfortable and empowered to go forward with this research even if it may not pertain to my specific identity, it pertains to a community that has provided me with so much more than I could ever imagine.

With certain questions on identity, I affirm my participants' responses with a positive response, never questioning or debating them on how they saw themselves. Rather, these interviews are safe and comfortable spaces for them to share whatever they felt necessary.

5. Coding

Each item question in the interviews is analyzed using a mixture of qualitative methods. The qualitative factors will entail the actual answers from participants, how they differ, and how answers from previous questions impact and influence each respective answer. This type of data analysis allows for themes and main ideas to come forward and be clear in the research at hand. This is done for each item in the Results section. Furthermore, the use of ethnic identity frameworks is used in the Discussion section once all of the results have been analyzed thoroughly. This allows for a holistic picture of the participants' views on their own identity.

6. Structuring the Data

The qualitative methods I use are inspired by Mia Tuan's (1998) work and from a curriculum perspective research by the Asian American Research Initiative (AARI) (Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework, 2022). These two sources of inspiration empathetically shape this project in an attempt to tell the full narrative of growing up Chinese American within the classroom and within the participants' respective communities. I use my background in ethnic studies to inform the narratives and experiences shared by the interviewees. What this means is that I take the context and content of each interviewee and place it in its own historicity and its own space. On top of this, the concepts built in by AARI are present throughout the lens I use in my analysis. The themes include: Identity, Power & Oppression, Community & Solidarity, and Reclamation & Joy.

Lastly, for the purposes of keeping anonymity throughout the paper, the participants were each given pseudonyms. As is stated in the Results section, the questions followed themes and allowed for easy transitions between the dialogues gathered in this research.

Results

This section discusses the results and qualitative interpretations collected from the 14 primary source interview transcripts. First, I discuss the nuances of family structure and growing up. Thereafter, analyzing representation in the community will allow us to understand how each individual saw themselves in their respective social spaces. Next, inspired by Mia Tuan's research, I explore the importance of connecting with culture from the parent's perspective.

The above four sections aptly set up the key discussion on the effects of the HL curriculum or lack thereof and its effects on identity. First, the conversation on education starts by analyzing the participants' experience in the K-12 classroom regarding Asian American representation in the history curriculum. This allows for a direct transition into understanding the nuances of Chinese schools and the structures that each of them went through; albeit, all of them were very different. Penultimately, the impacts of attending/not attending Chinese school will be analyzed. This will then feed into the discussion on how curriculum affects them individually and how they see it to be better improved after having experienced it. Lastly, the discussion will conclude with identity, specifically inspired by a question adapted from Tuan's research, "What does it mean to be an American?"

1. Family and Growing Up

This section of results focuses on the placement of the individuals who were interviewed throughout their childhood and adolescence and how this may have later

affected their identity formation, reflections on identity, and connections to their respective heritage and culture.

The majority of participants reported growing up in Northern Virginia at some point in their childhood and adolescence. One participant described the environment that they grew up in as a "healthy Asian community." Some participants also recounted their family's movement to America which displays a clear story and fresh formation of Chinese American identity and the importance of retaining the "Chinese-ness" of their respective identities. Five of the participants stated that they either spent the first few years of their childhood in China or that their family would make it necessary to go back every summer and immerse themselves in their ethnic culture. One such participant, Stacy, a transnational adoptee described her unique experience in the below statement:

> I was born in mainland China, and I was there for about a year, and then I was adopted by my parents, and then we moved to Zambia for a couple years, and then Taipei for like five years, and then Chengdu in China. Uh, and then I moved to Arlington County when I was like 10 and then we stayed there until I was 15, and we moved back to Beijing and we were meant to stay for a few years, but because of COVID we were evacuated. So I came, I went back to Arlington and then I came to college. -Stacy

This unique diasporic experience describes the complexity of growing up Chinese American. A constant movement between physical places, but at the same time a constant subversion of diasporic identity. But this is only one of the fourteen stories that are told through this research. The majority of stories follow the following narrative from Daniel who describes his family environment in pan-ethnic terms:

> Herndon, there were definitely a lot of other Asian Americans, like where I went to elementary school there was definitely a healthy amount of Asians. And I never felt like an outlier there, and now I know to feel blessed because I know in most other places in Virginia, are majority white and some Asian kids could be the only Asian kid growing up in their school. -Daniel

A self-awareness of identity and race is shown through Daniel's comparison of where he grew up and where he goes to school now, William and Mary, a predominantly white institution (PWI). "A healthy amount of Asians" perhaps describes a feeling of comfortability within his imagined community and that instead, he saw his identity as a pan-ethnic one at that (Espiritu, 1992). It is also here that we can apply Tse's (1998) structures of ethnic identity formation. Under this environment that Daniel describes, there is a clear process from "ethnic emergence" to "ethnic identity corporation" from his journey between these communities. These types of narratives are further explored in future sections on representation and classroom curriculum.

Within the group of participants, three were biracial and multi-ethnic people who recounted their family environment with a focus on this part of their identity. Sabrina, whose mother was Chinese and father was white felt that she never had problems growing up in their identity because there were so many Asians or half-Asians where she grew up. This feeling of security in identity though is not universal, especially for Kim who is half Chinese and half Korean who could only connect with her Chinese identity during family reunions on her dad's side.

Diasporic stories such as these allow for a clear dioramic interpretation of its complexities. This section described the foundation of identity formation for many of these participants by recounting their childhood experiences and familial connections.

2. Representations in Community

This section depicts the participants' conscious reflection on their respective identities in social settings, K-12 education, and in their current daily lives. Participants' responses heavily reflected interview answers from *Forever Foreigner or Honorary Whites* (Tuan 1998). However, in this section, their experiences fell into three categories: feeling represented within their communities, having no representation, or at the extreme side feeling like an "outsider" or not feeling "American" within their own social spaces, which is described by Tse as the opposite of "ethnic ambivalence." Thus each narrative will be split up into the following sections: 2.1 Affirming Representation, 2.2 Expressing Isolation in Community Spaces, and 2.3 Outsidership in Community Spaces. I differentiate between 2.2 and 2.3 by direct quotes and emotions felt by respective participants.

2.1. Affirming Representation

In everyday life, it was clear for some participants that their identity was well represented throughout their community. Whether it was in the classroom. Community spaces, family dinners, etc., these spaces acted as bubbles for their identity to acquiesce and allow for comfort in their own skin and their own homes. Susan, a participant, highlights this through her local community experience.

> I would say that I definitely felt like I had a community because a lot of my family friends and the Chinese community from Chinese school and people from my parents' hometown. -Susan

In Susan's case, a lot of her community was based on the connections that her family already had in China, ideating a transnational community and ethnic identity; but

this was not necessarily a shared experience for Daniel. This follows narratives explored in Tuan's work closely as a parallel to 1st and 2nd generation Asian Americans' experience (Tuan). Echoed here is a quote from her work on the basis of community and relation to parents in which "They pass[ed] on a Chinese American Culture…" Contrasting this response, when asked about representation in his community, Daniel first described his experience in high school.

> Yeah, I did, as I said, there were a lot of other Asian kids growing up with me. For high school, I moved to Vienna, Virginia and there were slightly fewer Asians there, but I still felt represented in my school. -Daniel

Here, Daniel quantifies the amount of Asians throughout his childhood. This piece of information is important because it shows a conscious recognition of being a minority in a predominantly white space, while also feeling comfortable in that space and represented. Concurrent to Tse's definition of ethnic "unawareness" which Daniel exemplifies here as he is clearly out of this stage in his ethnic identity formation (Tse 1998). By definition, this also allows us to reaffirm Mia Tuan's question of holding "Forever Foreigner" or "Honorary White" status. This lets us contextually imagine a space that may not have a predominantly white student population. In this environment, how would Asian American or even Chinese American identity exist? The Literature Review deeply explored Afro-Asian relations, but under a modern context, these relations have indeed changed (Maeda, 2009). In connection with this narrative, Emily offers a pan-ethnicized experience when identifying with East Asian groups.

> I remember like a core part of like my childhood was like going to different, like, dinner parties at, like, other people's houses and, like, so meeting, like, you know, um, like, other kids my age, and so a lot of us sort of, like, grew up together, like, even if we weren't going to the same

> schools. So, yeah, I would say there are definitely a lot of, like, Chinese people and then also just, like, East Asian people, like, in the area. -Emily

Even though for Emily her community was not necessarily exactly the same to her identity, she found comfort in her panethnic environment nonetheless. This is reminiscent of Espiritu's (1992) work on the formation of pan-ethnic communities and identity. However, what differs here is Emily's direct connection towards an East Asian community rather than a pan-Asian identity. It is specific and in spectrum

2.2. Expressing Isolation in Community Space

For the majority of participants, a heavy feeling of isolation or lack of representation as presented itself in the spaces they grew up in. The next few narratives highlight this in spaces that are not just predominantly white. This difference in lived experience displays the development of Chinese American identity in diverse spaces and conversely shows reasons for forced assimilation and losing touch with one's cultural heritage (Tse 1998, Lieber et. al, 2001). Dianne describes her experience growing up as a jarring, isolating experience where only maybe the janitorial staff were people of color.

> When I was a senior, in my whole school there was only about a dozen Asians. And there were only 3-4 in my class, so we weren't represented as much…"Wow, no one looks like me at all." And all the teachers were white too. There were no POC at all, except maybe the janitor. -Dianne

The amount of "Asians" was so quantifiable, that the number did not even exceed the fingers on one hand. The most impactful piece from this narrative however is when she states "Wow, no one looks like me at all." This experience is tied to Taun's (1998) conceptualization of "Forever Foreigner." When at last Dianne localizes a person of color to the janitorial staff, we come to question what this does for self-esteem and aspirations.

