Spring 5-18-2024

Playing With International Students From Asia: An Exploration of Cultural Commonalities and Differences in Developmental Transformations (DvT)

Hazuki Okamoto
hokamoto@lesley.edu

Recommended Citation

Playing With International Students From Asia: An Exploration of Cultural

Commonalities and Differences in Developmental Transformations (DvT)

Capstone Thesis

Lesley University

May 3, 2024

Hazuki Okamoto

Lesley University

Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Drama Therapy

Laura Wood, PhD, RDT/BCT, LMHC

Abstract

Asian international students in the United States face a multitude of challenges such as language barriers, differences in cultural norms and behaviors, and identity confusion while navigating a foreign landscape. Developmental Transformations (DvT), a form of drama therapy, may apply to these challenges by enabling participants to explore different identities and express themselves creatively beyond the language barrier. This community engagement project was designed for Asian international students to be seen and heard by utilizing DvT. Within an in-person workshop, five participants played with their shared stories, and explored international and cultural roles in group DvT. Key takeaways from the workshop on the needs of Asian international students highlight the importance of validation, providing spaces to process culture shock, and fostering connections with peers from similar backgrounds. Implications for future directions include more research and practice regarding the ways to modify theories of drama therapy for those who are from collectivistic cultures.

Keywords: Asian international students, culture, acculturation, developmental transformations, drama therapy

Author's Identity Statement: The author identifies as an international student, a woman, who was born and raised in Hiroshima, Japan. English is my second language, and I am still not used to the culture of naming my pronouns nor being considered a person of color.

Playing With International Students From Asia: An Exploration of Cultural Commonalities and Differences in Developmental Transformations (DvT)

Introduction

International students take on multiple roles simultaneously as they navigate their experiences abroad. They embody the role of a dedicated student, foreigner, and national of their home countries; they adapt to new customs and norms of their host country while maintaining connections with their homeland, friends, family, and preserving their cultural heritage. Juggling these diverse identities requires constant adaptation and flexibility to navigate the complexities of international student life. Those plural identities can cause identity confusion (Berry et al.,1987). International students from a collectivistic culture may struggle with the cultural differences of "self", while simultaneously developing new identities and adjusting to a new environment (Rahim, 2021; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Furthermore, international students face numerous challenges, such as acculturative stress, language and cultural barriers, discrimination, cultural misunderstandings, formation of friendships, lack of social support, financial constraints, visa, and immigration issues (Rahim, 2021; Leong, 2015; Sherry et al., 2010; Berry et al., 1987). In an anthropological context, culture is defined as traditions of thought, behavior, and feeling in society (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Acculturation is classically defined as the "[comprehension of] those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). Berry et al. (1987) identified acculturative stress which happens during the process of acculturation and these stress behaviors can manifest both internally and externally.

According to the 2023 Open Doors Report, over one million international students had studied in the United States for the 2022/2023 academic year and 53% were from China or India (Institute of International Education, 2023). People from collectivistic cultures prioritize group norms over personal goals and place a high value on maintaining group harmony, while individualistic cultures strive for independence and personal achievement (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994). Wang (2022) stated "[Asian diasporas] might simultaneously value independence and interconnectedness and as a result feel stuck" (p. 87). Asian international students from collectivistic cultures experience difficulties of acculturation significantly more than those from individualistic cultures because of certain sociocultural factors (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Research indicates that students from Asia are likely to have adjustment stress because of a cultural distance from their own host country (Bui et al., 2021). For example, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese students were reported to have a higher anxiety level of speaking English than other international students (Perry et al., 2017; Woodrow, 2006). Another example of adjustment stress can be seen in the hesitation to interrupt a teacher or to express one's needs to an authority figure, both of which are considered disrespectful in Asian culture; this can cause students to hesitate to be self-advocates in US classrooms (Bai & Wang, 2022; Lee & Ciftci, 2014). As such, this can cause Asian perspectives to be difficult to observe and understand from non-Asian audiences.

The need for various approaches to support expression therefore becomes essential. Arts-based therapies that incorporate art, music, dance/movement, drama/theater, play, and poetry/creative writing (Malchiodi, 2005) were reported as relevant for people from Asia to be able to safely express what they have in mind as the arts-based process can facilitate a non-verbal and indirect form of expression (Ho, 2021). Kim et al. (2023) elucidated that the integration of

arts within the bicultural contexts of individuals in South Korea and the United States facilitated dialogues concerning racism and ethnic discrimination. These findings underscore the efficacy of expressive arts techniques in strengthening assertiveness among Asian international students. It also creates a platform for their experiences to be acknowledged by non-Asian individuals. A drama therapy study found that using native language in the workshop empowered participants (Kim & Ginther, 2019).

Drama therapy, a form of creative arts therapy, has a growing body of research that may be relevant for Asian international students as a way of validating or exploring the process of acculturation and making a safe space for them to share stories and experiences (Breithaupt & Yang, 2023; Dokter & Sajnani 2022; Kim & Ginther, 2019; Jung, 2018; Sampathi, 2018; Chang, 2017; Bayley, 2016; Onoe, 2014; Volkas, 2014; Hung, 2010; Landy, 1997; Linden, 1991). The North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA) defined drama therapy as an embodied practice that allows the participants "to tell their stories, set goals and solve problems, express feelings, or achieve catharsis" (2021, para. 2). The practice has been embraced by a global audience. The World Alliance of Dramatherapy (WADth) was founded in 2017 and current collaborative members are from around the world (2023). Jennings and Holmwood (2016) discussed the practice of dramatherapy in South Korea, Taiwan, India, Cameroon, and Romania in their book, *Routledge International Handbook of Dramatherapy*. The practitioners in these regions found drama therapy to be relevant for addressing familiar topics within their societies and communities. Dokter and Sajnani (2022) proposed an intercultural drama therapy framework aimed at addressing intersectionality and diversifying its applications, emphasizing the global impact of drama therapy.

One modality of drama therapy, Developmental Transformations (DvT), may be particularly beneficial for this population given its focus on providing a space of empowerment, which helps to increase self-awareness and social engagement, and creates a forum that facilitates the exploration of race and interpersonal relationships (Sajnani et al., 2023). DvT is a practice of improvisational embodied play, which occurs in therapeutic and social settings, and recently DvT has been used as a tool to question and break down power and privilege (Johnson & Pitre, 2021). DvT aims "to help the *player* [the participant] gradually let go of their persona, history, issues, and beliefs, and release them to the *playspace* where they can be given their freedom to transform in a space mutually governed with others" (p. 131). Mayor (2012) indicated that a player's cultural differences can be unconsciously exposed in diverse play. An American drama therapist, Adam Reynolds, reflected on DvT play with people in Taiwan and he learned "how status, how power, how choice, influence gets played out in a different culture" (Dokter & Sajnani, 2022, p. 117). Given the freedom of play which includes cultural norms and challenges, DvT can encourage Asian international students to co-create a cultural space.

Personal Statement

Drama therapy opened my eyes with its playful and imaginative approach. I believe acting or thinking "as if" is the key to drama therapy and it gave my life more space to play, and it helped my transition from Japan to the United States. In particular, everyday cultural differences depleted me and I found myself wanting to take a rest from being in this situation. Imagination and playfulness give me a way to escape. These experiences made me think of creating a group of international students from Asia, especially those who share similar cultures such as: East Asia, South East Asia, and South Asia, and play with them in DvT format to see what outcomes it could produce. I was curious to see what movements, roles, scenes, or words

would come up during the process. I wondered what playing without the confines of the dominant culture of the host country would look like. In what way would people notice their commonalities and differences? With these questions, this capstone thesis, which serves as a community engagement project, explores what I observed from the experience of DvT play with Asian international students.

Literature Review

This literature review covers two different but interrelated topics: international student's challenges and DvT. As such, this literature review will be divided into two components: the Asian international student experience in general; and how the concept of drama therapy and DvT can be utilized within this overall population and culture.

