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**Enhance Inner Resilience and Self-Esteem: An Exploration Utilizing Expressive Arts Therapy in a
Curriculum-Based Approach with Asian Immigrant Adolescents**

Capstone Thesis

Lesley University

May 5, 2024

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Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Expressive Arts Therapy

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Abstract

Asian and new immigrant adolescents often encounter difficulty transitioning to a new culture and environment foreign to their previous understandings. The clash between individualism and collectivism can impact their ability to adjust into the host culture, leading to limited coping skills when faced with acculturation difficulties. This capstone thesis utilized the integration of expressive arts therapy as part of a curriculum designed to help Asian immigrant adolescents build inner resilience and self-esteem to cope with immigration. Through further research on immigration, collectivism, individualism, creative expression, improvisational performance, art-based interventions, and expressive arts therapy, a curriculum-based approach was implemented in the Chinese Immigrant Student Leadership (ChISL) group revolving around the themes of identity, leadership, immigration, and family. The research indicates that the curriculum may contribute to the creation of a safe, trusting, and nonjudgmental space for Asian immigrant adolescents to cultivate self-confidence and resilience through the exploration of multiple art modalities. The utilization of the body to express self through multiple avenues for identity exploration, discovery, integration, and understanding might have supported Asian immigrant adolescents to better process their immigration experience and express their authentic self through native and non-native languages.

Keywords: expressive arts therapy, immigration, acculturation, individualism, collectivism, self-esteem, resilience, improvisation, movement, role-play, language, embodied code-switching

Author Identity Statement: I acknowledge my experience as a Taiwanese immigrant and bilingual speaker in America supported my work with the Asian and new immigrant population. In developing and incorporating this curriculum and method, I remained culturally sensitive and allowed the clients to be the experts in their creative process and storytelling.

Enhance Inner Resilience and Self-Esteem: An Exploration Utilizing Expressive Arts Therapy in a
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Introduction

Asian and new immigrants often face difficulty adjusting to a “new host cultural environment” previously unknown in their home culture (Kuo, 2014, p. 23). Undeniably, collectivism is ingrained within Asian cultural values, norms, beliefs, and systems, leading to a clash with individualism in America (Kim et al., 2012). For adolescents who immigrated to the United States with their families, the “relationship between coping and acculturation” becomes crucial when “undergoing cultural change and transition” in an unfamiliar environment (Kuo, 2014, p. 23). Although Asian immigrant adolescents’ families can provide a sense of safety, support, and interdependence for adolescents to cope with acculturative distress through a collectivistic lens, adolescents would soon face intergenerational conflict as a result of embracing individuality, independence, and personal autonomy for integration, assimilation, and belonging (Kim et al., 2012).

As a foreigner in a host culture, Asian immigrant adolescents also face challenges in developing their identity between native and non-native languages. These challenges for Asian immigrant adolescents may potentially impact their way of navigating and expressing their sense of identity and self-embodiment as “bilingual or multilingual individuals” (Galdos & Warren, 2022, p. 84). How does this affect the way they move, speak, express, and use their body to embody a new sense of self to assimilate into a dominant culture, norm, and environment (Galdos & Warren, 2022)?

As an expressive arts therapy intern working with Asian immigrant adolescents in the ChISL group, I began to observe the participants’ differences in the range of expression through their voice, gestures, and body when switching between English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Despite adolescents’ abilities to express themselves more authentically with confidence in their native language through their voice and bodily movement, I witnessed them appearing more reserved and limited in their bodily

expression when using English, their non-native language, to express themselves. As I observed their hesitation and struggle to express their thoughts proficiently and fluently in English, I wondered if there was potential for adolescents to feel disappointment, shame, and frustration due to their inability to express themselves truthfully in the non-native language. I wonder how this impacts their self-confidence and connects with their minimal facial expressions, gestures, and movements when embodying the English language. As a result, the adolescents may fear being judged or not belonging in the host country, which can potentially influence how they view their identity and self with inferiority (Kirbira, 2002).

After witnessing their needs in the group, I decided to examine how the expressive arts can support Asian immigrant adolescents to explore various aspects of their identity “within the embodiment process” and support their understanding of their current self by experiencing and expressing “the embodiment of a new or different understanding of self” to rebuild self-confidence and enhance inner resilience (Holly, 2000, p.27). Would the expressive arts empower adolescents by becoming more capable of authentically, fluidly, and comfortably expressing themselves with confidence in multiple languages (Edelman, 2018)? With my past training and experiences as a dancer, singer, actor, playwright, and songwriter, I began to wonder how these art modalities can be incorporated to create a potential method for the adolescents in the group.

Through this inquiry, I hope to develop a method through a curriculum-based approach by integrating the following themes: leadership, immigration, identity, and family. Each session will be paired with a theme while utilize multiple art modalities, specifically improvisation, movement, mime, role-play, storytelling, creative writing, and/or visual arts-making to not only process the immigration experience but also become aware of how languages affect embodiment as expressed through movement, voice, and enactment, whether conscious or not. This process would then support Asian

immigrant adolescents to “learn how to further express their aspect of self” with more fluidity, confidence, and ease in native and non-native languages (Holly, 2020, p. 28).

Unquestionably, this capstone thesis project focuses on developing a curriculum-based approach to support Asian immigrant adolescents in enhancing their inner resilience and self-esteem through Expressive Arts Therapy. This curriculum has the potential to shed light on the limited research on the use of expressive arts therapy with Asian immigrant adolescents and reveal how this non-traditional approach can support the Asian immigrant population in adjusting to a new culture and environment with self-confidence, self-resilience, and a sense of belonging.

Literature Review

This literature review will emphasize the current literature and art-based research that utilizes expressive arts therapy and multiple art modalities to not only create a safe, trusting, and multimodal space for Asian immigrant adolescents to express themselves but also process immigration experiences with support and distance. In the review, specific research and studies on collectivism and individualism, immigration and acculturation, resilience, self-esteem, and Expressive Arts Therapy would provide salient information on how to better incorporate the expressive arts to support Asian immigrant adolescents to build their resilience and self-esteem through identity exploration.

When supporting the group, the facilitator must consider their cultural beliefs, values, and background as Asian immigrants immigrating to the United States. Since the adolescents are non-native speakers in a host culture, the facilitator must be culturally sensitive when presenting, executing, and incorporating the method with the group. More importantly, as the facilitator, I am highly aware how my immigration experience as a Taiwanese immigrant and dual citizen is different from those experienced by the adolescents in the group. This will prevent personal biases from influencing the process, observation, and interpretation of the result and ensure the facilitator to provide culturally competent care.