Later, we will discuss this in the context of the Asian American History curriculum and the lack thereof.

Alex's experience in her ESOL program left her isolated in a different way from Dianne's story. For Alex, the majority of students in her ESOL program were Mexican-American, leaving her with a few barriers.

> I was not so good at English and had to relearn English and I was in the ESOL program. So, at that time, I didn't feel like I could find my own friend group because the high school I went to was mostly Mexican American children, especially in the ESOL program, so I was the only Chinese in that program. So those other people that were Mexican would speak Spanish to each other, but I couldn't really be a part of the conversation because I knew a little English. -Alex

The first barrier was the content of the class itself: English. In terms of her own language skills and how it related to her identity, she could speak Chinese which made her comfortable with that piece of herself. But in the context of her classmates and environment, another barrier was set for her to be isolated: difference in language and culture. While there may have been a certain type of solidarity in this environment of ESOL students, Alex could not communicate with them in perhaps the only space she expected to because of the difference in their respective languages spoken at home. This raises a lot of questions about the efficacy of spaces like this and supports a rhetoric of marginalization for ethnic minorities in America when resources are not even allocated to provide a cross-cultural space to learn the dominant colonial language: English.

The last narrative of this section is special in its own right as it allowed for Jackie to find comfort through comedic relief. She clearly states that she was not at all represented growing up, and instead saw herself more in media, movies and

television. So much so that her parents had a set motto when such a sighting occurred.

> What I meant to say was, there were so few, like, Asian people represented, both like, Just mostly in the media at the time and it's really funny because when my parents were watching a movie whenever an Asian person pops up, we always like point **points** "go Asian". I still have that habit to this day. -Jackie

Jackie celebrates seeing an Asian on screen with her own family as her company as if it were in her imagination or in a dreamscape. This type of narrative does speak for itself.

2.3. Outsidership in Community Spaces

This last section explores what section 2.2 fails to do. These next narratives describe isolation and difference in a way that quashes American identity. The majority of participants that had this experience were of biracial or multi-ethnic backgrounds. These narratives succeed in also facilitating and revealing the complexities of Chinese American identity within biracial contexts and how they preserve themselves. An experience outside of biraciality from a Taiwanese American student, Connor, sets up this narrative as a minority identity in a Chinese context.

> But I never, like, felt that connected to American identity. I always thought of myself as, like, Chinese or Taiwanese. -Connor

Connor describes his own identity as completely separate from what his nationality is, His relationship to his Chinese or specifically, Taiwanese identity, concurrently connects and disconnects him to Chinese American-ness letting Taiwanese American identity play the role of a safety net. That experience also could challenge Tse's model as Connor falls out of its framework; however, under the idea of "ethnic identity corporation", he only has to feel comfort in this space which is ultimately an imagined community (Tse 1998)

Conversely to this, Cathay and Sabrina, biracial white-Chinese students describe their community and ideas of representation in starkly similar ways. While aware of their liminality in Asian spaces as white-passing, a sense of pride also emerges in a paradoxical enigmatic way.

> I feel like I don't belong..did I feel represented in my community? Uh, no, but honestly, I can, I feel like kind of an enigma where I like being different, you know, there's, I don't feel like it's a bad thing that there weren't a lot of Asians or half Asians. I kind of had pride in being. -Cathy

Cathy highlights a feeling of "I don't belong" but in the same vein defines her own existence in her community as a minority as something powerful and something that she has "pride in being." This is directly what "ethnic identity corporation" entails (Tse 1998). Whereas Sabrina defines her own experience as something between a rock and a hard place. Yes, she is white-passing, building her possible mobility for the future in a systemically racist America, but at the same time finds difficulty in her own Chinese American community with language and defines it as a weird "limbo."

> I couldn't relate with them because I'm white passing…I can't really talk to them…I'm fortunate to be white passing so I can use my privilege to, you know, help others. I think when it comes to language, because a lot of my Asian friends spoke like they were fluent in Chinese. So they were fluent in Chinese. And so I kind of sometimes talk in Chinese…I kind of don't belong in this group, but I kind of don't belong with white people either. So that's kind of like being half Asian. You're kind of like in limbo, which is why I had a lot of half-Asian friends. -Sabrina

These experiences, while unique to this specific research, are important to still consider in this body of work because Chinese American identity simply cannot be monolithicized into one narrative. The last excerpt from these interviews depicts a multi-ethnic experience from Kim, a Korean-Chinese American student.

> When I went to elementary school and stuff like that there were no other Asians at all. The only way I had any experience with other Asians was with my Korean

> friends in the county over, but like they were all "Korean" so it was hard to have Chinese representation especially sometimes they would forget that I was half-Chinese. -Kim

Kim's awareness of an affection for her Korean side growing up and lack thereof for her Chinese side shows a completely different type of erasure by association to her Korean-ness. By association then, Kim was seen as Korean, even after consciously feeling a disconnect to her Chinese heritage.

3. Importance to Connect to Culture

This section explores participants' perception of how their parents saw the role of Chinese culture in their daily lives. When asked item #3 (see Appendix), most of the participants linked the relationship of Chinese culture as "important" with attending Chinese school. At the same time, participants often felt that there was a lack of connection or that they did not start in time to appreciate their own heritage. Uniquely, the biracial participants both echoed how both of their parents, regardless of race, pushed for Chinese culture as a center in their lives. Under this schema, this section will be analyzed under three themes: 3.1 Chinese School as a Cultural Source, 3.2 Chinese School is Lacking, and 3.3 The Importance of Chinese Culture in "Wasian" Development.

3.1. Chinese School as a Cultural Source

From the parent's perspective, attending Chinese school was a must for the majority of Chinese American students interviewed. From how their parents perceived its role in their early childhood development, it allowed them to be connected enough to

their Chinese heritage and culture in an American context. However, even when expectations aren't met, acceptance is still given. This was Susan's experience.

> It was very important to them, especially when I was younger. When I got older I'd say they felt that I wasn't as connected as they'd hoped and they kind of accepted it. -Susan

From Susan's experience, a certain level of assimilation occurred during her adolescence to become and embrace the Chinese American identity that she now holds today. A sense of possible shame emerges when she talks about not achieving what her parents had hoped for previously. Liscomb posits this feeling of not achieving the hopes of becoming a "good Asian" American in their paper "Bad Asians…". Their work is similar in this response; concurrently, it draws a new narrative of acceptance (Liscomb, 2023).

For Daniel, his parents' involvement in Chinese school deeply exemplified how important the integration of Chinese culture in his adolescence was. Specifically, his mom's nurturing role as a teacher in his Chinese school perhaps made his connection to the culture all the stronger.

> For my mom, I think it was relatively important, she signed me up for Chinese school when I was 6. She became my teacher every other Sunday for the next 4 years, so she was teaching us Chinese stories, and Chinese obviously, and all those fairytales and folktales, and I really learned a lot about Chinese culture because of her. -Daniel

Owing to his connection to Chinese culture to his mother, Daniel could find himself comfortable within his Chinese American identity and community. From this familial bond in education, Daniel could garner a genuine attraction to his own culture. Yet, Jackie was aware that she would never measure up to what her parents wanted or to what the "motherland" was.

> I think they knew that like I probably, like, I'm obviously not going to be like the most, like, as Chinese or Taiwanese as someone from the motherland, but they wanted to do the best that they could to, like, preserve some of that. -Jackie

From these narratives, a connection to family, culture, and Chinese school is prevalent. Even if family members were not integrated into the schooling program, a deep feeling of whether or not the students can achieve a certain threshold of authentic "Chinese-ness" (Tuan 1998) was a constant for these individuals. Jackie phrases it as a way to "preserve" culture and identity. The question becomes how much? How much and in what way will it be interpreted? This is largely up to the influence of the teachers, curriculum that is built, family environment, and so much more. But ultimately, it is up to the students who go through this system and how they later interpret it post-adolescence (Tse 1998).

3.2. Chinese School is Lacking

This section dives into students' experiences with Chinese schools and how they found solace in connecting to their identity in stronger ways outside of Chinese schools. For both Esther and Emily, they found ways to achieve a healthy community-building environment to maintain their cultural identity.

> But I still feel I learned a lot more by being exposed to Chinese people, like my family. Yeah because, when I was in Chinese school, I was surrounded by other kids that lacked understanding of their culture and were forced to go to these schools. -Esther

> And I think one of the reasons why we continued going back to China every single summer to see my grandparents, was to make sure that I wasn't losing, like, that, you know, cultural heritage part of myself. -Emily

From both experiences, the importance of being immersed in a community that can provide a support system for sustaining and building cultural identity is presented. Esther

was also aware of the differences between her own community spaces and those that Chinese school provided. Contrary to this, spending Summers in China solidified her connection to Chinese culture by finding familial connections with her grandparents. A question arises from this: by being surrounded by kids that also don't have a grasp of their own identity, and only relying on a volunteer teacher to supply it, how is one to grasp an identity that is so far removed from them in a space that also does not supplement material for the Chinese American identity (Hsieh et. al, 2020)?

Adding onto this question, is the proponent of time.. When should kids take advantage of Chinese school, or is there a point in time that children can actively choose to go to Chinese school? Zoe describes her regret of when she started her HL education connecting it to how it bruised her ego:

> I wish it could have come earlier, cause I felt like... I think that was like part of the reason I hated it so much. It was just really embarrassing as a ten year old. If you've, you've been a fourth grader before. You know how the dignity of fourth graders, the ego is easily bruised. -Zoe

Her experience with Chinese school, while she did not delve deeper into it, was not positive as she "hated it." This general negative experience can likely translate to how HL students relate to their culture and language capabilities.

3.3. The Importance of Chinese Culture in "Waisan" Development

A separate experience arose when interviewing participants who were either white–Chinese biracial or adopted having at least one white parent. The push to keep a healthy relationship with Chinese culture from the parent's perspective was residually clear from the interviewees' own lived experiences.