Common Challenges of International Students From Asia

Acculturation

Broadly speaking, acculturation refers to the process through which individuals or groups assimilate into a dominant culture (Redfield et al., 1936). Berry (2023) identified three psychological acculturations: "behavioural changes; stress reactions; and strategies used in intercultural encounters" (p. 282). Behavioral changes encompass ways of speaking, clothing choices, and dietary habits, and they may also entail more challenging transformations, such as shifts in identities, self-perception, and values (Berry, 2023). Although traditional acculturation considered immigrants' transitional experiences, Garcia et al. (2020) indicated acculturation in terms of the context of intersectionality, diversity, and multiculturalism.

Acculturative Stress

Acculturation affects mental health and well-being. Xu and Chi (2013) expressed that the immigration experience is stressful because of the co-occurrence of "emotional, social, cultural,

educational, and economic adjustments" (p. 217). Berry et al. (1987) described acculturative

stress as occurring in the process of adapting to a new cultural environment. The stress behaviors

often show as "lowered mental health status (specifically confusion, anxiety, depression),

feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom level, and identity

confusion" (p. 492). Language barriers can cause a significant predictor of acculturative stress

for international students (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Another study of Asian international graduate

students in the United States showed that they possibly face acculturative stress from adjustment

to new educational systems, working on academic goals, experiencing homesickness, and

simultaneously trying to acculturate within a new society (Ma, 2021). This stress can manifest

itself in physical and mental health challenges (Xu & Chi, 2013). Yeh and Inose (2003)

discovered that international students in the United States from Asia, Central/Latin America, and

Africa are at a higher risk of acculturative stress compared to students from Europe because

those from collectivistic cultures may struggle with the US culture of independence. They also

indicated that "English language fluency, social connectedness, and social support satisfaction"

(p. 24) are significant predictors of stress. Ma (2021) examined that acculturative stress can be a

predictor for depression. In counseling contexts, overlooked acculturative stress can cause

inaccurate or unnecessary intervention methods such as emotional regulation or providing coping

skills (Ma, 2021).

International students already have a potential to have acculturative stress, and this stress

can be compounded for Asian international students because seeking help can be difficult for

them. Chinese and Korean immigrants in the United States are notably less likely to seek help,

due to their home culture's social stigma against mental health, a tendency towards self-blaming

thoughts that is pervasive in those cultures, and low self-esteem (Koo et al., 2021; Li, 2021).

Adjustment

If an international student's acculturative stress gets too severe, it can hinder their ability to achieve their goals; in order to achieve these goals, they need to adjust to the host culture (Wang, 2009). Adjustment helps students overcome negative emotions and feelings associated with being in an unfamiliar culture. Rahim (2021) categorized the international students' adjustment experiences into two experiences: psychological and sociocultural. Psychological aspects include feelings of homesickness, anxiety, and culture shock, whereas sociocultural aspects are adjustments in the "interactions with faculty members, academic advisers, classmates, and their learning experiences in classes" (p. 2251). In a study concerning Chinese international students in the United States, researchers examined that student interaction with American nationals created a sense of belonging and helped these international students learn and hone US sociocultural skills, which can help with their adjustment process (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). A study of Korean international students showed their monocultural nature posed challenges in adapting to the host culture (Koo et al., 2021). A further example was noted with Chinese students seeking a community to feel belonging (Wolf & Phung, 2019). Yeo et al. (2019) pointed out that one of the invisible challenges for international students in the United States was often dismissed as an individual-level issue, implying that they are responsible for managing the adjustment process.

Language and Cultural Barriers

Although social connectedness in the host culture is one of the key aspects of adjustment for international students, connecting with local people and accepting a new culture can be challenging for Asian international students because of linguistic and cultural differences.

Language Barriers. Anxiety that comes with speaking English is considered the most significant challenge for international students in the United States (Mori, 2000). The research showed that the challenges include idioms and slang in the context of American culture, which may not have been taught in an academic language class before these students came to the United States (Sherry et al., 2010). Language and cultural barriers vary between international students based on national origin. International students from East Asia studying in the United States have difficulty in English due to the dissimilarity in their native language (Perry et al., 2017; Leong, 2015; Woodrow, 2006). Sociocultural factors may also be at play among East Asian international students. Leong (2015) indicated that Chinese students often struggle with speaking English because of the embarrassment of their perceived limited English fluency and that might cause loneliness and anxiety.

For any population, language plays various important roles in communication, whether that is to express one's emotions, get information, or simply for interpersonal connections. However, individuals speaking a non-primary language may experience a disconnection from their authentic emotions associated with early memories while communicating in the language of the host country (Gersie, 1997), which significantly affects the therapeutic process when the client speaks their second language (Oliva, 2019). Michelle Napoli (2021), who is a professor of expressive therapy with a multicultural background at Lesley University, highlighted the significant role of language in informing one's worldview and connecting one's emotions to their ancestral experience: "When I speak our Native languages, my connection to our old collective soul is waking up, and I am accessing a worldview where life and spirit and value can be found everywhere and in everything" (p. 2). Speaking in a non-native language may cause a sense of disconnection for international students with themselves, family, friends, and community.

Likewise, speaking in one's native language can foster a sense of comfort and familiarity, allowing one to express themselves in a more robust way.

Cultural Barriers. In collectivistic culture, equilibrium of the community is a significant aspect in which the goal is to maintain group harmony; those belonging to this culture are more likely to avoid conflict compared to those from individualistic cultures (Triandis, 2001).

According to Hays (2022), non-verbal self-disclosure can manifest through gestures such as shaking hands, making eye contact, and managing physical space, all of which may vary across cultures. Additionally, Hays (2022) observed that the realm of non-verbal communication includes silence, which also carries cultural distinctions. She described the meaning of silence in European American culture, where it is often taken to be a sign of anger or an indication that the speaker has finished and the next person may speak. In contrast, in Chinese, Japanese, Alaskan Native, and American Indian cultures, silence is often used to communicate respect for what has just been said or for the speaker, especially for elders (Hays, 2022, p. 124).

Another cultural difference that Asian international students may experience is the US` layered taxonomy of racial identity. Those who came from Asia originated from racially homogeneous cultures, and grew up with different concepts of race from the American paradigm of power, privilege, and oppression. (Yeo et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2006). Korean Art therapy practitioners and students who have lived in the United States articulated their experiences in their artwork. In her artwork titled "Their. Lives. Matter," Korean immigrant Park Sojung presented one perspective on racism from the viewpoint of an international student, an outsider's interpretation. In the artwork, a White person and a Black person are in a boxing ring fighting each other, while in the background, a collage made up of the faces of different Asian people can be seen in the shadows, demonstrating the perpetual distance this population can feel in another

country's cultural experiences with racism (Kim et al., 2023). Being silenced and expectations of Asians to be silent can make it more difficult to be visible in US culture (Kim et al., 2023; Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). Additionally, international students facing language barriers often struggle to articulate their experiences in English, rendering their perspectives invisible (DiAngelo, 2006). Yeo et al. (2019) stressed that there is limited research on international students' experience of race and racism in the United States. Thus, more research is needed to validate international students' unique positionalities.

Drama Therapy

One possible means to validate international students' unique voices and experiences is drama therapy. Drama therapists combine core processes from the drama therapy approaches, such as active witnessing, distancing, dramatic play, dramatic projection, embodiment, engagement in dramatic reality, and multidimensional relationships, to guide clients or participants to their goals (Frydman et al., 2022). These techniques were adopted by those we now consider the early practitioners of drama therapy and came to form the foundation of the discipline (Johnson, 2021). Those early practitioners of what we now call drama therapy founded the NADTA in 1979 (NADTA, 2021).