Challenges Chinese Immigrant Adolescents Face in America

Collectivism vs. Individualism

In the United States, individualistic beliefs, values, and norms are deeply embedded in the American culture. Individualism is often described as the following: “the ties between individuals are loose” and that “everyone is expected to look after himself or herself” (Zha et al., 2006, p. 356). Not surprisingly, individualistic cultures tend to focus on personal pursuits and search for meaning based on their internal thoughts and feelings, demonstrating the characteristics of independence, individuality, and personal autonomy (Triandis, 1989). The “pursuit of democracy” also plays an enormous role in the rise of individualism in America (Zha et al., 2006, p. 356).

On the contrary, collectivistic beliefs, values, and norms are deeply ingrained in Eastern culture, including Chinese, Indian, or Japanese, which focuses more on the collective goals (Triandis, 1989). By “sharing group values” and being “obedient to group aims,” individuals living in a collectivistic culture no longer put themselves first to succeed in their own goal and instead focus on taking actions that can benefit the group to success (Zha et al., 2006, p 356). Therefore, individuals living in a collectivistic culture tend to obtain “an interdependent perspective of the self,” which values more deeply in “interpersonal relationships” than individualistic pursuits (Zha et al., 2006, p. 356).

Thus, in the United States, individuals have more of an awareness, ability, and capacity to explore, reveal, and express the self to differentiate and “accentuate differences from others” as unique entities (Zha et al., 2006, pp. 356-357). For Asian adolescents immigrating to America, their collectivistic upbringing tends to seek “membership in larger communities” and fulfill “the needs of the larger society” rather than focusing on expressing the self to foster personal meaning and autonomy (Zha et al., 2006, p. 357).

Education and Creative Expression

Undoubtedly, the difference between Eastern and Western culture is evident based on the approach to education. Western education focuses more on developing an individual’s potential,

providing the support and nourishment they need to fulfill their potential without molding their minds in a specific fashion (Cheng, 1998). In contrast, in Eastern education, individuals are trained to be accountable, dutiful, and qualified citizens serving the needs of the society to achieve collective goals (Biggs, 1996). Undeniably, such differences in education between the East and the West also affect one's capability to express oneself and utilize creativity. For instance, the education system in Eastern culture may restrain and suppress individuals from exploring and developing their creative potential due to limited encouragement to pursue personal interests in collectivistic society (Gardner, 1989). In contrast, the education system in Western culture encourages individuality and "self-directed learning," which provides individuals with the space and resources to "foster creative [expression] and potential" (Zha et al, 2006, p. 357).

In a "two-group posttest design" study between American and Chinese students, Zha et al. (2016) discovered the correlation between "cultural influences" and "creative potential" to be evident, indicating that American students have "greater creative potential" than Chinese students (pp. 357-360). In the 1950, individuals began viewing creativity as a reflection of one's character, originality, personality, motivation, cognitive capacity, and divergent thinking ability (Niu & Sternberg, 2003). In recent decades, experimental studies conducted by numerous psychologists have found that the educational system, social environment, school environment, and family "have a cumulative effect" in promoting or hindering one's creativity (Niu & Sternberg, 2003, p. 104).

In the United States, a Western society, the individualistic environment "encourages autonomy and self-directed learning," which positively impacts and develops one's creativity (Niu & Sternberg, 2003, pp. 104-105). In China, an Eastern society, the collectivistic environment discourages one "to [stand] out from the crowd" due to compliance with the needs of the larger society, leading to educators to put less emphasis on "teaching creativity" and limit opportunities for students to "engage in creative activities" (Niu & Sternberg, 2003, p. 108). Therefore, creativity appears to be culturally bound. With

collectivistic cultures putting less emphasis on creativity, Asian immigrants would likely face cultural shock not only because of language differences but also because of differences in how citizens in the East and the West express themselves with their voice, body, gesture, movement, and facial expressions.

Bicultural Conflicts and Acculturation

First, the acculturation process typically involves the immigrant to interact with a new culture different from their own. This process also involves the immigrant to interact with different “values, behaviors, or attitudes” because of cultural differences (Suinn, 2010, p. 6). According to Shim and Schwartz (2007), low acculturation with high Asian beliefs and values among Asian immigrants can lead to adjustment difficulties, acculturation distress, and psychological issues.

Moreover, even high acculturation among Asian immigrants can lead to distress when the immigrant adolescents embrace Western culture, beliefs, values, and behaviors, while immigrant parents choose to remain aligned with their home culture beliefs and values (Huang, 2006). This dynamic can increase family issues and intergenerational conflicts in turn leads to bicultural conflicts (Ying & Han, 2007). This can cause difficulty for the immigrant youth to find a balance between both cultures as they integrate themselves into a new cultural environment in the United States.

As Chinese immigrant youths make the “transoceanic leap” from their home country to “American soil,” the ways of living life in America are likely the opposite of the ways their home culture typically functions, such as how a person thinks, responds, and behave in certain situations and environments (Sung, 1985, p. 255). As Asian immigrant youths encounter challenges and experience stressors as a result of learning a non-native language in a foreign environment, they also face difficult decisions and negotiations as a result of “Bicultural Conflicts” when the “former values” and ways of living back home clash with “the new attitudes and behaviors” in host country (Sung, 1985, p. 255).

For instance, parents of Asian immigrant adolescents may still discipline their children to follow the way their upbringing has taught them to function because of parent's ignorance of bicultural

conflicts. This dilemma can lead to “confusion and anxiety,” especially for immigrant adolescents who are taught in America to be less obedient and more individualistic to foster their autonomy and individual ways of thinking with creativity in their identity development (Sung, 1985, p. 255). However, Chinese parents can also hold expectation towards their immigrant children to “adopt aspects of both Chinese heritage culture and ‘mainstream’ American culture,” which can be difficult for immigrant adolescents to navigate and fulfill their “parents’ bicultural socialization beliefs” (Lo et al., 2023, p. 443).

Thus, the acculturation process can become problematic for Asian immigrant adolescents as their “body of culture” from their homeland is now “called into question” (Sung, 1985, p. 255). They would likely contemplate how much to give up their culture, “which is part of them,” to “function adequately” in an individualistic society (Sung, 1985, p. 255). They may experience intense dislike and resistance to give up part of themselves and retain most of their cultural values and beliefs to remain obedient and loyal to their home culture (Sung, 1985).