> Of course they wanted me to know about Chinese culture because I am Chinese and like, connect with my family and things like that. -Stacy

> My dad was actually very... Concerned with me learning Chinese in a good way. He was like Pressuring my mom to send me to Chinese school. -Cathy

> Um, not even like, not just to my mom, but my, my dad as well. Because, um, he liked it when they met, like he fell in love, he fell in love with Chinese and Taiwanese culture. Like my mom showed him a lot of that. So he also wants me to be proud of it. -Sabrina

What was further prevalent from these responses was the push from the non-Chinese parents to connect and maintain a Chinese cultural identity growing up. Whether it was just to connect to language for Cathy, or based on a past love for Taiwanese and Chinese cultures for Sabrina, the positive encouragement from the white parents was clear. This experience is also not exclusive to Stacy's childhood. Her identity was central to her development even though both of her adoptee parents were not Chinese.

These narratives describe a complex interplay of biracial identity and Chinese American-ness. While each participant may have a certain propensity to being white-washed or white-passing, it was pivotal for their parents to connect them to their cultures in such a positive and supportive manner.

4. Representation in the Classroom

This section describes participants' interaction with curriculum in K-12 education when it comes to APIA or Chinese American history being covered in the context of the classroom. Unsurprisingly, in section 4.1 we will discuss the unanimous experience of not being represented in the classroom and its discontents. This section will also cover some of the participants' reflections on how it impacted their respective identities. I

include this to contextualize the fact that some participants live in majority Asian communities.

4.1. Education without Representation

To further quantify the need for proper and accurate representation of Chinese American identity within HL education spaces, the interviews also asked about K-12 education narratives. It is to no surprise that all of the participants could not recall a positive experience or an ounce of representation through their own primary school education. When asked about this topic, students went as far as to relay it to a disney animated movie, Mulan.

> No, not at all, I did not really see myself in that way." - Susan

> I think the only time we ever talked about it was the Chinese Exclusion Act. and we watched Mulan once in school too. - Kim

It is to Kim's point that the best option that the K-12 education system brought to her were negative narratives of Chinese American history (An, 2022). Never a story or Asian American figure who was seen in a positive light. And when her school wanted to do so, Mulan represented this concept of success. A disney princess, set in ancient China, forfeiting the right to proper representation that Chinese American deserve in the classroom. Yet, other students could at times imagine themselves next to the greats such as MLK.

> When we got to historical figures it was MLK did this, Rosa Parks did this, and that was the closest we got because like, not white. And I could see myself, I could see…something similar happening if an Asian person had been in their shoes, but nothing necessarily like I identify with this person so much. -Daniel

What is disheartening about Daniel's experience, is that there are in fact activists who were alongside MLK and Malcom X during the fight for and liberation of marginalized groups in America. To name a few, Grace Lee Boggs, Yuri Kochiyama, Haunani Kay-Trask, and many more. What if these people, these Asian American historical figures were portrayed in the classroom? How would Daniel view himself, would it still be an imaginary fable to see oneself next to these figureheads?

Instead, Sabrina offers an accurate depiction of the effects that this type of curriculum thwarts onto the Asian American youth community. Highlighting her experience in K-12 education, she reacts to how this impacted her directly.

> I think the only Asian history we talked about was the Chinese Exclusion Act and then the Japanese internment camps…It honestly, like, I, it, it felt weird to me, too, because I was surrounded by Asian people, and I grew up with Asian people, so I was, it kind of felt weird. I was wondering why are we discriminating against them, against them, like, I didn't even really know that part of history, so it kind of felt a bit weird. You know, I, I don't think it had a really big impact on my identity, but it just made me feel like uneasy, you know? -Sabrina

A feeling of "unease" is the final outcome for Sabrina, who from previous sections described her representation in the community growing up as a strong Asian American presence. So, should this community population and experience not reflect the curriculum which is taught at school? If students struggle to see themselves in an American setting and in a Chinese setting, where do they float toward then?

5. Structures of Chinese School

This section aims to explore what we have already discussed in the Shifting Paradigms in HL Education section, but this time through the eyes of our participants. It

is with no surprise that the participants' experiences mirror what much of Macedo's collection of essays depicts for modern day HL classes including themes of irregularities, a dependency on family involvement within teaching, and a lack of engagement for the students. Section 5.1 Irregularities in Curriculum describe the daily structure of Chinese school and its own built in discontents and periphery focus on extracurriculars. Section 5.2 Family Involvement in Chinese school shows the lack of training, pay, and pedagogical understanding that the volunteers named teachers have within these systems.

5.1. Irregularities in Curriculum

This section highlights the inconsistencies in each participant's experience growing up going through the HL curriculum. While most Chinese schools follow the standard of meeting on the weekends for 2 hours, usually after church, a few participants recalled a sort of "daycare" system that was every day of the week after school. To show the norm, Daniel describes exactly what Hsieh et al. (2022) study depicts.

> The Chinese school I went to met on Sundays from 2-4. We'd cover, at least in the beginning, like in elementary school, basic vocabulary, how to form basic sentences, like what you would do at college level. -Daniel

From this, a straightforward curriculum is imagined that increases in difficulty and aptitude as the student progresses through their childhood. On the periphery of Chinese school is its extracurriculars. This can be said for most students, but not all, which will become apparent soon.

> Once a week, on Saturdays, and there would be extracurriculars, so I learned chess and public speaking there. And the rest, I was just learning Chinese. -Connor

When asked about his experience in Chinese school, Connor quickly recalled anything but Chinese learning. A mixture of extracurriculars, chess, public speaking, and activities his parents signed him up for flooded his mind first. This is echoed more vividly by Emily, whose mother had more of an active role in Chinese school.

> I don't really remember that much from it. I, like, don't think I retained anything from, like, the Chinese classes, um, and then for the math classes, my dad, like, for some reason thought it would be a good idea to put me in, like, a higher level class because he was like, Oh, that way, like she'll learn. There were different music classes like, you know, my mom taught clarinet, but there were also keyboard classes. There were guzheng classes, you know, um, so there would be kids bringing their bass instruments with them. I remember that. And then, Like there was math probably like other subjects like science or something too. -Emily

Emily is able to name more than 5 different types of extracurriculars at her school, giving a wide variety of opportunities to either become closer to Chinese classical music or advance in math, english, science, etc. The bandwidth to have such an array of options, yet not consider Asian American history as a possibility to teach in even an English setting is somewhat confusing because of the nature of these educational spaces. Designed to bring language up to a stronger capability, one would also imagine a responsibility to enforce a strong sense of identity and agency. Emily's mom serving as an instructor also comes to know surprise based on Liu's (2010) work in HL studies. However, Matthew's irregular experience among participants adds another layer of inconsistency to the structure of these educational spaces. His Chinese school served as a PSAT prep school and daycare with subject packets at the ready when the children were dropped off after school.

> It was like, always do like your reading and math packet. Um, and then once you finished, First, you would finish your homework. Then, once you finished your homework, you would do a reading and math packet. After you finished your reading and math packet, then you were allowed

> to like, go play. And often, I think the Chinese classes happened more during the summer than they did during the school year. I think during the school year it was mostly like, just like daycare, right? -Matthew

In this environment, Chinese language learning is not even at the core of the curriculum. If a structure cannot even achieve what its name and main purpose is – raising the heritage learners' reading and writing levels to their speaking and listening – how can these languages, community spaces, and even histories persist in a society that has historically done everything in their power to quash them? This is inherent to some modern day HL education spaces and is also connected to what Freire defines as a "cultural invasion" in so that "the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression" (Freire, 2000: 152). In this respect, perpetuations of "model minority", "forever foreigner", or "honorary white" are concepts that the mainstream labeled Asian Americans as, perhaps influencing the structures of these HL education spaces. Contrary to this daycare-like experience, Daniel recalls his HL curriculum somewhat with joy reminiscing over stories of Song Kong.

> And then once you get past 8th grade to 10th grade, I stopped at 10th grade, they prepare you for the AP Chinese exam. And then they would go into more stories, and how to journal, deeper things. I think at least the book we read, the curriculum we read was called like (mao li ping), the book had a lot of stories, folktales for example, I know like in 6th grade we spent the entire year reading Song Kong. -Daniel

This variety of narratives should leave teachers and students asking questions like "What even is Chinese school?" and "How does this relate to their identity at all?" Some may argue that it is structures like this that allow Asian Americans to lean into the model

minority myth further and further, decentralizing themselves from language studies and focusing on success that is exemplified in racialized magazine articles such as TIME magazine's "The Whiz Kids" cover.

5.2. Family Involvement in Chinese School

As mentioned briefly in the last section, family involvement in Chinese school education is a common thing, yet when asked about deeper structure in the Chinese school structure, Tochon's (2019) essay on the deficits in HL education pedagogy mirrored how the students talked about their teachers and community members. Stacy and Jackie define this clearly:

> A lot of the teachers aren't, weren't professionally trained as teachers. They're a lot like semi volunteers. Like community members. - Stacy

> I did technically learn a lot, but I, but I forgot most of it. Um, because it was only like once a week, like two hours. Um, yeah. And then also, teachers were unpaid too. Not that high, because it's like, slash volunteer-ish vibes, but yeah. -Jackie

Stacy and Jessica both highlight that these are not trained teachers; rather, they are volunteers who may be paid sometimes. This is parallel to Matthew's experience in his daycare-esque experience, in that the children were just handed work and watched, nothing else, nothing more. This narrative is central to the section in this paper on Unstable Structures in HL Education and how to solve them. What is hopeful here is the fact that Asian American parents want to know more about how to advocate for their children and want to educate themselves on Asian American history (Kim, 2024). This makes a crack in the system of HL education a place for growth and a place for change in curriculum, pedagogy, and community involvement.