Sociometry

Sociometry, as a methodological tool, elucidates the intricate dynamics of group interactions, offering insight into the interrelations among individuals (Moreno, 1934). Through observation and analysis, it unveils the underlying mechanisms shaping group dynamics. A spectrogram is an action-based sociometry that locates one's body "on the imaginary line based on where they believe they belong when considering the prompt(s)" (Giacomucci, 2021, p. 219). The question can be started with an easy one such as "how much do you like summer", and

participants then stand along a line to indicate their agreement with the statement. Another sociometric technique is step-in sociometry. This begins with a circle and people step into the circle as they answer the prompt(s), and even the participants can offer the prompt(s) (Giacomucci, 2021). Buchanan (2016) described that step-in sociometry can help facilitate a group cohesion and promote a sense of connection. The distinguishing feature of step-in sociometry lies in the visibility of participants' facial expressions, coupled with the physical proximity engendered as all group members converge within the circle; the phenomenon accentuates the correlation between spatial closeness and interpersonal dynamics. Those two sociometric techniques allow non-verbal response (Giacomucci, 2021) as the main part is locating their body. Moreover, the participants can get a sense of similarities as well as differences upon the prompt(s). Hence, sociometry can offer a safe place for Asian international students to express themselves and safely see the commonalities and differences.

Role Theory

Moreno (1987) defined roles as private and collective aspects that were developed "by past experiences and the cultural patterns of the society" (p. 62). Classically, role theory is the idea of people taking roles in everyday life as they are acting in the theater of life, and this theory is applicable to analyze people in social, cultural, and psychological aspects (Landy & Ramsden, 2021). In the context of drama therapy viewed through a theatrical lens, American drama therapist Robert Landy explored roles in Western theatrical plays (Landy & Ramsden, 2021). He discovered that actors maintain an aesthetic distance in their performances, which is neither too close nor too far from the role itself. This concept can be effectively utilized in therapy. Landy described that naming the role can help clients "to move away from their daily reality into the fictional, creative realm" (Landy, 1993, p. 47). Naming roles gives people a sense that the roles

do not entirely shape their identity but the roles are only one aspect of who they are. Landy developed a theory that roles can be categorized into three functions; role, counter role, and guide (Landy & Ramsden, 2021). With a view of theatrical play, the role is the protagonist, the counter role is the antagonist, and the guide role stands between role and counter role and the guide is a therapeutic figure which leads one to their goal (Landy & Ramsden, 2021). Landy (1997) reflected on his experience of working with people in Taiwan by utilizing the idea of roles, and cultural roles were evoked immediately. Jennings (1983) expressed that the idea of giving permission to live with roles "encourages a greater sense of control over role behaviour and diminishes anxiety concerning loss of identity" (p. 4). International students who encounter marginalization and isolation often experience identity confusion as a stress behavior in their acculturation process (Berry et al., 1987). Classifying different identities as well as roles may support international students who explore different roles in a new environment.

Developmental Transformations (DvT)

DvT, which is the core theory applied to this thesis project, was derived from the root of theater and inspired by physical/affective drama therapy. DvT is an improvisational play that involves embodiment and movement, which happens with individual and group formats and "in any art modality, and any social frame (e.g., therapy, performance, education, public health)" (Johnson & Pitre, 2021, p. 123). In DvT play, a player [participant(s)] possesses the freedom to play with the *playor* [therapist] in any form or manner (Johnson, 2013). DvT centers its developmental process; starting with stepping into the playspace (where the play happens), sounds and movements, which mirror the player's behavior and passing it around the circle, and play can shift in any way. The roles, images, and scenes evoked from the players would come up again and the playor intentionally brings those up to see how the players transform them. DvT

tries "to help the player gradually let go of their persona, history, issues, and beliefs, and release them to the playspace where they can be given their freedom to transform in a space mutually governed with others" (Johnson & Pitre, 2021, p. 131).

Johnson (2013) stated that there are no objects engaged in the playspace except pillows and an area rug since real objects might give a specific meaning to the play and those can restrict the freedom in the play. Within this freedom of play, DvT aims to be able to lower fear of this unstable and unpredictable world and tolerate the instability (Johnson, 2013; Johnson, 2009). DvT playspace offers an experience of "living with a degree of ambiguity, mixture, incompleteness, and compromise" (Johnson & Pitre, 2021, p. 137). This instability theory stems from the Buddhist axiom that life is turbulent and impermanent (Johnson, 2013). DvT allows both player and playor to be in uncertain situations, and acknowledging and repeating this instability in the hypothetical playspace is the goal of DvT.

DvT emerged within the practice of drama therapy to see how people behave and how their behavior shifts in different situations (Johnson, 1982). According to Sajnani et al. (2023), DvT practice has been globalizing and it applies to different populations even in recreational contexts. The research showed that the application of DvT before the 2010s was in private or clinical settings, and from the 2010s, the literature also came out in languages other than English, and DvT entered a phase of being "a public practice capable of deconstructing stereotypes and enabling a greater sense of responsiveness and freedom amidst restrictive social conditions" (p. 277). Utilizing DvT to explore Asian students' cultural space can be relevant in a way of expanding the original idea of DvT in clinical settings to community-based application.

The Benefits of DvT

Theoretically, the benefits of DvT were described as helping to develop coping skills towards unstable as well as challenging situations and being able to play in an encounter that is among group members, oneself, and playor (Johnson & Pitre, 2021). Also, play is a significant component of the therapeutic benefit of DvT. Dintino et al. (2015) indicated that play enables individuals to introduce new elements into their transformation, gain a sense of control over real and unreal situations, expand their possibilities, and explore different perspectives. They also discussed the concept of playable and unplayable roles in DvT:

> It is as if there were an unspoken rule that we can only play with what is already playable, or better, palpable. Playing with topics that are unassimilated into our experience is quite another matter. Instead, these issues are suppressed, ignored, or pathologized. [...] Playing with initially unplayable ideas, wishes, and actions helps us feel they have become less of a threat to our integrity and existence. Playing with unplayable issues helps us to understand them more fully, control them more flexibly, and feel less overwhelmed by them. [...] Through play we learn restraint (p. 13).

It is important to note that what Dintino et al. (2015) described such as "what we can only play" (p. 13) and "our experience" (p. 13) may be applicable specifically within the authors' norms, cultures, and positionality. Research has further assessed specific unplayable topics including playing with a person without a home, perpetrators, gender, death, race, power, and privilege in social justice contexts (Mayor, 2018; Dintino et al., 2015; Mayor, 2012; Mayor, 2010; Dintino & Johnson, 1997). However, limited research conveys the relevancy of those unplayable topics within international students' challenges such as racial discrimination, cultural misunderstandings, and social justice.

Sajnani et al. (2023) conducted research about the observed benefits of DvT practice, which were eventually categorized into six general components: "positive relational change, positive cognitive change, positive emotional change, positive social change, positive physical change, [and] positive behavioural change" (p. 298). According to them, positive relational change was the most common component in the general categories, which was mentioned in 36 publications out of 51 selected publications written in English. Their research demonstrated that most of the published articles about DvT were not rigorous research studies, but rather were case studies or therapist observations. Furthermore, although social and cultural benefits were observed in the research of Sajnani et al. (2023), it revealed that limited investigation has been done in the publications in English focused on Asian culture, international, or immigrant populations. Mayor's (2012) article discussed playing with race, but the main discussion was racism in America such as whiteness and its privilege. In this context, immigrants or students from Asia are excluded.

One of the benefits of DvT that is related to international students can be freedom of usage of language in play. Landy (2008) described that DvT focuses on embodied action rather than verbal communication, and the physical sensation evokes what the player really wants to deal with such as specific scenes or roles. Although the way in which people in different cultures perceive embodiment may be different from Western perspectives, this non-verbal aspect can allow those who do not share the dominant language in the playspace to reduce their anxiety.

Roles in DvT

Roles in DvT Play. In the DvT playspace, multiple roles show up: it can be oneself, family, friends, strangers, occupation roles, or authority figures; objects with/without being able to talk; make sounds; or something else that does not have to be named. Johnson (2013)

explained that those roles are even reversible, which means other players and playor can take those roles too. In order to let the other players play those roles, it is necessary to give up control of those roles (Johnson, 2013). In this sense, DvT offers a safe distance as well as role theory (Landy, 2008).