However, as immigrant adolescents begin learning English, they would likely feel “invalidated” when their “cumulative life experiences” in their native culture clash with the new sets of behaviors, values, and speech patterns taught in American culture to ensure a successful transition and settlement in a new and unfamiliar environment (Sung, 1985, p. 256). Undeniably, language barriers are still the most common issues faced by Chinese immigrants. Language is not only the main channel through which one communicates and interacts with others but also the way one “[thinks, learns, and express oneself]” (Sung, 1985, p. 256). If bicultural conflicts become evident, these conflicts can potentially impact Asian immigrant youth, leading to psychological issues and difficulties (Shim & Schwartz, 2007).

With the desire to be accepted and belong, Asian immigrant adolescents may put aside what is “second nature” to them to fit in, leading to the pain of losing a part of themselves (Sung, 1985, p. 257). Furthermore, the struggle to retain parts of the Chinese culture while following the “American way” can negatively affect the relationship between immigrant parents and adolescents (Lo et al., 2023, p. 447).

Therefore, the difference in acculturation levels between Asian immigrant adolescents and Asian immigrant parents also plays a role in immigrant youths' immigration and acculturation experience in America (Kim et al., 2012, p. 1).

During the acculturation process, Asian immigrant adolescents often face “accumulative stress” due to language barriers, academic stress, discrimination, racism, cultural shock, and adjustment difficulty to a new environment both in and out of school (Kim et al., 2012, p.1). Thus, this process often becomes stressful for Asian immigrant adolescents to not only meet the expectations of Asian immigrant parents on academic success, but also deal with the ongoing discrimination, conflicts, and tensions with other racial groups (Lorenzo et al., 2000).

According to Kim et al. (2012), this qualitative research indicated how Asian immigrant adolescents are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, isolation, and other “negative psychological symptoms” because of difficulties in the “adaption process” (p. 2). Next, these symptoms worsen as a result of immigrants “high expectations” of the American dream and the “new lives” they imagine experiencing in America (Kim et al., 2012, p. 2). When such expectations are not satisfied as a result of challenges and barriers in the immigration process, immigrant adolescents can experience disappointment, anger, culture shock, dissatisfaction, and depression (Kim, 1996).

Thus, “the role of coping strategies” and resources become vital for Asian immigrant adolescents to process, manage, and cope with difficult experiences of immigrating to a foreign country (Kim et al., 2012, p. 2). However, there are limited research, studies, and inquiries on how Asian immigrant adolescents “cope with acculturative stress” from “adaptation difficulties” (Kim et al., 2012, p. 2). As a result, this curriculum-based method, with the integration of the expressive arts modalities, can potentially provide crucial inquiries by providing a creative space for adolescents to not only utilize to process immigration experience but also develop coping skills to better manage stressors “associated

with acculturation,” and in turn, build social support, positive emotion, resilience, and self-esteem (Kim et al., 2012, p. 2).

Expressive Therapies with Immigrant Adolescents

Expressive Therapies and Poiesis

Inspired by Levine's (2015) approach in expressive arts therapy, “the concept of *poiesis*” represents the process of “[letting] it be” by letting go of the urge of “knowing and willing” (p. 15). This process incorporates the concept of “[trusting] the [artistic] process,” which is introduced by creative arts therapist Shaun McNiff, who established the Expressive Therapies program at Lesley University back in 1974 (Levine, 2015, p. 15). Through the art-making process, the counselor and client “[decenter]” into the imaginative realm, an alternative reality where unexpected possibilities can be uncovered and utilized in the reality realm, providing “effective change in the client’s life” (Levine, 2015, p. 15).

By engaging in *poiesis* through the expressive arts modalities, Asian immigrant adolescents can begin experiencing and exploring the flow state in “the art-making world” (Lee, 2013, p. 58). This flow state allows one to be “so involved in an activity that nothing else matters” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 4). This alternative state allows one to not only lose the “sense of time” but also experience “heightened motivation, lengthened concentration, and enjoyment” (Lee, 2013, p. 57).

In the “‘Flow’ in Art Therapy: Empowering Immigrant Children with Adjustment Difficulties,” this qualitative multiple-case study investigates how the flow state experienced in the art-making process supports Asian immigrant children in “coping with everyday challenges” in both school and home settings in America (Lee, 2013, p. 56). In this study, three South Korean immigrant children between the ages of 7 to 11 were selected by the Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC) to participate in the study. According to the art therapist, who is also the researcher in this study, participants were selected based on their immigration experience, artistic ability, and parents’ consent to engage in “individual art therapy” (Lee, 2013, p. 57).

As Lee (2013) documented, transcribed, and analyzed each immigrant children's "lived and felt experience" through video recording, direct quotes, and post-session interviews, the researcher and art therapist discovered how immigrant children were able to utilize the flow in art-making as their gateway into "a newly created imaginary world," generating powerful "make-believe characters" through storytelling and roleplaying in session (Lee, 2014, pp. 58-61). This creative process supported immigrant children in experiencing a winning mentality, empowering them despite their struggles with language barriers, home country separation, and "emotional distress" in their daily lives (Lee, 2014, p. 57).

Thus, the flow state experienced through the expressive arts not only offered immigrant youth a safe, powerful, and therapeutic space to experience joy, motivation, concentration, and meaning making but also revealed previously hidden "strengths and inner resources" that can be utilized in their daily experience to better cope with their fear, anxiety, and emotional distress due to acculturation difficulties (Lee, 2013, p. 62). This flow state can be beneficial for Asian immigrant adolescents to gain access to through the expressive arts to process immigration experience and enhance coping abilities to better combat acculturation challenges with confidence and self-resilience.

Poiesis and Improvisational Performance

On the other hand, the flow state also guides the creator to "trust the process" (Levine, 2015, p. 15). Trusting the flow within and embracing whatever comes their way in their creative process is also known as the "creative flow" (Halprin, 2003, p. 86). By remaining in the flow state in the creative journey, one began to embrace spontaneity as the ultimate guide, leading one to utilize the mind, body, and spirit as instruments to unfold the truth through creative art-making (Halprin, 2003).