6. Impacts of Not Attending Chinese School

From the participant pool, three students had not attended Chinese school. This section is used to help identify what impacts this may have had on their identity. Here, the students were asked about their experience growing up without attending a Chinese school and to imagine ways or construct ideas on how they adapted to their surroundings. Section 6.1 Chinese Identity in Myriads, explores the identity of the three students and how they self–reflected after growing up. Section 6.2 Roads to Reclaim Chinese Identity, describes the ways that they want to reconnect to their cultural identity. Lastly, Section 6.3 analyzes the importance of community building in the maintenance of identity retention.

6.1. Chinese Identity in Myriads

What is core to this research is understanding the kaleidoscope of identity produced through childhood experiences, especially when thinking of the impacts of Chinese schools. These sections tackle the opposite, what happened to the participants' connection to their Chinese American identity after not attending a Chinese school environment. For Dianne, she found herself connecting to her adopted mother's Indonesian identity.

> I don't really feel connected to any Chinese culture at all. Maybe Indonesian, because my mom is Indonesian, but for Chinese, not at all. I think it kind of made me feel less connected overall. -Dianne

Here, it is clear the connection not only between finding solace in identity with adoptive parents, but also in the basic foundation of forming a pan-ethnic Asian American identity. Dianne, even though she is not Indonesian, talks about growing up celebrating Indonesian culture and integrating herself into that community. But she also

stands to reconcile her identity as an ethnically Chinese American person through reconnecting with her ethnic language in college. As she states, her inner ethnic identity may be closer to that of her mother, but her external perceived identity both by those around her and how she now seeks out opportunities to connect to Chinese culture shows a complex layering of identity in the context of transnational adoption.

For Alex, who got to spend a lot of time in China with her extended family, she talks about the spaces between her Chinese and American identities. While she saw herself as both at the same time, she felt that when occupying each respective space she would be otherized to the converse identity because of either her outward appearance or the way that she stuck out.

> I think a really interesting part about me trying to find my identity is when I was in the US people would think I'm Chinese, but when I'm in China, people think I'm American. And it's like a really conflicting two parts, these identities. And I did struggle with thinking about who I actually am because there are those two parts/cultures that I did grow up in and I didn't predominantly live in any one culture so they are split like half-half.
> -Alex

This "half-half" identity that Alex highlights is a common theme throughout diasporic communities, especially within the histories of Asian American diaspora. Under this, a non-consensual code switching is placed onto those like Alex when she is either not American enough or not Chinese enough depending on her cultural context.

A slightly similar narrative arrives for students who identify as multi-ethnic, balancing multiple cultures and ethnicities. Kim describes her experience as a Korean and Chinese American in the context of her extended family and communication. While she did not go to a Chinese school, she instead attended a Korean Church which offered similar structures, strengthening her connection with one side of her own identity.

> Well for me, I went to a Korean one. I do feel like Because of that I Am closer to my Korean Identity , but I do wish I had the Chinese experience because I can't communicate with my relatives, like I can't even communicate with my grandparents because they only speak Chinese. So, I kind of wish I had a little bit of both, or like an equal balance." - Kim

She knows she is both Korean and Chinese, but the contexts that she can fully inhabit these identities are faw skewed to her Korean heritage due to not having an opportunity growing up to engage with it. One could argue that her bridge between these two ethnicities is an option for herself to choose in certain spaces (Waters, 1990). This is further exemplified by wishing she "had a little bit of both" so that she may feel equally represented on all sides of her identity.

6.2. Roads to Reclaim Chinese Identity

For these participants, to attend Chinese school or take part in similar language classes at this point in their lives would mean to focus an immense amount of energy and time remolding their own ethnic frameworks. The question is then raised, what roads are available for them to reclaim their identity? Both this section and the next focuses on answering this through individual narratives and a larger community purpose.

For Dianne, reconnecting with her culture means something much more literal and something that would take effort not only in searching but as an emotional journey.

> I'm not sure if this relates to the question, but I am adopted and I am debating whether to find my [birth] parents or not. That is like a lot of work, a lot of effort, but I think it would feel really empowering if I did find my parents. -Dianne

Since Dianne is adopted, reconnecting with her birth parents would etch a new piece and likely a journey for her to embark on in solving the jigsaw puzzle of her identity as a transnational adoptee. She states that this would be "empowering" for her in

her pursuit of a stronger connection with her Chinese heritage. In doing so, it would provide a new source, a new community for her to interact with in strengthening herself.

Alex instead states a direct struggle to understand her own identity. In hopes of aiding this, she specifically cites the goal of this research as a possible aid to reconcile her struggle and others.

> I struggled a lot with finding my own identity and defining my own identity, so I think if we can learn more about Chinese [American] culture and history through a school setting or academically, it would be really helpful. -Alex

These two narratives offer a similar solution, although looking very different. Dianne, an adoptee who has no direct connection to Chinese culture seeks out an experience to reconnect with her Chinese heritage in the context of being a Chinese American. Whereas, Alex, a participant who lived in China through most of her childhood, looks to a source of building and reaffirming her own Chinese American-ness. While these journeys vary, the outcome is the same: reclamation. This is unsurprising converse to the narrative of how modern Chinese school makes students feel, largely distant from an Asian American or Chinese American identity (Hsieh et. al, 2020).

6.3. Building Solidarity Through Community

The unique quality of these participants is that they live in a college setting which offers them multiple opportunities to engage with community to find people who hold similar beliefs or cultural values. This has become key for these three participants in constructing their own identities. In addition to this, the community and practice of language and culture that is supplemented in a college environment are at their disposal.

Dianne takes advantage of all of these resources in order to have agency and self-determination in her Asian American identity.

> I'm taking Mandarin 101 and I hope to continue it through my years here at William and Mary and get involved with CSO and AASI. I'm trying to get involved with all of these Asian organizations cuz I really want to be able to say "Oh, I'm Asian." I don't feel white-washed. -Dianne

She has a plan and framework to maintain her connection to Chinese and Asian American identity. Her commitment to involving herself with multicultural organizations and student activist communities just so that she can evade the feeling of "white-washed-ness" under the pressures of William and Mary as a Predominantly white Institution is apparent and further supported by her enrollment in Mandarin 101. Kim also reflects on similar structures, but concurrently reconciles with what it may lack.

> So, I kind of gave up I guess in terms of learning the language, but I try to get more into the culture which is why I joined CSO and everything, but it's not the same. -Kim

Recognizing the importance of CSO in her life, she finds herself having a strong connection to the culture through learning from friends and community building. But at the same time details that lacking a connection to the language makes it somehow "not the same." As discussed in other pieces of her interview, she is conscious of and knows that at this point in her life that CSO may be all that she has the bandwidth for at the moment.

7. Impacts of Attending Chinese School

The majority of participants attended Chinese school through their childhood and parts of their adolescence. However, it was clear from these interviews that even though

attendance and HL education occurred, effects on their identity and how they viewed themselves was not at all unanimously the same. Some of these discrepancies are explained from Macedo's collection of essays covered in previous sections, but from each individual experience, three themes emerged as core to the Chinese school experience. Section 7.1 "Am I Chinese if I don't know Chinese", analyzes the deficits in the pedagogy of teaching Chinese to students who are not in an immersive environment. This section also tackles a statement made similarly between two participants in terms of identifying language as a core part of identity. Contrary to this, Section 7.2 Harnessing Chinese American Identity, displays the emergence of Chinese American identity in relation to language and how this manifested for one participant, Daniel. Lastly, Section 7.3 Regrets of Chinese school Students, highlights the complex experiences of Chinese HL students during their time in Chinese school and after.

7.1. "Am I Chinese if I don't Know Chinese?"

The connections of language and self-determination of ethnic identity presented themselves clearly throughout this section of the interviews. When asked about their own experiences in Chinese school and how it may have impacted their identity, participants started to question the effectiveness of their HL education and curriculum, what it had given them, or rather what it may have taken from them. It was clear for both Esther and Sabrina what HL education gave them, whether it was support in finding their own Chinese American identity or making it even more of a foggy and abstract idea or imagination of who they are.

> I didn’t know if I was Chinese or American. Like I didn't know if my Chinese was as good as a native speaker. But now, I feel happy, and satisfied, to have this identity, which makes me feel very diverse. -Esther

Esther, hyper-aware that she is not as fluent as a native speaker, embraces this difference as a key part of being Chinese American. Within this other participants also noted the ability to speak “Chinglish” with their parents or siblings. This supports the ideas from Pennycook that bilingualism is not at all the core of hyphenated diasporic groups in America, rather it is instead the ability to use the bits and pieces from each language as its linguistic arsenal smashing the narratives of second language acquisition and even HL education. Pennycook calls it “translingual activism”, being able to exist within lingual spaces that have this niche for hyphenated groups in an American context (Pennycook, 2019: 169-185).

However, when Sabrina reflected on her experience and growth with her ethnic language journey, she felt disconnected from her Chinese-ness. She explained that the more Chinese she knew, perhaps the more Chinese she would feel. Of course, this is her imagined perception of identity and is unique to her response, but it does connect to future parts of the results, seen especially in sections 8.1 and 9.3.

> I kind of felt like I wasn't Chinese, because I was like, well, I don't know Chinese, So am I Chinese in a way? Like if I know the language, like the more I know the language, the more Chinese I will feel. -Sabrina

If identity is this closely tied to the language that is spoken by communities and single individuals, then we should also question how individuals learn the language and to what extent the curriculum reflects the students (Hsieh et. al, 2020).