Role gives a picture of one's patterns of "thinking, feeling, valuing or acting" (Landy & Ramsden, 2021, p. 86). DvT offers a safe space to explore various roles outside of the patterned roles such as stereotyped roles (Butler, 2012). In a racially diverse play, Mayor (2012) expressed that "race as roles that are produced and performed, embodied and created in the encounter" are made possible (p. 212). The racial roles naturally are evoked in the play, which interconnects their subconscious and cultural differences. DvT playspace gives us the freedom to play roles we are not attributed or cannot play, or conversely, the opportunity to let go of roles we normally play, cling to, or are fed up with.

Roles of the Facilitator (Playor). The facilitator's roles are guide, mirror, player's play object, and observer. Playor intentionally brings different roles "even contradictory ones" (Johnson & Pitre, 2021, p. 142). In the play with Asian international students, the contradictory roles would be an Asian-phobia figure or an immigration official to let the player experience roles and scenes with many different layers, perspectives, and the thoughts and feelings that accompany these experiences. What is different from group drama therapy and DvT is the playor's role of play object which is the idea that the player has control over the play. The role of play object offers players the ability to "acknowledge how difficult life is, how incomplete our efforts are, and to not be afraid of or ashamed of our failings" (Johnson & Pitre, 2021, p. 148).

Intercultural Drama Therapy

The practice of drama therapy is receiving global attention, and recently, intercultural drama therapy has garnered more focus within the discipline. Drama therapists Dokter and Sajnani (2022) developed a framework for the intercultural practice of drama therapy to address intersectionality or to deconstruct the original theory and apply it to diverse subjects which exemplifies the global reach of drama therapy. One example of this is the Black American role taxonomy created by Adam Stevens (2023) which builds on Landy's (1993) work by utilizing stereotypical roles that are assigned to or taken by folks of color. Another example is the play *Turbulence*, which was an arts-based participatory action research project with people who identified as Black and people of color facilitated by Sajnani et al. (2023). In the play, "dramatic, visual, musical and poetic forms" (p. 130) were incorporated to allow the participants and researchers to question themselves as to what realities and hopes they saw and how to grow as a community. Creating this space enabled individuals with shared interests and minority experiences to connect and feel empowered, mitigating isolation and fostering a safe environment for sharing their stories. Both of these exemplify intercultural drama therapy by showcasing diverse positionalities and their practical application in community empowerment.

Academic research on drama therapy may be constrained by language bias, as evidenced by a quantitative analysis of scholarly literature published from 2000 to 2021. This analysis revealed that more than half of journal articles originated from either the United Kingdom or the United States, highlighting the perceived exclusivity of drama therapy research within academic discourse (Constien & Junker, 2023). Although the number of studies are limited, there are an increasing number of studies and practices that have been published about drama therapy for people who have roots in Asia (Breithaupt & Yang, 2023; Dokter & Sajnani 2022; Kim & Ginther, 2019; Jung, 2018; Sampathi, 2018; Chang, 2017; Bayley, 2016; Onoe, 2014; Volkas,

2014; Hung, 2010; Landy, 1997; Linden, 1991). Breithaupt and Yang (2023) reported that their workshop in China was carefully prepared with a consideration of traditional values, norms, and Chinese systematic changes in history. They witnessed that those cultural aspects emerged in scenes in drama therapy. Bayley (2016) found that integrating classical Indian mythology and embodiment practices facilitates clients' therapeutic engagement by enabling them to visualize their bodies and movements more effectively than through imagination alone. Japanese drama therapist Onoe (2014) has notably applied DvT play with children at a foster home in Japan to positive outcomes. The studies on utilizing drama therapy for international students from Asia in the United States are still limited, with cultural aspects and identity considerations remaining largely unexplored; hence, further research is imperative to elucidate how to effectively employ drama therapy for this population.

Method

This thesis project was a part of the cultural-centering drama therapy workshop. This workshop was planned and conducted with another student in the drama therapy program at Lesley University. Our shared areas of interest and the cultural backgrounds in which we grew up led us to organize a workshop together.

Throughout this project, I wanted to explore three areas: 1) how Asian people play without anyone from the dominant culture; 2) what roles, stories, and norms are shared or not shared; 3) how DvT empowers the community.

Recruitment

The workshop had two components. The first one was a pre-workshop which was an introductory/recruitment online session for whoever was interested in the workshop and to determine if they met the eligibility requirements: graduate or PhD students; those are from East

Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia; and those who have been living in the United States for less than 10 years. The second component was the workshop which took place in person in January for four hours at Lesley University.

I published a flyer for the introductory/recruitment online session in early January (Appendix A and Appendix B). The flyer was sent to potential participants and these participants were not limited to Lesley University. Within Lesley University, I asked the International Student Office, Global Education Center, International Student Association, and the professors in the graduate program, to pass flyers to the relevant population, and I also posted it on the expressive therapies program community's emailing list. I also reached out to seven other universities in the Boston area for participants open to the workshop; however, I did not get any responses back.

Participants

The participants included not only F-1 international visa holders but also permanent residents in the United States. I selected these specific subgroups to tailor the workshop's content more closely to their experiences, facilitating easier sharing of values and cultural insights. Additionally, keeping a group small such as four to six participants was another consideration of the introductory/recruitment online session since having a large group makes it difficult to track the behaviors, roles, scenes, and transformation.

I got 11 responses from the registration form for the online pre-workshop, all from Lesley University. In total, eight participants came to the online session: six from East Asia, three from Southeast Asia, and two from South Asia. After the recruitment process, five students joined our main workshop. To avoid bias toward participants from one country, I recruited the participants from as many different Asian places of origin as possible.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants for the Main Workshop

Participants	Asian subgroup	Place of origin	Years in the U.S.
A	East Asia	China	9 years
B	East Asia	Taiwan	6 years
C	East Asia	Taiwan	> 5 years
D	South Asia	India	6 years
E	South Asia	India	1.5 years

Workshop Procedure

Pre-workshop

The pre-workshop session was not only for giving information but also as a warm-up and getting to know each other. I asked the workshop participants why they signed up and about their experiences as international students in the United States. As a facilitator, understanding the participants' experience was crucial in designing the main workshop. For instance, I considered how much the participants were willing to share and how many were familiar with drama therapy activities.

Main Workshop

The main workshop consisted of five portions: (1) warm-ups; (2) monologue; (3) role exploration; (4) group DvT play, and (5) reflection and closing. I consulted with my drama therapy modality supervisor about the outlines for the workshop. My supervisor is a DvT

practitioner and had personal experience of being an international student in the United States and had worked with diverse populations.

      Warm-ups. The workshop took place in a rectangular dance studio room at Lesley University. Everyone took off their shoes and we began sitting in a circle. The warm-up included group norm settings and housekeeping such as taking care of yourself and announcing that break and snack times will be offered multiple times. I stressed that this group was a community engagement project and was not a therapy session, and I told them they had the ability to step out of the group activity and step into the witness role or leave the room to do self-care if something intense came up during the group activities. Additionally, I confirmed everyone's confidentiality and that I would not use direct quotes in this thesis. Activities were used as a warm-up to get to know each other and see each participant's positionalities. Firstly, I asked everyone to share their name as they pronounce it in English, as well as how they would pronounce it in their primary language, to allow them to become aware of the dual identities they may be playing in their lives while in the United States. Then, I asked for an energy level check-in to measure their emotional and physical energy level with their hands; placing their hands lower if they felt less energy, resistance, or nervous, and putting their hands higher if they had a good level or energy and were ready to move forward. After that, the group moved to an activity of step-in sociometry (Giacomucci, 2021) in maintaining a circle. The participants were asked to place their hands as an answer to the questions such as their experiences of acculturation and immigration. Lastly, a spectrogram (Moreno, 1934) was conducted to see their positionalities and to notice how they are related or unrelated to others in terms of their identities or language barriers. Prompts were given on the common Asian international students' experiences: "How comfortable was speaking English for you in the past and present?", "I feel very connected to my cultural roots", etc.