Therefore, improvisational play becomes vital in the intermodal expressive arts practice to revitalize the imaginative state, expand the "imaginal capacity," and reveal the hidden truth through creative expression (Carlson, 2019, p. 4). By engaging in this "imaginative and playful space," Asian immigrant adolescents could receive the precious opportunity to unearth previously unconcealed truths,

supporting them to “creatively [make] meaning” and discover new understandings of self and their experience in the imaginative world (Levine, 2009, p. 33).

Finally, the concept of “mimesis,” also known as “imitation,” is embedded “at the heart of *poiesis*” (Levine, 2009, p. 63). By expressing the self in a “performative” state, a make-believe performance in the fictional world, Asian immigrant adolescents can soon immerse themselves in playing multiple characters and roles not limited by the confinement of present reality (Levine, 2009, p. 63). By exploring spontaneity through free play, immigrant youth can gradually embrace the unknown to surprise them in thinking differently from their previous notion of truth in life. This imaginative and “possible [world]” can not only foster new revelations of self and identity but also discover unexpected resources and perspectives to transform immigrant adolescents' current reality with new possibilities (Reekie, 2018, p. 516).

Indeed, the beauty and power of the expressive arts lie in the possibility of rewriting personal stories in the creative space without facing consequences or judgment due to their distancing and imaginative quality (Reekie, 2018). As Asian immigrant adolescents continue to face language barriers, bicultural conflicts, cultural shock, academic stress, discrimination, and/or adjustment difficulties, the creative space can offer them a non-judgmental and imaginative realm to process challenging life experiences that are often suppressed and unexpressed in the body (Reekie, 2018). By enacting their stories with new alternatives, the immigrant adolescents in the group may begin to witness and experience the possibility of a new emerging self capable of coping with those challenges with empowerment and confidence.

Expressive Arts and Resilience

Through Opfermann's (2020) theatre-based research with immigrant youth, the researcher discovered how improvisation, mime, role-play, storytelling, creative writing, and visual arts-making have

the power to support immigrant youth to not only process their immigrant experiences but also cultivate personal transformation and “meaningful experience” (Opfermann, 2020, p. 150).

By incorporating multiple art modalities, immigrant youth were able to increase their confidence and fluency in utilizing English, their non-native language, as they embodied multiple characters through fictional scenarios and real-life experiences (Opfermann, 2020). By incorporating their own stories, especially those associated with oppression, they are more capable of building resilience by witnessing new possibilities in combating those seemingly “limiting situations,” leading to “hope for a better future” (Opfermann, 2020, p. 151).

Based on this theatre-based research, the expressive arts modalities can be tremendously beneficial for the adolescents in the ChISL group to utilize to not only improve their language fluency but also build their resilience and self-esteem to express themselves authentically and confidently in English, their non-native language (Opfermann, 2020). With potential language barriers, immigrant adolescents may not have the capacity to fully express and embody their cultural identity authentically in English, leading to shame and disappointments (Edelman, 2018).

In the phenomenological study by Kalaf & Plante (2019), the researchers investigated how the expressive arts influence Syrian refugee youth. Art4lives, an expressive arts workshop, is designed for migrant youth to enhance their resilience through expressive arts-based therapy in Lebanon (Kalaf & Planet, 2019, p. 18). Through this arts-based approach, the refugee youth impacted by acculturation difficulties, displacement, and war trauma were able to experience a sense of empowerment, purpose, safety, meaning-making, and community through acting, drawing, story writing, and collaging.

This creative process not only supported immigrant youth to produce a “short stop-motion movie about resilience” as a group but also guided them to connect with their feelings, express their inner self, rebuild their self-esteem, and promote resilience to manage and cope with acculturation difficulties in a foreign country (Kalaf & Planet, 2019).

Methods

For this method, I was inspired by the Chinese immigrant adolescents in the Chinese Immigrant Student Leadership (ChISL) group to utilize Expressive Arts Therapy as a creative approach to provide a safe, trusting, and non-judgmental world for adolescents to explore and express through the body, language, voice, gesture, and facial expression, uncovering hidden stories within the self through verbal and non-verbal communications. As DeMott (2017) stated, Expressive Arts Therapy (EXA) is incorporated based on the underlying assumption that individuals can heal through the utilization of the imagination, physical and mental movement, playfulness, and other avenues of creative expression.

Such healing power can potentially support adolescents in processing and healing their experience with immigration, which is often traumatic (Foster 2001). I imagine this method could allow Chinese immigrant adolescents to experience the expressive arts as a light, shining a new path for them to not only reveal new, alternative ways of perceiving their world and personal narratives but also rewrite their stories with new possibilities.

During the design of this method, I also considered two underlying assumptions. First, developing one's identity and self in adolescence is crucial (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018). As I built rapport with the adolescents, I witnessed their fear of being judged for not fitting in the dominant culture, impacting how they view their self and identity with inferiority (Kirbira, 2002). By internalizing such ideology, the adolescents would not only have less self-confidence but also have limited resources to combat acculturative difficulties and oppression as immigrants in the host country. Second, the gap in the literature can be addressed based on the Expressive Arts Therapy approach targeting Chinese Immigrant Adolescents.

Setting and Population

This method was implemented in the Youth Center classroom, which specializes in providing comprehensive services for Asians and New Immigrants in Greater Boston and beyond. The Youth Center

supports Asian Immigrant youth to thrive in school and beyond through leadership development, education support, college preparation, and workforce readiness. Specifically for the Chinese Immigrant Student Leadership (ChISL) program, the group supports Asian and new immigrant youth to immerse in a supportive atmosphere and community to enhance their growth and identity development.

For this method, each session is around two hours. Each session consists of four or more Chinese immigrant adolescents who identified as female. There are no male participants in the ChISL group. I'm the only facilitator who is male identified. The second facilitator who I've worked collaboratively with to facilitate the ChISL program also identified as female. In this group, I chose to focus on providing a safe, supportive, trusting, and non-judgmental environment for participants to not only develop their voice, resilience, leadership, identity, and self-esteem but also use as an imaginary play space, a temporary home to process their immigration and acculturation experience and difficulties. These include trauma, oppression, discrimination, micro-aggression, and bullying in school settings if needed (Foster, 2001). In addition, the method also presents the potential of supporting participants to enhance their ability to advocate for themselves in their non-native language.