7.2. Harnessing Chinese American Identity

Carrying on the narrative from the previous section, Chinese American identity expressed itself for the participants in many different ways other than just a direct connection to language. This section contains a short anecdote from Daniel, who found his Chinese American identity as a superpower growing up, able to help those who were in his community when he least expected it. While this tangent has nothing to do directly with the structures of educational curriculum, it has everything to do with how Chinese American youth see themselves, especially in a context of historicity.

> But it's also helped set up my identity as a Chinese American because I can speak like I can harness the power of both languages. I remember this one time in elementary school, we came to a bus stop and this girl was supposed to get off, and I think she hadn't come to school that day or got off somewhere else, but her grandma was waiting at the stop and she couldn't speak English. So she was trying to talk with the bus driver, so I told the grandma in Chinese that she wasn't there, and that it was all okay. So because of that, I feel like my identity helped solve that issue that would have been prolonged if like…If I hadn't been there… -Daniel

Daniel uses a specific word when describing this experience, harness, when recounting his heroic tale. He connects, again, directly to language as a key player in his makeup of Chinese American identity. He also imagines if he hadn't been there, what then? Would the grandma know where her granddaughter was, or would she report her missing?

For the purpose of this narrative, Daniel truly harnessed his Chinese American identity, displaying what that meant to him as a child. What is also important is the fact that he was able to recall this memory as so instrumental to who he is as a Chinese American. In times that his language or ethnic identity could actually be used or in his

words “harnessed”, were times that he had full agency to actualize his internal ethnic identity into an external ethnic identity product.

7.3. Regrets of Chinese School Students

Through this portion of the interviews, participants recounted their feelings about how they also performed in Chinese school and its effects on how they interact with family members, classmates, and friends. Connor talked about his relationship with his family and how not taking Chinese school as seriously as his mom wanted has negatively impacted him today. His mother’s role in this is also very similar to many narratives that we have already explored, further solidifying the role of parents not only within these school systems but as also the main enforcer in the household environment.

> My mom would be like study, study, study, and I was just like no, I’m not doing any of this. So I was a pretty bad Chinese school student. But in terms of how this impacts my identity, I think now, if I were to redo Chinese school, I would’ve taken it more seriously and tried to learn the language because now I’m like dang, it would’ve been so cool to be 100% fluent in Chinese and do…like so there wasn’t a language barrier between me and my cousins in China, so that’s how it impacts my identity. -Connor

His main regret now is that he can’t communicate as smoothly in Chinese with his extended family in China. Looking back, of course, it would have been great to have taken it more seriously, but Connor also had a problem with the curriculum offered. He reflected that *“My attention level for Chinese history was like 20%, but for Chinese American history it’d still be low but it would be like 35% at the time. When I was a kid, I probably would’ve been more interested because it pertains more to me.”* Here, we can see some direct ties between this feeling of regret and the type of curriculum being taught within these schools. Would he have been 100% fluent if Chinese American history was

taught? No, however, a stronger sense of fulfillment and self-assuredness could have been more easily seen in Connor's responses.

Emily felt different emotions regarding her experience not only in Chinese school, but through her self-perceived levels of Chinese-ness and how Americanized she was compared to other individuals in her school system. This feeling of Americanization is also closely tied to the identity frameworks of Tse and Lieber when discussing evasion of ethnic identity (Tse 1998, Lieber et. al, 2001).

> I felt like I was surrounded by a lot of people who are just more Americanized, I guess. And, or more, assimilated, kind of. And that's what I thought was good. And so, I didn't like the fact that I had to go back to China every summer. And that you know, that I was more Chinese than other people like in my classes and at school. Um, so definitely there was a period of time where I sort of…I wanted to not accept that and I felt ashamed by it almost. -Emily

While Emily has a unique experience in going to China during the summers, these feelings of shame also rise from her childhood journey in the Chinese school program. She also points out the importance of learning Chinese American history in these contexts because it would have made her feel "more American."

8. Reflections on Curriculum

This penultimate section looks to define the reflections of all participants when thinking about their respective experiences with Chinese school curriculum. Tochon… In doing so, this section has three themes. Section 8.1 Imagining Myself in Curriculum, details how the participants could have seen themselves in the classroom. Secondly, Section 8.2 Volunteer Teachers and Lack of Pedagogy, displays Tochon's (2019) research, as most of the educators in these programs are family or community members,

lacking pedagogy and education on Asian American history and modern ways to implement it into a heritage language curriculum.

8.1. Imagining Myself in Curriculum

When crafting the interview questions, it was important to build up to discussing the restructuring of HL education curriculum. At this point in our discussions, based on their lived experiences, trying to now center the conversation onto an imagined experience of Chinese school allowed the participants to reflect holistically on their own experiences and what could have been. To open this section, a quote from Daniel highlights the nuances that building Chinese American curriculum contains and its direct connections to its students.

> All these kids when they are growing up, they're all Chinese Americans, so these Chinese schools are going to adapt to accept more Chinese American historical figures as well as learning Chinese, where it all began in China. -Daniel

He highlights a few things in his message. The first being that HL curriculum must adapt to fit the narrative of its students while also retaining its roots in China. The second thing is that all of the students are and will grow into being Chinese Americans in a modern-day America. Chinese schools have a unique responsibility in maintaining and adapting to what is needed by and for the students. This however, is not met. Susan talks about how easy it would be to find time to allocate Asian American history even as an elective.

> If I think about it logistically, you could just incorporate it into our lessons. It could be something cool. When I was really young, like when I lived in Connecticut, I remember we had these electives or something we would do after class. -Susan

She recalls her own experience with these electives and makes a clear connection to what that time could effectively be spent on: engaging with her own identity. This notion is echoed by Esther as she states that “I feel that it would make me feel more comfortable in being a Chinese American.” Taking it one step further, Alex connects learning the language, learning her history, and the preservation of this unique diasporic narrative together as a main point for the future of Chinese schools. She provides a second narrative of the CSO at William and Mary, and how the pedagogy of Chinese school is even reflect there by the culture corners that don’t pertain to the students either

> I think it is really important for them to learn about history because it is basically a part of who you are, where you came from. And if you incorporate the Chinese American histories into the Chinese American schools, then it would be really helpful for people in those schools to learn about their identity. Because its very conflicting, both Chinese and American culture like smashing together, so if you can learn about the different perspectives and aspects it would be really helpful…whenever they do the culture corners for CSO, I feel like a lot of people can’t relate to it because it is talking about a lot older Chinese traditions. But some people are Chinese American or they have no connection to that. Like me for example, I can't really relate to it, and it feels more like a history lesson that I can’t really relate to. -Alex

Reflecting on these narratives demonstrates the shortcomings of Chinese school HL curriculum building. In the next subsection, we find out why it is like this through testimonies on conceptions of Chinese America and the worker systems within these spaces.

8.2. Volunteer Teachers and Lack of Pedagogical Framings

When asking the interviewees about implementing Asian American history into Chinese schools, a common topic turned to not only how the students would take it, but

the parents and community members. The unique element about these educational programs is that the majority of teachers are underpaid or not paid at all, community members, and often parents of one of said students taking part in the program. This section highlights these discrepancies through student narratives and opens a can of worms of problems which are highlighted throughout *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education* (2019).

Daniel highlights the difference in being "FROM" China and being Chinese American. For him, this is a key reason why it may be hard to implement Chinese American history in this setting.

> but I don't know if the program would have because they are definitely more focused on teaching and learning the basics of Chinese, and it was definitely catered towards like the Chinese moms and like their children who they wanted to learn chinese. So the kids didn't have much say because it came from their parents who were FROM china. So they don't really care about Chinese America, I'm assuming. -Daniel

Yes, this is an assumption as he states clearly in his response; however, what is promising and even exciting about this response is it makes a problem apparent that is also readily solvable by the frameworks of this project. If Chinese school is so community-based, it is not only the students who will need to learn the new curriculum, but also the teachers, the community members, and most importantly of all the families. This is concurrent to the research that Esther Kim has done in Texas, stating that the parents of Asian American children wanted to be aware of these histories but did not have access to it in their respective languages. This is also somewhat highlighted in Emily's answer as she focuses on the impact this will have for future Chinese American students.

> Future generations will benefit from and like having those conversations with them I have like I, you know, I don't think anyone would be opposed

> to it, you know and so I think it's really just it might be a matter of like Just making them aware of it and maybe having like a sample curriculum Because the teachers were like, like the teachers were volunteers, they were parents. I don't know if they got paid. They might have gotten paid. Um, because there were also teaching assistants that would just sit there and like help, right? Um, but those were mostly like supervisors. Like one of them was like my friend's mom. -Emily

Emily also adds on how important this would be for the parents, to be aware of the past histories of discrimination, celebration, all-out exclusion, and success of Asian America. It is through these narratives that we can see the possibilities of healing and learning that open up not only for the students but for their directly related family and community members.

9. Reflection and Refraction of Identity

These next sections are inspired by Mia Tuan's work and adapted to fit the reflections of the participants in relation to Chinese schools, their curriculum, and reflections on identity, or rather refractions of identity. Chinese schools' focus is to not only heighten the student's level of understanding of Mandarin Chinese but also to make their connection to Chinese culture one that is resilient. When answering questions from this section, I often received answers that were contrary to its latter purpose, only stalling or halting a concrete identity from being formed for these participants. Section 9.1 Embodying Chinese American Identity, focuses on how the participants engage with their ethnic identity in social spaces and within family structures. Section 9.2 "Losing Touch", focuses on the relationship that each participant has had with Chinese culture in the context of being Chinese American. Finally, Section 9.3 What is American Identity? focuses on how each participant perpetuates American identity growing up in a racialized

context. This final section is key to this project as it displays a myriad of responses often displaying a disconnect to America due to their own lived experiences in one school system that did not represent them in an American context and one that failed to do so in a Chinese context.