Monologue. I performed a five-minute monologue in front of the participants using a suitcase to express my experience of moving to the United States (Appendix C). The purpose of this monologue was to offer the idea of two of drama therapy's core processes, the *dramatic projection* and the *active witness*. Dramatic projection is a process of transferring one's internalized experience to externalized objects which includes "dramatic material (e.g., puppets, props, masks, text, role, story)" (Frydman et al., 2022, p. 8). The suitcase was used as a metaphor in the monologue to showcase my emotions. Another core process, the active witness, is the experience of observing others' stories as an audience member (Jones, 2007) or the process of noticing the self, others, or the collective self. It also provides an experience of being seen by facilitators, group members, and the audience (Frydman et al., 2022). In this intercultural context, Sajnani et al. (2023) expressed that witnessing ensures "the locked-away stories of unfinished grief across generations" (p. 211). Through this monologue, I wanted the participants to "witness" my story because I felt it would be beneficial for them to see the common themes with my story and possibly their own stories. After this monologue, a reflection time was given. The participants journaled what they saw or felt, drew, or whatever they wanted to express.

Role Exploration. For my own exploration, I utilized Landy's (1993) taxonomy of roles. Since the original taxonomy of roles was derived from Western culture; it was necessary for me to make a new taxonomy of roles applicable to international students and Asian cultures. I thought translating the original roles to the Asian cultural context and making new roles was beneficial. Even if the participants knew the aspect of roles from Western culture, I thought that they would be less likely to choose the roles or less connected if the cultural background from which this role emerged was different from their own cultural background. For example, Landy's

taxonomy of roles includes *Zombie* as a state of feeling, and *Satan* as a natural being (Landy, 1993); it can be translated into specific names of each culture's folk tale or god.

In this activity, I first wrote down my revised version of a taxonomy of roles on a whiteboard that would be familiar to Asian international students (Appendix D). Initially, I made five categories: student, Asian/stereotypical, family, shadow, and others. The shadow roles mean the roles you have not played for a long time; international students in the United States do not play their nationality role or family role that often. The category of "others" means nothing-else-role or the role of inhabiting a state of being beyond what is nameable. After showing the roles, I gave the participants a bunch of sticky notes to add roles that they wanted to add to the list. I even asked them to write their primary language if that would be helpful. Then we looked over what roles we had and shared their reflections.

Group DvT Play. This group DvT play took 30 minutes. I began with a brief explanation of what we were going to do: we could play whatever we wanted without using any objects; the scenes and roles could shift at any time; and using whatever language was welcomed such as their primary language, gibberish, or sounds. Moreover, I shared that DvT involves physical touch, and it happens naturally as our play goes on, but if those are uncomfortable with the touch, step out of the moment and state your discomfort. We stood in a circle and began with sound and movement; copying each person's sound and movement together one by one. Secondly, I asked one person to come to the center to show the movement, while the others copied the movement. Then, the group shifted to unstructured play in which scenes and roles moved in an improvisational manner. I initiated closure and asked them to come back to the circle to end the experiential together.

Reflection and Closing. After the DvT group play, we returned to a circle and shared the participants' reflections. As a closing activity, I brought my suitcase to the center of the circle and opened it, and each participant put what they got and what they wanted to leave behind in there with or without words or sounds and actions.

Observations

Observed Commonalities and Differences

Commonalities

East Asian and South Asian students share commonalities in their collectivistic cultures, as well as their status as outsiders when in the United States. During the workshop, I observed several commonalities between our collective cultures. One of the commonalities I observed was the experience of confusion in a different culture from our own. I observed that we were aware of this, but we had been seeking opportunities to process these emotions. Another commonality was the desire to be seen and heard, such as having the experience of someone uttering an agreeing sound, such as "mmhmm" and "a-ha". Finally, I observed that even though I was the only Japanese person in the group, I still behaved in a way that I would in front of other people from my culture (such as being modest), and this behavior seemed to be common to other participants.

Differences

Although the participants originally came from East Asia and South Asia and shared similar cultures, they can be divided into several categories such as their residential status, English proficiency, and prior college experience in the United States. This was revealed specifically in the sociometry activity in the warm-up. We all shared a status of not having American passports, but as for the visa status, we were divided into a group of permanent

residence (green card) and temporary residence (international F-1) visa holders. What they were allowed to do depended on their visa status. The green card holders can work off-campus, while international F-1 visa holders can only work on-campus. Another difference was the participants' exposure to the English language in their home country. Certain countries, such as in India, have a high amount of English level proficiency, where it is essentially a lingua franca spoken throughout the country. On the other hand, countries such as China, Taiwan, and Japan all have very little native exposure to English, making the language more of a barrier.

Artistic Reflections

Roles

As my reflection on the group DvT play, I created visual arts about roles. I drew the footsteps of the play after the workshop. The DvT play began in the center of the room and moved around. I also made blue role cards of the roles I had played in the workshop and placed them on the footsteps. The locations of each role show where I played those roles and the arrows show how each role shifted.

Figure 1

Footsteps and Shifting Roles in DvT
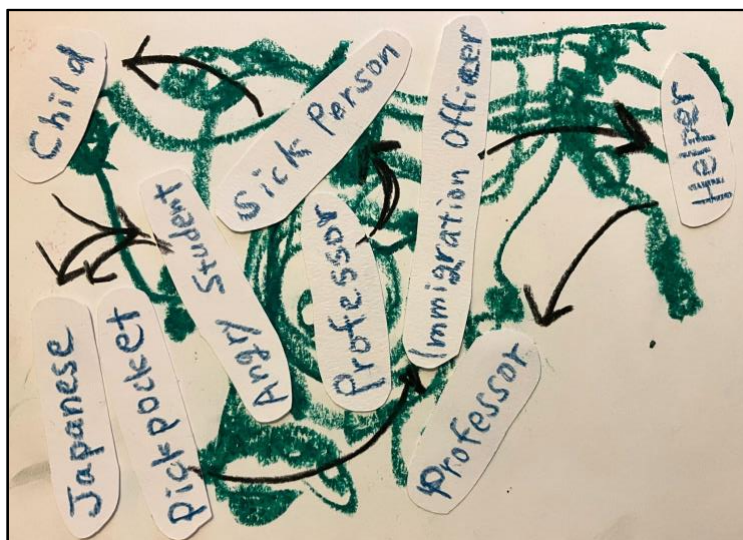
The orange roles in Figure 2 show roles I did not play. When I first moved to the United States, *Homesick One*, *Sad One*, and *Silent One* were a big part of me. I might have been tired of playing those roles or they were too vulnerable to play in this context, but I wanted to know how the participants would react if I had performed them again. I also noticed that I did not play any non-human roles such as animals or objects; I put *Bird* and *Stone* in the group of roles I wanted to play because those roles can be non-verbal and might get less expectations to talk.

Figure 2

Footsteps Meet Vulnerable and Non-human Roles

Metaphor and Performance

A live artistic reflection, *Traveling Suitcase* with four international students including myself was performed at Lesley University on May 1, 2024. This performance incorporated monologue, scenes, and stories (Appendix E). We created space to tell the stories of Asian international students using our primary languages, non-verbal and facial expressions, and movement. The symbol of the suitcase represents the packing and unpacking experiences, which are not only for objects but also emotions and cultures. In my monologue, which can be found in

Appendix C, I discovered that this suitcase metaphor can evoke strong emotions and reflections on immigration.