Intervention Materials and Considerations

In the Youth Center, the classroom has multiple tables, stuffed pillow animals, sofas, chairs, whiteboards, whiteboard markers, markers for drawing, pens, pencils, ping pong tables, board games, books, and computers. For this method, I prepared most of the expressive arts materials for the sessions, including dance scarves, maracas, soft and hard pastels, watercolor pencils, colored pencils, and crayons. The Youth Center also provides papers and multiple small whiteboards for art-making and storytelling creation. One crucial consideration for the method is the final project for the ChISL group. The group's final project is a live theatre performance about their immigration experience in America. Therefore, improvisation, role-play, movement, storytelling, and creative writing become crucial modalities to support the participants in developing their voice and identity for their final project.

In addition, the adolescents in the group seemed to be unfamiliar with expressive therapies as evidenced by their initial resistance towards drama-related modalities and techniques. As a result, the curriculum also incorporated expressive arts therapy warm-up and/or closing to not only build rapport and trust with the adolescents, but also enhance their familiarity with the expressive arts and their willingness to work through initial resistance with the expressive arts modalities.

Personal Tracking and Exploration

For personal tracking, I tracked my progress through direct journaling, note-taking, and creative writing right after each session. Since each session happened on Friday afternoon, I used the weekends at the dance studio at Lesley University to further process my experience, emotions, and observations through singing, songwriting, and improvisational movement with music. These multiple art modalities also supported me to explore how the sessions have impacted me physically, mentally, and emotionally through the implementation of the method for Chinese immigrant Adolescents in the ChISL group.

Session 1-3: Identity

Before co-facilitating the group, I was not involved in the ChISL group during the first four sessions. As a result, I began using the expressive arts modalities first as a warm-up and/or closing to support the adolescents become familiar with the expressive arts modalities by utilizing movement, voice, and the body. During the first session with the group, I guided the adolescents to stand in a circle to experience the drama game called “Whoosh”. This warm-up brought the group together organically as we waved both hands to pass down the “Whoosh” to the person next to us with our movement, voice, and body. When the group had the power to “Whoa” someone by holding up both hands to stop the motion of “Whoosh” from continuing, smiles began to emerge on the adolescents’ faces.

Next, when adolescents were allowed to “Zap” their “Whoosh” by pointing and clapping their hands to the person across them, the group laughed and expressed spontaneously. Finally, when the group was allowed to call out the words “Goooverlicious” or “Freakout” to either do a groovy dance as

a group or create a new group circle, the group went wild and had lots of fun interacting with each other. This intervention was crucial in building rapport with the adolescents and providing them the opportunity to utilize their bodies for self-expression, self-exploration, and self-embodiment through expressive arts modalities with playfulness and spontaneity.

After the “Woosh” warm-up, the adolescents shared a movement, word, or sound to express how they felt in the present moment after experiencing the intervention. After the sharing, the adolescents were engaged and prepared to review the community agreements for the group following a 15-minute break. After the break, the group began discussing the topic of identity. In this activity, participants wrote down an identity for each group member, including the facilitators, based on their first impressions on the sticky notes. Each participant also wrote an identity for themselves.

Next, each adolescent put a sticky note on the back of each group member. Once everyone had their sticky notes on the back, the adolescents had the opportunity to examine what other members wrote about their identity and talk about which one they agreed with and which one they believed was inaccurate about themselves. What do you feel in your body when you see these words and why? At the end of the session, the group ended with the drama intervention called “Shake It Off” to support the adolescents to shake off any feelings they wanted to let go from their bodies, helping them to use the body to release emotions before leaving the group. The group counted down from 10 while shaking out the right arm, left arm, right leg, and left leg in sequence until the group reached to the number one.

In session two, the group continued to build rapport and trust in the creative space. The group began with the improvisational storytelling intervention called “Once Upon a Time” as a warm-up. One participant began saying “Once upon a time,” either in Mandarin or English, and the next participant shared a word, a phrase, or a sentence in their native or non-native language to begin creating a story through group improvisational play. The group collectively dived into the unknown, exploring the infinite possibilities of creating unexpected narratives and stories in the present moment through the

imaginative state. After several rounds of spontaneous storytelling, the group discussed and gave a title for the improvisational stories they created. After the warm-up, the adolescents were warmed up and ready to review the community agreements with the group, following a 15-minute break. After the break, the group dive into the topic of identity through the identity wheel activity.

Two types of wheels were introduced and incorporated within this session: the personal identity wheel and the social identity wheel. These identity wheels encouraged Chinese immigrant adolescents to reflect on how they identify and define themselves and their relationship between personal and social identities. This exploration allowed adolescents to process how their identities impact how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them in life. The facilitators provided questions in the session to spark conversation and discussion as a group. The questions supported the adolescents to investigate what part of their identity they are most proud of and comfortable sharing with others. The questions also encouraged the participants to think about which part of their identity they struggle the most with, know the least about, and believe others judge them by. After the discussion and sharing, adolescents were invited to share and/or sing their favorite music from their personal identity wheel. At the end of the session, the group ended with the drama intervention “Shake It Off” again to shake off any emotions and feelings they would like to let go from the body before leaving the group.

In session three, the group became more congruent compared to the previous session. The group began with the storytelling intervention “Find an Object in The Room!” First, each adolescent found an object in the room that represented how they felt physically, emotionally, and mentally in the here and now. Each adolescent got to share the object with the group and explain the reason behind the choice. Once everyone shared, the adolescents put together their objects in the middle of the circle. The facilitators then provided space and guidance for adolescents to reflect on how they felt when witnessing the objects and identify connections they had with other objects in the middle of the circle. This process supports the adolescents to continue building rapport as a group.

After providing a safe, trusting, and non-judgmental space for the adolescents to share, the group had a 15-minute break. After the break, we arrived at the final activity called "Privilege for Sale," which introduced the utilization of role-play in an imaginative state. The facilitators provided the adolescents with a list of privileges, such as socioeconomic privilege, citizenship privilege, able-bodied privilege, heterosexual privilege, religious privilege, and white privilege. The adolescents then imagined holding none of these privileges but possessing the power to purchase one of the privileges. After making their choice, the facilitators provided space and time for the adolescents to reflect on the reason for selecting a particular privilege. This process began to explore some of the immigration experiences influencing the adolescents' choices in purchase. At the end of the session, the adolescents de-rolled from their role in the activity.