9.1. Embodying Chinese American Identity

The discussion of how to embody one's own Chinese American identity followed similar themes of past sections such as community and solidarity. Whether it was finding it in CSO for some participants or through simple connections, the meaning of Chinese American identity to the participants largely rested on having a foundation of people, cultures, and foods. Susan even recalls these types of relationships as forms of "trauma bonding" over similar experiences growing up Chinese American.

> I find myself being friends with a lot of Chinese Americans whether they are family friends or just people I meet here because we already have that in common. And a lot of us have really similar childhoods growing up and we sort of bond over our experiences at Chinese school or things like that. -Susan

Even if it is a mere coincidence that Susan's friend group is majority Chinese American, she also recognizes that there is something in common that is shared between them all: an identity, a culture, a history. This is parallel to responses found in Tuan's research regarding identity building (1998). Contrary to this, Esther takes it one step further identifying with a broader marginalized group in America. Recognizing that while she does find herself in a lot of different ethnic circles, she does ultimately feel the most comfortable in an Asian American context.

> But my friends, for example, are all from a lot of different spaces, not just Chinese. So like, Latin American, Black, Japanese, Vietnamese, like these,

> I would say I feel more comfortable to be around Asian Americans, because we share a similar identity -Esther

In this sense, a modern interpretation of Espiritu's Panethnic Asian American Identity is at play (1992). Feeling comfortable in terms of her Asian American-ness, she also finds some level of solidarity in friendship with other marginalized communities which can be connected to the long history that Maeda walks us through in inter-ethnic solidarity (2009). These ideas culminate finally into how Dianne, an adoptee, sees herself as an Asian American through and through.

> I identify myself as an Asian American, I don't call myself Chinese American because I feel so distant from it. Being adopted is a really big part of my identity and I want them to know that when I first meet them. -Dianne

Dianne highlights very similar themes that we have encountered throughout the results, but her reasoning for feeling so distant is unique due to her identity as an adoptee. However, it clearly shows a clear intersection with many of the other participants. Feeling "so distant" from Chinese American-ness is not only manifested through her experience, but also from the narrative that Chinese school is not for embracing a Chinese American identity, but rather as Daniel states a "mish-mash of the two" similar to oil and water, of Chinese and American.

9.2. "Losing Touch"

Connections to culture and community have been major themes throughout these primary interview sources. But what about the void of culture through a constant progress of life and as Dianne pointed out earlier, becoming "distant"? How does identity reveal itself in the schema of losing touch with it, are there preventative measures, or is there a

certain point where you cannot turn back? As Connor points out, to lose touch with something means that first, you must have a connection.

> When you say lost touch, it implies that at one point you were connected to it, so I don't know if I was really connected to it because I've always lived in America. So I think as a base, I was always a little disconnected. -Connor

Connor is conscious that there has always been, to some extent, a disconnect to Chinese culture, but perhaps this is the meaning and basis for Chinese American culture to exist in its own right. Similar to the idea of becoming "distant" to culture, what does physical distance mean for preserving or practicing the little things or as Cathy sees it "doing Chinese things" with her mom? When adding a physical distance, and additionally an amount of elongated time that she can't be in an environment that serves a part of her identity to persist and to maintain itself, she reminisces and later in her interview talks about trying to make due in her dorm room, which is only harder.

> I don't think I was that in touch with it, to begin with probably being here, I'm not with my mom as much. When I'm with my mom, we just inherently do Chinese things. Like, go to the Chinese market, eat yuantiao. We have a lot of frozen Chinese food in the freezer, and, or she makes red bean…she loves the sweet red bean desserts. So we just eat a lot of that kind of stuff. -Cathy

For Cathy, a biracial Chinese American, to "do Chinese things", is also reminiscent of to do Blackness, or to perform Blackness (Maeda). What is special here instead though is that this is based on culture, not a political identity. Similar to Cathy, Daniel also revels in his connection to food as a staple in his assembly of what Chinese culture is and what has prevailed through his childhood.

> I started to forget when certain holidays were, but not the foods, or like especially reading, I don't read an write on a daily basis, so I'll use Google translate, which I don't find shame in, but it's like, it'd be nice if I thought more about culture, and CSO really helped there. -Daniel

A disconnect between holidays and language is concurrent with Tuan's interviews. However, he still finds solace in community building, seeking out opportunities to celebrate these holidays through CSO culture shows, culture corners, and opportunities to speak Chinese with his fellow clubmates.

To close this discussion, Stacy offers a word of hope when it comes to the concept of losing touch. She connects her ability to speak Chinese to her DNA and that she is "wired to speak Chinese." She states that "I don't feel like I'm ever in danger of losing touch" because of these reasons. Whether she is using "DNA" as a metaphor or not, her direct connection between language and identity is uncanny, so much so that she is wired to speak it.

9.3. What is (Chinese) American Identity?

For this final section of results, I'd like to present 7 quotes from the interviewees when discussing what American identity means to them. Each one is unique in its own right, however, a certain theme rules in the context of Chinese American Nationalism.

> I just defined American as like growing up in America. That's really the only way I've thought about it or like being born in America and living there for a long time and I've always defined myself as American in a way. -Susan

> And for me, I can't consider myself fully "American" because I grew up with both American and Chinese ideologies. The Chinese side coming from my parents and the American side coming from school and a little from my parents as they adapted to life here…like a *hands clapping* a mish-mash of the two. -Daniel

> Not all Americans are aligned. So I think…we are all just living here, just trying to live. It's just a country we happen to live in, that my parents happened to move to (from China to America)...and I just think America is

> where I live, a bunch of people live in, and I don't think it means much to be American. -Connor
>
> I don't know what it's changing. I don't know if there's anything to America besides its government, really, like, the institution of power that keeps it all held together, like, if that weren't there, what would there be to hold everyone who, like, lives in America now together? -Stacy
>
> For me, American is literally just the nationality on my passport, that I was born here. -Cathy
>
> I just, I don't think I feel any sort of, like, emotional connection or, like, nationalism or, like, you know, patriotism, like, towards the U.S., yeah. So I guess if anyone asks, like, I would say, like, yeah, I'm Chinese American or whatever. But it's mostly just, like, that I was born here and I also grew up saying that so it'd be weird if I didn't. -Emily
>
> America's just a country, like, at the end of the day, it's literally a piece of land that they stole from the natives, so like, it's, you know, I'm not sure like, The American identity, I don't want to give the nationalistic answer because I don't really have a strong nationalism or love for the U.S. It's just a place where I live and I have friends and family and that's what I like about it. -Jackie

These are presented with no other analysis because they speak for themselves and so far, in what has been analyzed, many factors have coalesced into this specific identity and definition of Chinese American nationalism. HL Education structures, generational differences, under-representation in a K-12 environment, and other factors will lead us into the discussion section of this storytelling project.

Discussion

In the Results section, I reflected on a variety of themes including identity, the structures of HL education and curriculum, representation in the community and the K-12 environment, and the impacts of such things on the well-being, maintenance, and preservation of Chinese American identity. From the Results, we can glean influences and findings supported by scholars discussed in the Literature Review section.

First, what was analyzed during the Results section about HL structures and the influence of family and community within these spaces closely mirrored multiple findings from past studies. When it came to the schedule, the majority of students recalled that Chinese school happened on the weekends for about two hours after church or just during the afternoon (Liu, 2010). Furthermore, the importance of family in teaching at these schools was also supported by multiple testimonies, even if it was not directly teaching Chinese. The use of extracurriculars to supplement interests and other aspects of HL education was also found to be parallel with Hsieh et al. (2020) study. However, some participants were quick to state the almost “daycare” nature of their respective Chinese schools. When Matthew talks about his experience at a Chinese school, growing up in Texas, it is almost like an after-school program that only prepares the kids for future success in a K-12 environment, completely abandoning traditional aspects of what other interviewees such as Daniel experienced.

These nuances raise a lot of questions on the standardization of HL spaces. The goal of this project was not to suggest a set structure for what HL education should look like 100% of the time; but, this is not to ignore what is found in *Decolonizing Foreign*

Language Education, an essay collection by Donald Macedo. When discussing structures, Theresa Austin specifically focuses on HL teacher education within higher education, citing that in 2017 the National Heritage Language Resource Center focused on language teacher development and teaching practices. Yet, one thing that cannot go unnoticed is that this is only at the university level of education, and not at the level which this research focuses on. This means that there would be more resources and funding for such initiatives in higher education. One such similar testimony in her essay describes a parallel line of thought to this exact research.

> In my school I saw that my heritage language students were not getting the same opportunities to develop research skills ... so I turned my lessons in the Spanish classes into inquiries and project-based activities to involve them in the types of thinking, reading, and writing that would get them ready for college.
>
> (Austin, 2021: 143)

This educator saw a gap in how her students were directly affected by the gap in the curriculum, thus changing the structure of own classes. With this framework, HL education can also be used to bridge gaps in identity that are not at all touched on or fleshed out in traditional HL education. Additionally, with the support and testimonies given by the students in this research, dissatisfaction is very present and Chinese school HL structures should indeed adapt.

Secondly, within these structures lie the topic of how engaging the curriculum is for students. Connor specifically talks about how if the curriculum pertained to him, his attention level may have gone up 10-15%. This attitude toward the curriculum is mirrored by Hsieh et al (2020) research in that it is simply not engaging. One finding throughout the research that was unexpected was the prevalence of extracurricular activities such as clarinet, chess, public speaking, or as extreme as Matthew discusses math and English

packets for the SAT. While some of these extracurricular activities can indeed develop personal growth, Tochon adds that these spaces should focus on “work on identity, power for social healing, and the politics of the personal” (Tochon, 2021: 274).