Discussion

Asian International Students' Playspace

In my previous experience of DvT, I intentionally spoke Japanese in the dramatic play with another Asian student. She also used her primary language, and we both could not comprehend what the other was saying. In that moment, I was "lowering [my] own fear of instability" (Johnson, 2013, p. 32), which was a psychological attempt to tolerate uncertainty. I used my mother tongue as self-expression purely for myself, and not for others. I sensed my throat vibrating and I heard my Japanese voice, which was liberating, and I felt safe because of the familiarity (Imberti, 2007). This is why I wanted to explore Asian international students' encounters in DvT playspace through this project. In fact, I sensed that playing without anyone from the dominant culture was helpful for us to express ourselves. Including such a member would have been an inherent power dynamic, such as language familiarity that favored the person from the dominant culture (DiAngelo, 2006). With this absence, we were brought closer together on a hierarchical scale.

Roles, Norms, and Objects in the Play

Role exploration could be helpful for Asian international students in DvT play. I found that the roles of power figures, such as professor, immigration officer, or police officer were often evoked in an authoritative way. I thought initially that the participants from collectivistic cultures would uphold respect for teachers or those authoritative roles within the play since there is a belief that rejecting norms causes punishment (Triandis, 2001). Yet, it appeared that they temporarily let go of their collectivistic attributes and their culture. The role of criminals was

also commonly played, which I believe was a manifestation of our collective fears of doing anything wrong and being deported; in this play, freedom was given to us to express ourselves uniquely and safely. This play notably lacked Asian/stereotypical roles, which often entail discriminatory and culturally-bound gender roles (Appendix D). Asian international students, particularly those from racially homogenous backgrounds, may have been dealing with their racial identities in the United States, potentially never having encountered or named these roles within their own communities.

One of the collectivistic cultural norms, harmonization, was seen throughout the play; there were no scenes of the group being split into two. No one started a totally different scene neither alone nor someone in the group. I saw this as maintaining group harmony to connect with the group and embodying collectivism. Additionally, harmonious behaviors might appear in our play in a way that avoids non-confrontational scenes (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994).

As a DvT playor, I found it challenging to set boundaries when objects were introduced into the playspace. I initially informed participants that real objects should not be used, as per Johnson (2013). Ideally, I should have halted the play, removed the object, and resumed. However, in this context, saying a direct "no" was difficult for me, as I tend to avoid such straightforward refusals, a reflection of my own culture.

How DvT Empowers Community

DvT group play begins with copying someone's movement; everyone except the movement leader has the same role (Johnson, 2013). The group play progresses through various scenes, each featuring multiple roles, transitioning from group cohesion to individual autonomy. This is similar to the acculturation process of international students from collectivistic to individualistic cultures. Furthermore, embracing the freedom of choice, whether definitive or

ambiguous, may bolster the confidence of Asian international students in decision-making. In this way, DvT has the potential to empower this community.

Limitations

I observed three limitations in this work. First, there is limited direct research that has been done for the Asian population or international students in drama therapy practices. Therefore, finding a way to modify the theories for Asian international students was challenging.

Second, participants leaned on the use of English throughout the workshop, despite being offered permission to center their primary language in role explorations and DvT play. There might have been some expectations to explain things in English because we wanted to share our own stories to be seen and heard. Some words in our primary language and roles in our own cultures cannot be translated into English easily; it takes extra work to explain since it needs two layers of translation: culturally and linguistically. Consequently, those roles remained silenced and invisible. Although sharing the same language (English) worked well and made a bridge for connection, I would like to keep questioning the use of English in this cultural-centering work.

The third limitation is based on time. This workshop took only four hours because of the time frame of this thesis project. I noticed that the participants wanted to have more time to share their experience of each activity with other participants. However, for the sake of time, the activities and group DvT were brief. I addressed this by creating a performance opportunity separate from this thesis, but it is a worthwhile limitation when considering replicating this work.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

</div>

This community engagement project with Asian international students opened up a space to share their unique stories of immigration, acculturation processes, and multiple identities. Validation and non-judgmental reflections on the shared stories were numerously observed

during the workshop. "Difference is at the heart of intercultural understanding" (Dokter, 2008, p. 175). Even though the participants came from similar cultural backgrounds, their experience of immigration and acculturation was different; however, I sensed that the participants wanted to connect with peers beyond their differences. With this observed experience, future directions suggest that modifications must be made when incorporating theories from a Western perspective into Asian international students as the theories were developed with the background of what individualistic culture prioritizes and their histories and norms. Creating a small group with those from similar cultural backgrounds or have similar English language proficiency may be beneficial to this population. This approach could allow Asian international students to cultivate confidence in giving themselves permission to explore vulnerability, navigate identity struggles, and embrace moments of confusion. DvT could potentially extend to interactions with ones from dominant cultures, facilitating meaningful engagement with hosts and fostering a sense of belonging among Asian international students, thereby helping in their adjustment process. (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). However, further investigation is required into integrating drama therapy tailored specifically for Asian international students due to the lack of practical application and case studies in this area.

References

Bai, L., & Wang, Y. X. (2022). Combating language and academic culture shocks—International students' agency in mobilizing their cultural capital. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1037/dhe0000409

Bayley, B. H. (2016). Embodying Ramayana: The drama within. In S. Jennings., & C. Holmwood (Eds.). *Routledge international handbook of dramatherapy* (pp. 26-35). London & New York: Routledge.

Berry, J. W. (2023). The search for some general psychological principles for improving intercultural living in plural societies. *Psychology & Developing Societies, 35*(2), 278–301. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1177/09713336231178368

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *The International Migration Review, 21*(3), 491–511. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.2307/2546607

Breithaupt, S., & Yang, P. Y. (2023). Chasing the sun: Discovering Chinese therapists', students' and educators' proficiency in the use of dramatic reality. *Drama Therapy Review, 9*(2), 331–337. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1386/dtr_00136_7

Buchanan, D. R. (2016). Practical applications of step-in sociometry: Increasing sociometric intelligence via self-disclosure and connection. *Journal of Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy, 64*(1), 71–78. https://doi.org/10.12926/0731-1273-64.1.71

Bui, H. T., Selvarajah, C., Vinen, D. G., & Meyer, D. (2021). Acculturation: Role of student–
    university alignment for international student psychological adjustment. *Journal of
    Studies in International Education, 25*(5), 546-564.
    https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315320964286

Butler, J. D. (2012). Playing with madness: Developmental transformations and the treatment of
    schizophrenia. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 39*(2), 87–94.
    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2012.01.002

Chang, H. H. (2017). A case study on the application of the role method in a therapeutic theatre
    production at National Taiwan University of Arts. *Drama Therapy Review, 3*(1), 63 - 74.
    https://doi.org/10.1386/dtr.3.1.63_1

Constien, T., & Junker, J. (2023). Analysis of the body of literature based on a new drama
    therapy literature database. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 82*, 101989.
    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2022.101989

DiAngelo, R. (2006). The production of whiteness in education: Asian international students in a
    college classroom. *Teachers College Record, 108*(10), 1983–2000.
    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00771.x

Dintino, C., & Johnson, D. R. (1997). Playing with the perpetrator: Gender dynamics in
    developmental drama therapy. In S. Jennings (Ed.), *Drama therapy: Theory and practice
    3* (pp. 205–220). New York, NY: Routledge.

Dintino, C., Steiner, N., Smith, A., & Carlucci Galway, K. (2015). Developmental
    transformations and playing with the unplayable. *A Chest of Broken Toys: A Journal of
    Developmental Transformations, 1*(1), 12-31.

Dokter, D. (2008). Immigrant mental health: Acculturation stress and the response of the UK 'host'. In M. Finkelstein & K. Dent-Brown (Eds.), *Psychosocial stress in immigrants and in members of minority groups as a factor of terrorist behaviour* (pp. 168–179). IOS Press.

Dokter, D., & Sajnani, N. (2022). *Intercultural dramatherapy: Imagination and action at the intersections of difference*. Taylor & Francis.