Session 4: Leadership

In session four, the adolescents began utilizing the mime technique through the "Guess Who I Am?" activity. The adolescents used their body language and nonverbal expression to enact an object, a character, or a scene. The adolescents first entered the "stage" the group created in the room to enact and showcase to the group members. In the process of embodying the character, scene, or object, the adolescents could use their voices to make sounds. However, the participants were not allowed to use verbal communication to express themselves. Next, the group members who were not "performing" or role-playing guessed what the "performers" were enacting. The adolescents worked together in pairs due to the initial resistance of "performing" one person at a time. Ultimately, the adolescents performed different characters, stories, and scenes for the group to guess the word or phrase in their native or non-native language based on the "performers" enactment and performance.

After the activity, following a 10-minute break, the facilitators began introducing the word "leadership" and the types of leadership styles available in society. These leadership styles include authoritarian leadership, participative leadership, delegate leadership, transactional leadership,

charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership. Each adolescent then chose one leadership style to role-play as a group. The group ended up enacting a scenario based on their real-life experience in school, which sparked playfulness, spontaneity, and engagement on how to better advocate for themselves in English. The facilitators and adolescents role-played together and reenacted the scene by utilizing the process of conscientization, helping the adolescents to begin witnessing and discovering new approaches and possibilities in their everyday lives in school. At the end of the session, the group ended with “Shake It Off” once again to support adolescents to allow their body to de-role from their leadership roles before leaving the group.

Session 5: Immigration

After not joining the ChISL group for two weeks, I flew back from Taiwan to facilitate the fifth session during the first week of this year. The group first experienced a different mime technique by utilizing their face to explore various emotional states to practice expressing their emotions. Each participant had the chance to choose an emotion they would like to enact, and the rest of the group members guessed the emotion the “actor” portrayed. In addition, the adolescents had the freedom and flexibility to choose an emotion in their native or non-native language.

After the warm-up, the adolescents began writing a story based on a teacher who impressed them the most. This prompt connected back to the role-play facilitated in the fourth session. In this creative activity, the facilitator guided each adolescent to share the story they wrote a couple of times using different emotions, languages, and speeds to feel the difference in each embodiment. After this sharing, the adolescents moved into a more personal reflection by writing a story about their experiences coming to America. In this creative writing process, the adolescents were allowed to write the story in their native language. The adolescents were also allowed to write an imaginative story if they were uncomfortable sharing their real-life experiences. By incorporating the embodied narrative approach, the participants integrated their voices and bodies to express their stories through multiple

languages, emotions, and speeds to experience the difference in expressing through different channels. At the end of the session, the group ended again with “Shake It Off” to release any emotions they liked to let go from sharing before leaving the group.

Session 6: Family

After missing one session with the group due to internship training, I joined the following week to co-facilitate the sixth session. For the warm-up, each participant and facilitator started with the sentence “Have you ever _____?” Anyone who could answer the question with a yes stood up. This warm-up was crucial to building new connections and rapport with new group members joining this session. Before transitioning to the family tree activity, the adolescents utilized the dance scarves as a verbal and non-verbal approach to express their feelings with movement and as a bridge to transition themselves to the visual art-making process. The scarfs also became a crucial way of connecting new and old members with play. After the movement with scarves, the adolescents began receiving the prompt of creating their family tree from the facilitators.

For the family tree, the adolescents were allowed to draw each family member as an animal, an object, or a symbol in their family tree. In the creative process, the participants experienced using hard and soft pastels, watercolor pencils, colored pencils, and crayons. Once the group completed their family trees, each adolescent shared their family tree and used the space to express their immigrant family relationship in native and/or non-native language. The facilitators provided questions and guidance for adolescents to share more about where they located themselves in the family tree and how this reflects the animal, object, or symbol they have chosen to represent their family experience as immigrants. This activity became a crucial moment for adolescents to express their stories freely non-judgmentally with support from other immigrant adolescents in the group.

Results

Session 1-3: Identity

During the first session, the drama game “Woosh” supported the adolescents in utilizing different movements, voices, and speeds to playfully express their emotions and body in the here and now. The improvisational aspect of the game allowed the adolescents to be surprised by each group member’s embodiment with “Woosh,” “Zap,” “Goooooverlicious,” and “Freakout,” leading to the adolescents smiling, laughing, and having fun as a group. The enjoyment and playfulness expressed in this creative process helped the adolescents become less intimidated and resistant in utilizing their movement, voice, and body to express themselves. This warm-up guided the adolescents to become more familiar with using their bodies for spontaneous expression and self-exploration by embracing various expressive arts modalities.

In this session, the curriculum focused on the topic of identity. By putting the sticky notes on each other’s backs, the adolescents began to experience how the notes made them feel in their bodies. After reading the words in the notes, the adolescents expressed themselves by talking about their identity and advocating what they believe is not part of who they are. After the discussion, the adolescents experienced the “Shake It Off” activity. Since this was a new activity for adolescents, I was not surprised by the initial resistance. By demonstrating how to shake off the body to the adolescents, I witnessed the change in their willingness to release themselves through movement and their openness to shake off various parts of their bodies to let go of emotions and feelings from the body.

During the second session, the improvisational storytelling intervention “Once Upon A Time” encouraged the adolescents to utilize their native and non-native language to create the stories as a group. The unexpected words, phrases, or sentences expressed by each group member motivated the adolescents to access their imaginative state for spontaneous storytelling in the present moment. The playfulness aspect of the intervention also sparked the adolescents’ interest in utilizing their bodies, gestures, voice, and facial expressions to further express the word, phrase, or sentence the participants

wanted to add to their collective stories. By creating the improvisational stories collectively, the adolescents continued to build trust and rapport as a group.

In this session, the curriculum focused on the topic of identity through the identity wheel: the personal identity wheel and the social identity wheel. These identity wheels appeared to provide a safe, non-judgmental, and creative space for the adolescents to reflect on how they perceived themselves as immigrants. The questions prepared for the adolescents to explore sparked discussion and sharing about the difficulties they faced as a result of the language barrier, leading to the topic of shame, self-esteem, and resilience. This discussion sparked further conversation on how English suppressed their ability to access their voices and bodies to express themselves authentically.

At the end of the session, the adolescents experienced the “Shake It Off” activity. The adolescents appeared less resistant compared to the previous session and shook off the feelings from their bodies based on their own needs. Some adolescents changed the speed and range of movement as they shook each part of their body to let go of inner emotions and feelings.