Lastly, for the conversation on curriculum, Tochon also provides two pieces of core advice when moving forward in curriculum development. First, “teaching self and otherness is a part of teaching culture and language” (Tochon, 2021: 275). What was grasped in the testimonies from the participants and past research on the HL curriculum, is that it does not discuss the self and its future; rather, it teaches a foreign past. Secondly, “Teaching a language is not a matter of grammar. Part of it is related to a clash of identities” (Tochon, 2021: 276). The existing curriculum in Chinese schools doesn't accommodate the clash of identities mentioned throughout many of the tesimonies; instead, it treats it as a distant concept, belonging to the past and entirely disconnected from the meaning of being Chinese American.

The real question posed at the end of the results section was how does this all impact identity? Throughout the interviews, we are often reminded of Mia Tuan’s milestone contribution to such research and also Elaine Juo’s work in the development of Chinese American identity. Quotes from both of these works such as “It’s like Western Chinese food, a facade, but really American” or “My father is truly Chinese American because he cannot speak Chinese…” mark certain distinctions in what Chinese American identity is or “should be” (Kuo, 2001: 13, Tuan, 1998: 50). When putting these comments from over 20 years ago in comparison to this research’s narratives, there are apparent differences, yet the undertones of marginalization stain with an unfavorable aroma. In the last item of the interviews, participants were asked what it meant to be American directly.

For more than half of them, there was an apathy towards American identity. This can also be contextualized as a generational and temporal difference, but in the position of this research and the build-up to this question, lack of representation, discussion, or support for Chinese American identity within these HL structures to thrive are also to hold some responsibility in this narrative. It is here also that Tuan's conception of Forever Foreigner is reintroduced within the traditional Chinese HL curriculum, as something foreign both in terms of distance and time (Tuan, 1998). Distance, ina metaphorical sense in that it is such a foreign history or concept that it so hard to relate to; time, in that it is historically so dated that it is of little importance for children to take seriously academically.

Using Tse's (1998) model on ethnic identity formation in connection to HL education, participants found themselves in stages of or in between "ethnic ambivalence", "Americanizations", and "ethnic emergence." For some participants, this model did not necessarily fit how they saw or described themselves within different communities and spaces. Yet we are reminded by Phinney et. al, 2001, that a high ethnic involvement does not necessarily reflect a strong ethnic identity. Thus, conclusively, these theories combine to note that ethnic identity is a spectrum, allowing for identity to fall in and out of these boxes fluidly.

Conclusively, when tying these themes together for this project, we are reminded of their interconnectedness. Holistically, each of these pieces influences the other symbiotically, if it is allowed. However, if one part falls short, such as the curriculum not being up to modern standards, where is identity left to develop? It instead becomes an individual strife, which it can be; yet, with these structures already in place a paradigm

shift is necessary for the advancement of HL education and the future of a political Chinese and Asian American community.

Conclusion

This project has effectively mapped connections between the HL curriculum, HL structures, and identity development for Chinese American students. This was done through a comprehensive analysis of 9 main themes and 20 sub-themes from 14 unique primary source interviews between myself and William and Mary Chinese American undergraduates. In doing so, this project uncovered the shortcomings and places to improve the current structures of Chinese HL education. The research reaffirmed what many of the participants felt about their experiences with Chinese schools: that it simply did not pertain to them. It is with this statement, that HL education must adapt to reaffirm Chinese American identity, not only the historical background of Chinese identity. It is also necessary to emphasize that all participants in thai study noted the importance of seeing Chinese American history in these HL spaces, wishing it was actualized.

In this current study, there were multiple limitations influenced by restrictions on the participant pool and the amount of time to complete this project. Firstly, the majority of participants hailed from Northern Virginia, with few coming from other states such as Texas, New Jersey, or New York. This in tandem affected the economic and social circumstances of each individual to be higher as well. Secondly, as mentioned in this project already, not all students interviewed had gone to Chinese school. This was to gain a deeper understanding of the difference in how identity was affected by both circumstances. Thirdly, this project did not focus on biraciality, a common theme in difference for those individuals in this research. Lastly, the original goal of this project was to work with a Chinese school to create an effective curriculum; yet due to time and

placement of Chinese schools locally, this could not be achieved. Instead, the sample curriculum will be in the final section below.

Future research should critically analyze where modern-day Chinese schools are today in terms of their curriculum in Biden's America. Furthermore, it would be valuable to stress the difference that biracial and multiethnic students face as this current research attempted to do so, but ultimately lacked the literature.

The final section is supplemental to this work, offering a new sample paradigm that HL schools could adopt to teach Chinese American history to their respective students.

Curriculum

The following curriculum selections are designed by me, the PI, and are attributed to my education in Asian American studies. These topics are chosen so that they can have a connection to other intersectional topics such as feminism, diasporic histories, popular culture, etc. while also having a connection to traditional Chinese HL education structures and ideas. I would like to thank Lin Chunying for her contribution in advancing the boundaries of my language skills to create these and for her assistance in editing these ideas and constructs.

A Fong Moy

This first curriculum design is meant for HL students who are further along in their 1) Chinese studies and 2) within their own understanding of history and social studies. This chapter would target high school students or advanced middle school students within the HL system.

VOCABULARY/生词

女性Nǚxìng (woman)	会见Huìjiàn (meet)
移民yímín (immigrant)	总统zǒngtǒng (president)
名义míngyì (name)	出版chūbǎn (publish)
展览zhǎnlǎn (exhibition)	记录jìlù (record)
服装fúzhuāng (garment)	博物馆bówùguǎn (museum)
缠足chánzú (foot binding)	年代niándài (age/era)
成名chéngmíng (become famous)	下落xiàluò (drop/fall)
访问fǎngwèn (interview)	影响yǐngxiǎng (influence)

GRAMMAR/句型

然而。。。	However. . .
。。。逐渐。。。	. . . gradually. . .
题为【--------】	Titled【--------】
有关。。。	related. . .
并。。。	and. . .
A与B。。。互动	A and B. . . interact

A Fong Moy 是第一位已知的美国华人女性移民。1834年，梅由商人Nathaniel and Frederick Kahn从家乡广州带到纽约市，并以“中国女士”的名义展出。她的展览公告宣传了所穿的服装、她的语言和缠足造成的四英寸“小脚”。莫伊是第一位在美国成名的中国女性。她访问了美国，接受了媒体报道，并会见了美国总统安德鲁杰克逊。

1835年，纽约Risso and Browne公司出版了莫伊的版画，题为《中国女士》。她被用作博物馆的展品，并有固定的时间表，规定何时在她所在的房间里走动。 然而，莫伊的声望在

1840 年代逐渐衰退，有关她的记录也在 1850 年消失。报纸上再也没有提到莫伊，也不清楚她的下落。莫伊是第一位与许多美国人互动的中国女性，并影响了他们对亚洲女性和中国文化的看法。

Extending Exercise

This exercise is meant for the students to extend what they learn about A Fong Moy into a modern-day context of feminism (女權), racism (種族歧視), and sexism (性別歧視). It is also an opportunity to think about themselves within society, their own family, and their positionality (地位性) as Chinese Americans.

1.) 請你想一想你生活中最有影響的女性。。。可能是你媽媽，朋友，姐妹，甚至於你自己！想得好以後，解釋她的優點，她是怎麼這麼厲害。

   a.) 回答方式：

      i.) 採訪她，然後提交一張反思文章，

      ii.) 或者選一位流行女士，然好寫一篇文章關於她的背景。

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Exploring Your Family's History and Diaspora

https://cn.nytimes.com/usa/20210420/chinese-language-newsletter/

For this section, the students will read an article from the *New York Times*. Students who are not at the level to read this article can still partake in the assignment, making it an accessible learning curriculum for all HL students. This short article deep dives into the Californian Asian American community and its diasporic histories. It will allow students to conceptualize their parents' history and diasporic journey. For this section, a vocab and grammar list is not included because it would be dependent on the student to create it for themselves depending on their level of reading and speaking.

对话《海外华人札记》作者:如何为中文读者写专栏

过去的一年因为无法尽数的诸多原因而不同寻常，根深蒂固的不平等、种族主义和仇恨给美国带来的巨大伤害被赤裸裸地置于聚光灯下。

但如果有一样东西我希望我们能够发扬和推进，那就是对加州和全国多元化的亚裔社区的历史、广度和正在增长的力量更深刻的理解。海外华人是其中重要的一支。今天，我很高兴向您介绍新闻工作者荣筱箐，她将在每周五为改版后的《纽约时报》中文新闻简报撰写一个专栏。（一周中其他日子里，中文简报将继续推荐华人关心的时报精彩文章，您可以点击此处订阅。）

我让筱箐向我介绍一下这个新栏目，以下是我们的对话：

首先，请简单介绍一下这个栏目——读者定位是什么？订阅读者将在这里读到什么？

这份新的新闻简报是为中文读者、特别是美国华人打造的，每周选取热点话题从华人视角进行解读，比如如何理解增长中的反亚裔仇恨、华人在日渐多元的亚裔社区中的位置和角色等。简报中也会推荐华人可能会感兴趣，却未必有时间自己去时报每天发表的海量文章中搜寻的新闻报道。

筱箐，跟我们介绍一些你自己吧。你住在哪里，对什么样的话题最感兴趣？

我在中国长大，但最近20年一直住在美国。我是纽约的双语新闻记者，报道华人社区已经快20年了。我对所有跟华人社区相关的议题都感兴趣，从华人生活中需要面对的困惑和挣扎，到他们取得的成就，以及和故国错综复杂的关系。

如果这个专栏是为海外华人撰写的，我想你可能会有很多加州的读者。你关注的话题中有哪些是与加州读者息息相关的？

加州是美国华裔人口最多的州，也常常处于华人关心的热点话题的漩涡中心，比如平权法案的运营问题、华裔政治力量的上升、最近一年针对亚裔的仇恨攻击、以及中国大陆资本在加州大城市房地产市场上的投资等。我想这些话题以后都会在我们的栏目中进行讨论的。

你还有其他想对加州华人说的话吗？

好多年以前，我去三藩市的时候，一个朋友开车带我去了中国海滩，在那之前我都没听说过这个地方。很长一段时间里，这个海滩被以三藩市白人民族主义者前市长的名字命名，叫做James D. Phelan海滩州立公园，直到联邦政府在1970年代把它改回“中国海滩”这个名字，以纪念19世纪在这里聚集的华人渔民。最近，我经常想到这个

海滩。我们近来都经历了太多，但我相信错误总会被纠正的，只要你像那块矗立在海边、刻着“中国海滩”的碑石一样，站稳脚跟。

Extending Exercise #2

The assignment will stay the same regardless of grade level in the HL school. It is designed to be simple and to be flexible based on the student's speaking level. The student will write down what they learned from their parents and also ask follow-up questions about their diasporic experiences.