Frydman, J. S., Cook, A., Armstrong, C. R., Rowe, C., & Kern, C. (2022). The drama therapy core processes: A delphi study establishing a North American perspective. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 80*, 101939. https://10.1016/j.aip.2022.101939

Garcia, J. G., DiNardo, J., Nuñez, M. I. L., Emmanuel, D., & Chan, C. D. (2020). The integrated acculturation model: Expanding acculturation to cultural identities in addition to race and ethnicity. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 48*(4), 271-287. https://doi. org/10.1002/jmcd.12199

Gersie, A. (1997). 'To feel absent from one's voice': Trial therapy with a young immigrant woman. In S. Jennings (Ed.), *Dramatherapy: Theory and practice 3* (pp. 113–128). Routledge.

Giacomucci, S. (2021). *Social work, sociometry, and psychodrama: Experiential approaches for group therapists, community leaders, and social workers*. Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

Hays, P. A. (2022). *Addressing cultural complexities in counseling and clinical practice: An intersectional approach*. American Psychological Association.

Ho, R. T. H. (2021). Growing to be independent in an interdependent culture: A reflection on the cultural adaptation of creative and expressive arts therapy in an Asian global city. *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy, 6*(2), 171–178. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.15212/CAET/2020/6/1

Hung, S. C. (2010). Exploring the recovery process of former Taiwanese comfort women through drama therapy. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies, 16*(2), 60–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2010.11666088

Imberti, P. (2007). Who resides behind the words? Exploring and understanding the language experience of the non-English-speaking immigrant. *Families in Society, 88*(1), 67–73. https://doi. org/10.1606/1044-3894.3593

Institute of International Education. (2023). *International students in the United States: 2023 fast facts*. Open Doors. https://opendoorsdata.org/fast_facts/fast-facts-2023/

interrelations. Washington, D.C.: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co.

Jennings, S. (1983). The development of social identity through dramatherapy. *Dramatherapy, 6*(2), 1–5. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1080/02630672.1983.9689272

Jennings, S., & Holmwood, C. (2016). *Routledge international handbook of dramatherapy*. Routledge.

Johnson, D. (1982). Developmental approaches in drama therapy. *Arts in Psychotherapy, 9*, 183–190. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0197-4556(86)90005-5

Johnson, D. R. (2009). Developmental transformations: Towards the body as presence. In D. R. Johnson., & R. Emunah (Eds.). *Current approaches in drama therapy*. (2nd ed., pp. 89-116). Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Johnson, D. R. (2013). *Developmental transformations: Text for practitioners, number two*. New Haven, CT: Institutes for the Arts in Psychotherapy.

Johnson, D. R. (2021). Development of the profession of drama therapy in North America. In D. R. Johnson., & R. Emunah (Eds.), *Current approaches in drama therapy* (3rd ed., pp. 5-21). Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Johnson, D. R., & Pitre, R. (2021). Developmental transformations. In D. R. Johnson., & R. Emunah (Eds.), *Current approaches in drama therapy* (3rd ed., pp. 123-161). Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Jones, P. (2007). *Drama as therapy: Theory, practice, and research* (2nd ed.). East Sussex: Routledge.

Jung, S. (2018). Individuals' experiences of insight improvisation in Korea: Self-discovery, challenges and breakthroughs. *Drama Therapy Review, 4*(2), 209–221. https://doi.org/10.1386/dtr.4.2.209_1

Kim, O. M., & Ginther, A. M. (2019). 'I am who I am-나는 나다': Archetypal drama therapy workshops for Asian American adoptees. *Drama Therapy Review, 5*(2), 251-266. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1386/dtr_00005_1

Kim, Y., Choi, S., Lim, J., & Park, S. (2023). South Korean art therapists' roundtable discussion on racism and ethnic discrimination: An arts-based inquiry. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 83*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2023.102023

Kim, Y., Choi, S., Lim, J., & Park, S. (2023). South Korean art therapists' roundtable discussion on racism and ethnic discrimination: An arts-based inquiry. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 83*, 102023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2023.102023

Koo, K., Kim, Y., & Lee, J., & Nyunt, G. (2021). It's my fault? A qualitative study on Korean international graduate students' psychological well-being and experiences. *Journal of International Students, 11*(4). 790-811. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v 11i4

Landy, R. (1997). Drama therapy in Taiwan. *The Arts In Psychotherapy, 24*(2), 159–172. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0197-4556(96)00070-6

Landy, R. (2008). *The couch and the stage*. New York: Jason Aronson.

Landy, R. J. (1993). *Persona and performance: The meaning of role in drama, therapy, and everyday life*. Guilford Press.

Landy, R., & Ramsden, E. (2021). Role theory and the role method. In D. R. Johnson., & R. Emunah (Eds.), *Current approaches in drama therapy* (3rd ed., pp. 82-122). Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Lee, J., & Ciftci, A. (2014). Asian international students' socio-cultural adaptation: Influence of multicultural personality, assertiveness, academic self-efficacy, and social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 38*, 97-105. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.08.009

Leong, P. (2015). Coming to America: Assessing the patterns of acculturation, friendship,

formation, and the academic experiences of international students at a US college.

Journal of International Students, 5(4), 459–474. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v5i4.408

Li, J. (2021). Acculturation and social stigma: Mental health communicative action and help-

seeking behaviors among Chinese immigrants in the United States. *International Journal

of Strategic Communication, 15*(5), 487–503.

https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1080/1553118X.2021.1984918

Linden, S. (1991). Aiko: Drama therapy in the recovery process of a Japanese/Korean-American

woman. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 24*(2), 193–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0197-
4556(97)00015-4

Ma, K. (2021). Acculturation stress and depression among first-year international graduate

students from China and India in the U.S. *College Student Journal, 55*(1), 104–118.

Malchiodi, C. A. (2005). Expressive therapies history, theory, and practice. In C. A. Malchiodi

(Ed.), *Expressive therapies* (pp. 1–15). Guilford Publications.

Mayor, C. (2010). Contact zones: The ethics of playing with "The Other." *Poiesis: A Journal of

the Arts and Communication, 12(1)*, 82-90.

Mayor, C. (2012). Playing with race: A theoretical framework and approach for creative arts

therapists. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 39*(3), 214-219.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2011.12.008

Mayor, C. (2018). Political openings in developmental transformations: Performing an

    ambivalent love letter. *Drama Therapy Review, 4*(2), 233–247.

    https://doi.org/10.1386/dtr.4.2.233_1

Moreno, J. L. (1934). *Who shall survive? A new approach to the problem of human*

Moreno, J. L. (1987). *The essential Moreno: Writings on psychodrama, group method, and*

    spontaneity. Springer Publishing Company, Incorporated.

Mori, S. C. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. *Journal of*

    counseling & development, 78(2), 137-144. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-

    6676.2000.tb02571.x

Mukkamala, S., & Suyemoto, K. L. (2018). Racialized sexism/sexualized racism: A multimethod

    study of intersectional experiences of discrimination for Asian American women. *Asian*

    American Journal of Psychology, 9(1), 32–46. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000104

Napoli, M. (2021). Ka Suwe: Culturally sustaining and responsive practices in expressive

    therapies education. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 76*, 101854.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2021.101854

North American Drama Therapy Association (2021). *What is drama therapy?*

    https://www.nadta.org/what-is-drama-therapy

Ohbuchi, K. I., & Takahashi, Y. (1994). Cultural styles of conflict management in Japanese and

    Americans: Passivity, covertness, and effectiveness of strategies. *Journal of Applied*

    Social Psychology, 24(15), 1345-1366. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-

    1816.1994.tb01553.x

Oliva, M. E. (2019). A healing journey of the bilingual self: In search of the language of the

heart. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 28*(3), 334–347. https://doi-

org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1080/15313204.2017.1384946

Onoe, A. (2014). The healing and growth of little monsters hurt within: Drama therapy at a foster

home in Japan. In N. Sajnani & D. R. Johnson (Eds.), *Trauma-informed drama therapy:*

Transforming clinics, classrooms, and communities (pp. 329–347). Springfield, IL:

Charles C. Thomas.