During the third session, the storytelling intervention “Find an Object in The Room!” provided the adolescents the space to find an object that symbolizes how they felt in the present moment. The adolescents initially seemed unsure of how to select the object. After observing their hesitation, the facilitator demonstrated the activity by finding an object and explaining how the chosen object represented the feeling of being calm in the here and now. This demonstration sparked the adolescents' interest in exploring the room to find an object that represents their feelings in the present moment. The adolescents took their time with their movements and bodies by examining their feelings before choosing an object. Once the adolescents selected their objects, they seemed eager to share and express how the objects represented their current feelings with their facial expressions and body. As the adolescents put together their objects in the middle of the circle, they seemed surprised by the connections between the objects, helping the group members feel seen and heard.

In this session, the curriculum focused on the topic of identity through the intervention “Privilege for Sale”. Playing the role of the purchaser was not difficult for the adolescents. When the adolescents were embodying the role of the purchaser as a group, they seemed less afraid to step into the imaginative world. However, the adolescents were having a hard time choosing one privilege to purchase. As immigrants and minorities in America, the adolescents expressed limited opportunities to possess privileges and power in America. This role-play process inspired the adolescents to begin exploring and processing how their immigration experience influences their choices to purchase a particular privilege.

Session 4: Leadership

Before session four began, I was fascinated to witness the adolescents switching languages between English, Mandarin, and Cantonese as they talked with each other. In the group, one adolescent understood English and Cantonese only, which required the facilitators to communicate with her in English. By speaking more English in this session, the adolescents seemed willing to express themselves more frequently in English to improve their proficiency and confidence in the non-native language. In addition, the language the facilitators decided to use to express themselves also influenced the adolescents' decision to express their thoughts and feelings in a particular language.

During the fourth session, the theatrical activity “Guess Who I Am?” created initial resistance among adolescents. The adolescents initially seemed hesitant about "performing" one person at a time. After a moment of silence, the facilitator provided the option to work in pairs. This option provided the support the adolescents needed to overcome the resistance and participate in the activity. By not allowing the participants to use verbal communication in the "performance," the adolescents explored more deeply with different ranges of movement, voice, gestures, and facial expression on the "stage". After a few rounds of using their body language and nonverbal expression to embody a character, scene,

or object in pairs, the adolescents appeared more confident in utilizing the body to move throughout the entire "stage" for the group members to guess what the "performers" were portraying.

During this activity, two adolescents portrayed a Chinese idiom for the group to guess, which brought cultural aspects into their "performance". As the "performing" and guessing process became more fun, playful, and expressive, the adolescents appeared to become more open to exploring a variety of movements, gestures, facial expressions, and voices to portray their characters more authentically with freedom and spontaneity. The adolescents became braver as evidenced by utilizing their bodies to embody the characters they were "performing" to the group. This creative process seemed to support the adolescents in learning to use different parts of the body to express themselves clearly while building confidence in utilizing the self as an instrument for self-expression.

In this session, the curriculum focused on the topic of leadership, which includes an extensive role-play based on leadership. After the adolescents chose the leadership style they wanted to role-play, the group expressed interest in using their real-life experience in school with their English teacher. This real-life experience sparked creativity, playfulness, spontaneity, and engagement as the facilitator witnessed the adolescents learning to better advocate for their needs in English. Their facial expression, gestures, voices, and bodily movements in their embodied leadership characters seemed more expressive, fluid, and authentic, leading to more confidence in using the English language to express potential solutions to resolve issues that emerged in school.

By reenacting the scene multiple times, the adolescents were able to discover previously unconsidered approaches and possibilities to cope with their everyday experiences in school. This process of embodying the leadership role appeared to strengthen the adolescents' resilience, confidence, and ability to use their voice and body as instruments to better advocate and express their needs in their non-native language. After the role-play, the adolescents used their own "Shake It Off" movements to de-role from their character and guide their bodies back to the present moment.

Session 5: Immigration

Despite a two-week gap between sessions four and five, the group maintained a strong rapport. During the fifth session, the adolescents experienced a different mime technique by utilizing facial expressions to express their emotions. By providing the freedom and flexibility to choose an emotion in their native or non-native language, the adolescents expressed less resistance when participating in this activity. After four sessions of implementing the method, the adolescents seemed less afraid of improvisation and spontaneity in this warm-up. The adolescents had gained more ease and freedom in portraying and embodying the emotion with their bodies as evidenced by expressing themselves more authentically with confidence. Moreover, when the group members took longer to guess the emotion the "actor" was portraying, the adolescents seemed able to experience and learn how to spontaneously reenact and adjust their facial expressions to better express the emotional state they were portraying to the group.

In this session, the curriculum focused on the topic of immigration. The adolescents appeared engaged in creatively writing a real or fictional story in Mandarin or English about a teacher who impressed them the most. The adolescents seemed eager to share their stories about their teacher with the group. As the facilitator guided the adolescents to share their stories a couple of times using different emotions, languages, and speeds, the adolescents were surprised as demonstrated by the changes in their movement, voice, body, and facial expression when expressing the same story in different languages. Through each sharing, the adolescents appeared more aware of how expressing different emotions and languages influenced their bodies. This practice prepared the adolescents to become more open, truthful, and vulnerable with their immigration stories.

As the adolescents learned that the stories can be imaginative and written in their native language, the participants seemed more willing to participate in the creative process. Because of the rapport built in the group, the adolescents appeared more willing to write and share their real-life

experiences in America. As each adolescent shared their immigration experience, the group members expressed their support and encouragement for each other by identifying each person's strengths. This trust and alliance in the group provided a safe and non-judgmental container for the adolescents to discuss cultural shock, cultural differences, assimilation, belonging, discrimination, racism, and language barriers to process the immigration experience as a collective. At the end of the session, the facilitator guided the adolescents to shake off different parts of their bodies to release those inner emotions. The adolescents appeared open to incorporating sound as they release heaviness from the body.

Session 6: Family

Due to internship training, there was a week gap between sessions five and six. During the sixth session, three new participants joined the group. As a result, the warm-up "Have you ever ____?" was utilized to help create connections between new and old participants in the group. The adolescents seemed to enjoy the movement of standing up and sitting down as a way of visualizing connection between group members. This warm-up supported the adolescents to build rapport with new group members. This was evident when the adolescents offered support for a new group member sharing personal experiences of being bullied in school.

By incorporating the dance scarves as a verbal and non-verbal approach to express their feelings with movement and as a bridge to transition themselves to the visual art-making process, the adolescents seemed able to create their movements expressively, playfully, and spontaneously while collaborating with new group members, building further connections and rapport as a group. This creative process also encouraged the adolescents to utilize the scarf as a veil for each other to wear as a group. Based on this session, the dance scarves appeared to support the adolescents to build further creativity, engagement, and curiosity in the expressive arts.