1. 采访你父母或奶奶爷爷关于他们自己移民美国的经历。他们面临什么问题？为什么他们要移民到美国？你还可以想一想你要问的问题。

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The amount of follow-up questions and length of the assignment will solely be based on the grade that the student is in. This exercise is drawn directly from themes in Macedo's book on D*ecolonizing Foreign Language Education.* It addresses making content that is keen on the student's identity, making it engaging as well as connecting it back to family and community building.

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Appendix

Proposed Methodology

For the base of this project, Latin American studies will be used as a model to incorporate Chinese American history into language courses. Macedo's collections of essays details the way in which the decolonization of foreign language education, specifically Spanish dialects, has aided in the strengthening of ethnic identities and social identities within said groups. Adopting this paradigm will serve as pedagogical grounding.

An interview portion will also be given to the William and Mary Chinese American population. The interviews will be anonymous and will serve as qualitative data to base the utility of Chinese Heritage schools and how those who have attended them experienced them. Furthermore, the interviews will reveal how these schools impacted their own identities as Chinese Americans, what the curricula entailed, and what they felt was missing.

The proposal will be below and will include procedures used to recruit participants, measures to ensure their privacy, safety, and wellbeing, a question guide for the interview, and consent forms.

Proposed Procedures

1. Designated Groups at William and Mary to sample from:
    a. Chinese Student Organization
    b. Taiwanese Student Association
    c. Asian American Student Initiative
2. Interview requirements
    a. Students of Chinese American descent at William and Mary
    b. Have/Have not attended Chinese school
    c. Can expect a commitment of 30-45 minutes
3. Question Guide:
    a. Where did you grow up?
    b. Did you feel represented in your community?
    c. How important do you think it was to your parents to be familiar with Chinese culture?
    d. In the classroom, did you ever see yourself through historical figure or events?
    e. Throughout your childhood, did you ever attend any equivalent to Chinese school?
    f. If yes:
        i. What did the schedule and content entail on a daily basis??
        ii. How did learning the language and culture as a child impact your identity today?
        iii. Did your Chinese language school curriculum offer any information about Chinese American history? (straight up)
        iv. Would you have appreciated an opportunity to learn about Chinese American history at your Chinese language school? (direct)
    g. If no:

i. How do you think not attending Chinese school impacted your identity?

ii. Did you have any personal drive to seek out your culture or ethnic language? What did that look like?

iii. Do you think reclaiming your ethnic language and history are forms of empowerment for yourself?

h. Do you think there are ways to incorporate Chinese American History into modern Chinese schools today?

i. How do you embody your identity as a Chinese American?

j. Do you think you have lost touch with Chinese culture?

k. What does it mean to be American to you?

4. Anonymity, Protection, and Consent

   a. For writing purposes, names will not at all be mentioned or used when using responses for qualitative evidence

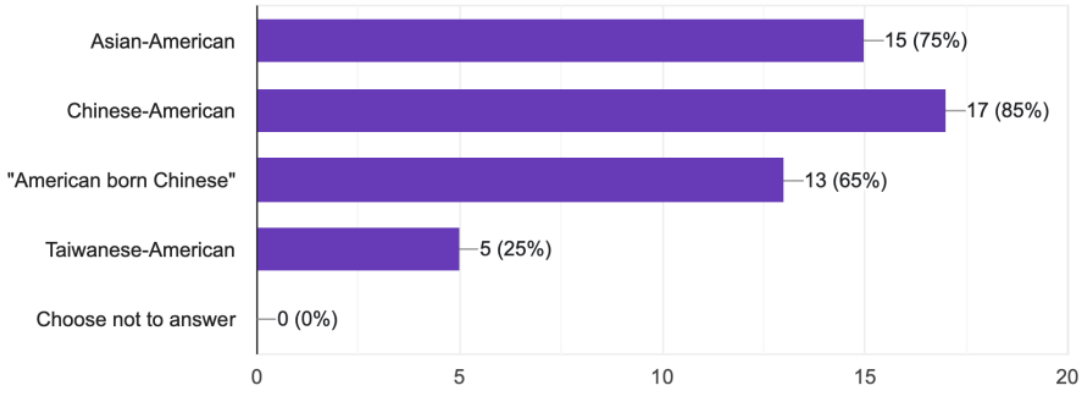
   b. When signing up, it will be done through a google form to keep a list and make sure it can be done securely and with no outside pressures from peers or environments.

   c. Consent forms will be written with advisor*

   d. Give notice beforehand on content of interview questions

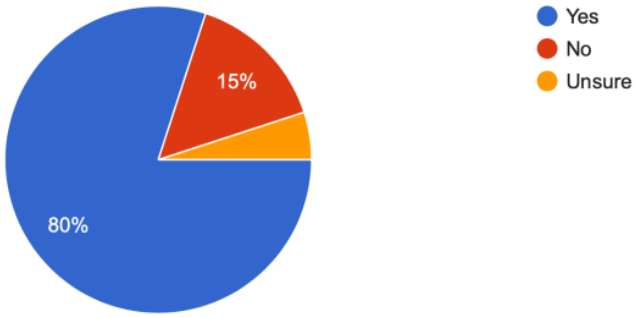
How do you identify yourself? (Check all that apply)

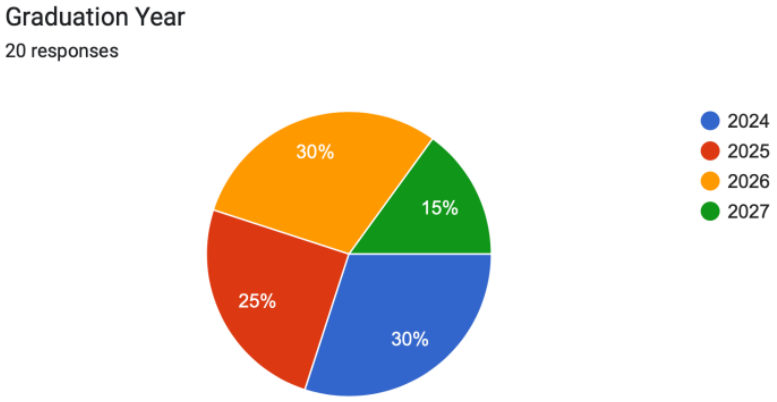
20 responses



Do you have experience attending Chinese school as a child or taking any Heritage Learner classes?

20 responses





Consent Form for Interview Participation Title of Research Project: Decolonizing Chinese American History through Language Education

Principal Investigator: Collin Absher
Affiliation: William and Mary Undergraduate Student
Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an interview for a research project aimed at exploring personal experiences and perspectives related to childhood, Chinese schooling, and identity. Before proceeding, it is important that you carefully read and understand the information provided below. Feel free to ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Purpose and Procedure:

The purpose of this research is to gain insights into individuals' upbringing, experiences with Chinese schooling, and how they perceive their own identity; additionally what they may have felt was missing in the Chinese school curriculum. The interview will be conducted by the principal investigator, Collin Absher. It will be audio-recorded for accuracy during data analysis. The interview duration is estimated to be approximately 30 minutes. Furthermore this study has been reviewed by William & Mary Student IRB on 8/30/2023, is determined to be "Exempt," and will expire on 8/30/2024. Lastly, this research is not funded by any third-party institutions.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

All information collected during the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. Personal identifiers such as your name, contact information, and any other identifying details will be removed from the transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms to ensure

your anonymity. The data will only be accessed by the research team and will be securely stored in password-protected files. Only aggregated data without any identifying information will be shared in research publications or presentations.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any specific questions or to withdraw your participation at any time during the interview or even after its completion, without any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected up until that point will be deleted, and your information will not be included in the final analysis.

Potential Risks and Benefits:

Participating in this study poses minimal risks. Some questions or discussions about personal experiences and identity may be sensitive or evoke emotional responses. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the interview, please let the interviewer know, and they will be responsive to your needs. The potential benefits of participating in this research include contributing to a better understanding of childhood experiences, Chinese schooling, and identity, which may have implications for education and cultural understanding. Once the research has concluded, participants can expect to receive a copy of all findings.

Questions and Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or your participation, please contact the principal investigator, Collin Absher, at 5402704711. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board or Ethics Committee at contact information.

You may report dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study to Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee, by telephone (757-221-3862) or email (jastev@wm.edu).

By signing below, you acknowledge that:

1. You have read and understood the information provided in this consent form.
2. You have had the opportunity to ask questions, and any concerns have been addressed to
   your satisfaction.
3. You voluntarily agree to participate in the interview for the research project.
4. You understand that your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to
   withdraw at any time without consequences.

5. You agree to the audio-recording of the interview, confidentiality of your information,
   and anonymized use of your data for research purposes.

Participant's Name: _____
Date: _____
Participant's Signature: _____

Check this box to confirm you are 18 years or older ___

Researcher's Name: Collin Absher
Date: _____
Researcher's Signature: _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. Please retain a copy of this consent form for your records.