Perry, C. J., Lausch, D. W., Weatherford, J., Goeken, R., & Almendares, M. (2017).

International students' perceptions of university life. *College Student Journal, 51*(2), 279-

290.

Rahim, N. A. A. (2021). Adjustment experiences of international graduate students to life in the

United States. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 29*(4), 2243–2262.

https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.47836/pjssh.29.4.08

Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum for the Study of

Acculturation. *American Anthropologist, 38*(1), 149–152.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/662563

Sajnani, N., Willemsen, M., & Butler, J. D. (2023). A scoping review of observed benefits of

developmental transformations (DvT). *Drama Therapy Review, 9*(2), 273–315. https://doi-

org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1386/dtr_00133_1

Sampathi, B. R. (2018). Asian mental health and use of drama therapy for acculturative family

distancing in immigrant families. *Mental Illness, 10*(2). https://doi-

org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/10.4081/mi.2018.7806

Sherry, M., Thomas, P., & Chui, W. H. (2010). International students: A vulnerable student population. *Higher Education, 60*, 33-46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9284-z

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. D. (2005). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race. *American Psychologist, 60*(1), 16-26. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.1.16

Stevens, A. D. F. (2023). BART, the Black American role taxonomy: A culturally expansive approach to role theory and method. *Drama Therapy Review, 9*(1), 81-99. https://doi.org/10.1386/dtr_00121_1

Triandis, H. C. (2001). Individualism and collectivism: Past, present, and future. In D. Matsumoto (Ed.), *The handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 35-50). Oxford University Press.

Volkas, A. (2014) 'Drama therapy in the repair of collective trauma', In N. Sajnani & D. R. Johnson (Eds.), *Trauma-informed drama therapy: Transforming clinics, classrooms, and communities* (pp. 41–67). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Wang, J. (2009). A study of resiliency characteristics in the adjustment of international graduate students at American universities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 13*(1), 22- 45. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307308139

Wang, T. J. (2022). *Permission to come home: Reclaiming mental health as Asian Americans*. Balance.

Wolf, D. M., & Phung, L. (2019). Studying in the United States: Language learning challenges, strategies, and support services. *Journal of International Students, 21*(1), 211. https://doi-org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.32674/jis.v9i1.273

Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal, 37*(3), 308-328. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688206071315

World Alliance of Dramatherapy (2024). *Associations and representative*s. https://www.worldallianceofdramatherapy.com/collaborating-members

Xu, L., & Chi, I. (2013). Acculturative stress and depressive symptoms among Asian immigrants in the United States: The roles of social support and negative interaction. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 4*(3), 217–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030167

Yang, H., Harlow, S., Maddux, C., & Smaby, M. (2006). The impact of cross-cultural experiences on worldviews of Chinese international students. *Counseling and Values, 51*(1), 21-38. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-007x.2006.tb00063.x

Yeh, C. J., & Inose, M. (2003). International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 16*(1), 15-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951507031000114058

Yeo, H. T., Mendenhall, R., Harwood, S. A., & Huntt, M. B. (2019). Asian international student and Asian American student: Mistaken identity and racial microaggressions. *Journal of International Students, 9*(1), 39-65. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v9i1.278

Zhang, J., & Goodson, P. (2011). Acculturation and psychosocial adjustment of Chinese

international students: Examining mediation and moderation effects. *International

Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*(5), 614-627. https://doi-

org.ezproxyles.flo.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.11.004

Appendix A.

Cultural Centering Drama Therapy Workshop Invitation

Appendix B.

Registration Form for Cultural Centering Workshop Intro Session

Registration Form for Cultural Centering Workshop Intro Session

This is a registration form for the intro session of the Cultural Centering Drama Therapy Workshop for Asian International Students.

We are looking for participants who are Graduate or PhD students; are from East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia; and have been living in the US for less than 10 years.
Intro Session: On Zoom and 1 hour
Main Workshop: In-person at Lesley, The end of January, Saturday, 4 hours

Facilitators: Hazuki Okamoto & Rithika Gopalakrishnan
Questions or Concerns: Email us at hokamoto@lesley.edu

1. Are you from *

   ◯ East Asia

   ◯ South Asia

   ◯ Southeast Asia

   ◯ Other

2. Country of Origin *

   Enter your answer

3. Length of years residing in the US (We expect the participants who resides in the US less than 10 years, but you can type and explain if you need) *

   Enter your answer

4. Are you a *

   ◯ Graduate Student

   ◯ PhD Student

   ◯ Other

5. Which school are you going? *

   ◯ Lesley University

   ◯ Other

6. What is your major? *

   Enter your answer

7. Which Zoom intro session is available for you? *

   ◯ January 10, Wednesday, 1-2 pm

   ◯ January 11, Thursday, 7-8 pm

   ◯ Neither of them works

Appendix C.

The Monologue of my Experience of Moving Into the United States

The participants sit in line facing in front of the space.

(Hazuki walked into the middle of the space pulled a suitcase and opened it.)

Hazuki: Okay, I have to finish packing to go to America! What do I need? Let's see…a letter of acceptance to the Master's program from Lesley University, my passport with a visa, I-20 documents, my COVID-19 vaccination card, and documents for immunization records, those are very important. What else? Drama therapy books, Japanese novels, a rice bowl, chopsticks, and some snacks too.

(Hazuki closed the suitcase and started walking around the space)

Hazuki as a service announcer at the airport: Welcome to Boston Logan International Airport.

(Hazuki walked into the middle of the space pulled a suitcase and opened it)

Hazuki: Arrived in my room in Boston! Let's unpack.

(Hazuki opened the suitcase, and desperately searched for something inside the suitcase)

Hazuki: Where are they? I cannot find them.

(Hazuki looked into the participants' eyes)

Hazuki: Oh, I forgot to bring my family, my friend [her name], we used to go to the cafe so often…I forgot…

(Hazuki looked down for moments, closed the suitcase, and walked out of the space)

Appendix D.

The International Students and Asian Version of the Taxonomy of Roles

The following roles were introduced to the participants, and I asked them to add if they wanted. The roles were divided into the following five categories:

1. Student

   International Student, Immigrant, Refugee, Alien, The Other, The Fool, The One Who Doesn't Understand, The One Who Pretends to Understand, The One Who Always Uses Dictionary, Lonely One, Powerless One, Jet Lagged One, Bi-cultured One, The One Who Misses Everyone, and Representative (of the culture)

2. Asian/Stereotype

   Exotic One, Submissive One, Sex Slave, Smelly One (Food such as garlic or other spices), Orient One, Cute One, Soldier, Masculine One, Punctual One, Modest One, Loud One, Nerd, Book Warm, Silent One, The One Who Pretends to be American, Assimilated One, Chef/Cook, and Traveler

3. Family

   Mom/Dad, Child, Sister/Brother, Daughter/Son, All Family

4. Shadow Role

   Daughter/Sister

5. Others

   Nothing One (The One Cannot Be Categorized in Anything)

Appendix E.

Traveling Suitcase **the Performance**

Acknowledgments

This capstone thesis project including the workshop and performance could not have been done without those individuals. I would like to thank Dr. Laura Wood, Dr. Jason Butler, Alicia Stephen, Eddie Yu, Rithika Gopalakrishnan, Angelique Beauchêne, the participants for our workshop, the actors for the performance, and Rick Nilon.

For readers of this capstone thesis and the audience for the performance, thank you very much for witnessing my pathways!

THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Lesley University
Graduate School of Arts & Social Sciences
Expressive Therapies Division
Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Drama Therapy, MA

Student's Name: Hazuki Okamoto

Type of Project: Thesis

Title: Playing With International Students From Asia: An Exploration of Cultural Commonalities and Differences in Developmental Transformations (DvT)

Date of Graduation: 5/18/2024

In the judgment of the following signatory this thesis meets the academic standards that have been established for the above degree.

Thesis Advisor: Laura L. Wood