After the facilitator provided instruction on the family tree, the adolescents were fascinated by hard and soft pastels and watercolor pencils since this was their first time utilizing these art materials for

visual arts making. By exploring new art modalities, the adolescents remained engaged throughout the creative process. I witnessed moments of silence as the adolescents created their own family tree. After the group finished the family tree, the adolescents appeared eager to share their family tree.

By expressing in English and/or Mandarin their immigrant family relationship and where they located themselves in the family tree, the adolescent seemed to focus on the following themes: strength, resilience, love, and belonging. Through the adolescents' visual arts creation and sharing, I witnessed how the adolescents' families have supported them in their immigration experience in America. This was evident by witnessing the adolescents expressing love and gratitude towards their families as they share their stories. Figure 1 was the family tree that I created in this session.



Figure 1: "Taiwanese Family Tree." Artwork from session six.

Discussion

This curriculum-based approach examined the impact of expressive arts therapy with multiple art modalities, specifically movement, mime, improvisational role-play, storytelling, creative writing, and visual art-making, for Chinese immigrant adolescents in the ChISL program. The results indicated that expressive arts therapy interventions based upon the themes of identity, leadership, immigration, and family have not only supported the adolescents to process their immigration experience but also provided a non-judgmental space to explore how native and non-native language influence their way of embodying various roles, gestures, facial expressions, voices, and movements.

Based on the results from the curriculum, the adolescents gained more confidence in expressing various aspects of self through the English language (Holly, 2020). The playfulness and imaginative aspect in the expressive arts seemed to create enough distancing for adolescents to overcome their initial resistance towards improvisation and role-play, expanding their range of embodied movements to understand more of the self and embracing the imaginative realm as a safe place for new possibilities and solutions to emerge to better cope with difficulties and challenges in life. The adolescents appeared to gain more confidence, resilience, and awareness by learning to better advocate for themselves in their non-native language, English.

As “bilingual or multilingual individuals,” Asian immigrant adolescents encounter the challenge of developing their identity between host and home language, navigating and expressing their self-embodiment and identity (Galdos & Warren, 2022, p. 84). How does this impact their speech, movement, and utilization of their present body to express and embody a new sense of self as they assimilate to a new culture and environment (Galdos & Warren, 2022)? Warren (2018) introduced the process and concept of “Embodied Code-Switching,” which emphasizes the importance of becoming aware of how the body “[embodies] culture” (Edelman, 2018, p. 176). By becoming more attuned to “body’s own language” as one “[shifts] between social and cultural environments,” individuals can

receive a deeper understanding of their identities and create approaches to better “prepare for code-switching” when entering and adjusting into specific cultural environments or settings (Edelman, 2018, pp. 176-180).

Undoubtedly, for future research, Asian immigrant adolescents could benefit tremendously by experiencing how their nonverbal communication, body movements, facial expressions, and gestures are “minimized or suppressed” as they enter different cultural environments or settings, which limits how their “cultural identities can be expressed” through the body. As a result, the expressive arts modalities become crucial in offering a playful space to foster awareness and guidance to make choices that can better express their cultural identity with fluidity, confidence, and ease (Edelman, 2018, pp. 179).

Without a doubt, the expressive arts can play a crucial role in guiding Asian immigrant adolescents to become aware of those changes as they code-switch and experience new possibilities, transforming their self and body by expressing playfully, confidently, and authentically with a sense of empowerment, fluidity, and spontaneity. The creative space becomes a safe container to notice how code-switching makes them feel through the body in “each cultural setting” (Edelman, 2018, p. 179). This creative journey can also open new doors for them to truly experience the “stories in [their] bodies” by expressing them through multiple languages and expressive art modalities, gaining a deep sense of self and identity with confidence, resilience, and freedom (Edelman, 2018, p. 179).

Moreover, the engagement and flow in the adolescents' creative process also played a significant role in enhancing their ability to embody and express themselves authentically and spontaneously with ease through multiple languages. Furthermore, the facilitator's participation and demonstration throughout the session supported the adolescents feeling less uncomfortable and vulnerable when experiencing new and unfamiliar expressive arts modalities.

In addition, the facilitator's proficiency and fluency in both English and Mandarin also played a critical role in the curriculum. Without the language capacity, the facilitator would have been unable to

build rapport and implement the expressive arts interventions efficiently with the adolescents. Without a strong rapport with the adolescents, the expressive art modalities would've been difficult to implement with ease. With the facilitator's prior experience and training in dance, music, and performance, the adolescents felt supported enough to overcome their resistance with improvisation and role-play, providing them a trusting space to embrace multiple art modalities with creativity, authenticity, spontaneity, and ease.

Regarding the limitation of the research, the adolescent group had no male participants participating in the curriculum. As a result, the results may have been different if the group had both male and female participants. A mixed-gender group may limit or expand the possibilities of these expressive arts therapy interventions. Next, other facilitators who want to implement the curriculum with adolescents could potentially struggle to execute the interventions in the curriculum effectively if the facilitators are not bilingual speakers or have previous experience and training with multiple art modalities. Thus, this highlights the need for more multilingual and/or multicultural clinicians to continue to support the Asian immigrant population in the community.

Indeed, this method has the potential to bring attention to the minimal research and the need to utilize expressive arts therapy to build confidence, resilience, identity, authenticity, and belonging as an Asian immigrant immigrating and transitioning to a new cultural environment. The power of the imaginative realm in the expressive arts can potentially be empowering for Asian immigrants to rewrite their stories and self-image to enhance mental health and well-being and express authenticity and truth in their lives.

In conclusion, the power of this method lies in the use of the body. As I reflect on my own experiences immigrating to America, I begin to understand how Asian culture seldomly encourages people to experiment with the body for self-expression, limiting their ability to process emotions and feelings in the body. I wonder how the differences between collectivism and individualism impact not

only the mind of the immigrants but also their bodies by promoting or limiting their creative development (Niu & Sternberg, 2003). In all, the power of the expressive arts was evident in this potential method as adolescents learned how to better utilize their bodies as instruments to not only process immigration experiences but also build confidence and resilience to cope with barriers and challenges in life. This curriculum deserves further investigation for future implementation with the Asian immigrant population and beyond.

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THESIS APPROVAL FORM

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Student's Name: Kevin H. Lin

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

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Wendy Allen