Bridging the Divide: Understanding Interactions between International and Home Students in U.S. Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

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The increasing numbers of international students have been well-documented in universities around the world—particularly in English-speaking nations such as the United States. Less documented, however, is the similar growth of international student numbers in private secondary schools in the United States. Unlike in university international programs, little research has been done on the topic of interactions between home and international students at this educational level.

Using a qualitative research design with the intention of discovering certain trends and themes, Chinese international students were surveyed in order to further understand and characterize student interactions in American high schools. An inductive qualitative approach was deemed necessary for its ability to understand the entirety of the international student experience as it relates to their interactions with home students at school.

The resulting thematic analysis found that large divisions exist between the two groups of students. Though positive interactions do occur, Chinese international students feel largely separated from home students, thus impacting their ability to interact further. Positive interactions were two-fold—those focused on class-time "helping" relationships, and those deeper-level "friendship" interactions often made during informal school events.

Schools and teachers were found to play a role in fostering the interactions, while at the same time enacting practices or policies that deepened division. After further analysis of the discovered themes within the Intergroup Contact Theory and the Social Identity Theory, several practical suggestions were explored for schools to examine.

Keywords: cross-cultural interaction, internationalization, international education, intercultural communication, Intergroup Contact Theory, international students

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of international students and student mobility in educational institutions has largely concentrated on the international programs present on campuses of higher education. This focus on higher education arose out of practical reasons—universities in many countries have a long history of admitting international students onto their campuses or sending their own students out into the world. As the field of international education has strengthened, the phenomenon of students from around the world studying in American post-secondary institutions has experienced rapid growth in recent years. This is not only due to the effective internationalization strategies undertaken by recruiters and admissions counselors. The growth has coincided with well-documented increases in globalization and the increasing numbers of people in the middle to upper-middle classes around the world. In particular, the economic development of Asian countries has fueled much of this growth where increasingly wealthy families are sending their children to other countries to learn English and obtain a more desirable foreign degree in order to enhance future job prospects.

In the same way the business world has become truly international, so too has the field of education become a context where global student mobility has changed the look and mission of schools worldwide. Countries in addition to the United States, such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and others, have experienced similar growth of international students. In the near future, this research concerning international students on predominately Western campuses will become even more useful. At the time of this writing, European nations are struggling with the issue of millions of asylum seekers fleeing conflict in countries such as Syria and Iraq. Educational institutions at all levels, not just universities, will need to respond to these challenges in order to lead the effective integration of millions of people into new societies.

1.1 International Student Programs in Secondary Schools

The increase in the number of international students has been well documented in post-secondary institutions, but a relatively new phenomenon in the field of international education—particularly in the United States—is a similar rate of growth in secondary schools. As a result, American high schools are following similar patterns of international student recruitment and enrollment. The strong motivation in studying at top U.S. universities, and the job prospects that follow, have led many parents (again, mostly from Asian countries) to make the decision to send their children to American high schools as a way to strengthen their chances of being accepted into these big-name universities.

The Institute of International Education's (IIE) 'Open Doors' report has long been the "go-to" guide for reporting statistics of international students at American universities; since 2013, they have included a supplementary report on secondary international students because of this growth. This report, "Charting New Pathways to Higher Education: International Secondary Students in the United States," details this trend where the number of international students in U.S. high schools tripled between the years of 2004 and 2013. As of 2013, more than 73,000 international students were studying in U.S. high schools. Two key figures are related to this thesis: 95 percent of these students studied in private schools, with 32 percent of the students coming from China. Korea is second with 12 percent. (Farrugia, 2014, pp. 9-11). It is essential to note that these statistics are from 2013. In the three years since, this trend has shown no signs of abating, with most of the growth coming from Chinese students. From this researcher's personal experience with multiple schools around the United States, Chinese students represent a far majority of students enrolled in American international student programs.

1.2 Home and International Students: A Growing Divide?

High schools, in the same manner as universities, have welcomed the growing numbers of students with open arms. For private institutions, admitting international students often provides new and full-fee paying students at a time where private secondary schools are seeing declines in enrollment. For religious schools with mission-based values, admitting international students achieves spiritual objectives as well as the financial benefits. This thesis will focus on the even more discussed benefits that are parallel to those universities have cited in their quest for an internationalized campus: that by accepting international students into a school, both domestic and international students can have a more open and global view of the world, thus improving their intercultural competencies and skills that can prepare them for an increasingly multicultural society. This paper is based on the premise that these ideals of internationalization are attainable—that international and home students can, in fact, learn from one another and improve their global competencies.

However, the problem of division or self-segregation amongst international and local students can prevent this ideal from happening—or in some cases, actually increase levels of discrimination in a school. In schools with large numbers of international students, 'parallel streams of non-communication' have started to take place where the home and international students rarely interact with one another (Matthews, 2002, p. 377). On these school campuses where parallel streams exist, it would not be unusual to easily witness two different and separate school communities. One only needs to walk onto these school campuses to see international student groups eating lunch, studying, or socializing together separately without any interaction with their American peers. Compounding the problem is that new groups of international students are largely coming from the same few countries. In the past, smaller groups of exchange students from a wide variety of countries resulted in less separation into defined groups based on ethnicity or language. As the Open Doors report (2014) stated, most students are now coming from China, and they are coming into private schools that are over 70 percent white (Farrugia, 2014). In this situation where definite in-groups and out-groups exist, true interactions are less likely to take place as the groups of students retreat to the

comfort zones of linguistically and culturally-similar peers. As this takes place, the ideals of internationalization cannot be met. Positive interactions and friendships between culturally different students can enhance the ways in which students develop intercultural competency skills such as openness, empathy, and the learning benefits that come with challenging existing beliefs (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). If these interactions are not taking place, then quite obviously the goal of developing these skills are not being met as international student programs on high school campuses are, in effect, a separate school within the institution.

1.3   The Importance of Interactions

This thesis seeks to first understand the nature of these interactions at the secondary level. The aim is to identify key spaces and characteristics of possible positive and negative interactions in order to aid school personnel in fostering more effective intercultural learning opportunities in their schools. While universities have had the resources and staff dedicated to transitioning international into their campuses, private high schools with little financial resources are left to a time-consuming trial-and-error process in creating new school policies for international student programs. There is a clear gap in the research on these topics as it concerns international students on high school campuses. One could assume that research completed on interactions at the university level hold true for high school students, but this would be ignoring the fact that school days are inherently different between college and high school life. The research, while paying attention to what has been done at the university level, starts at the beginning by simply trying to understand where and how international and domestic/local (hereon referred to as 'home') students are interacting.

Why study interactions? Studying interactions will help us understand if the conditions are being met on high school campuses for intercultural learning to take place. A lack of opportunities for interaction can prevent intercultural learning from taking place (Volet & Ang, 1998). The previously mentioned benefits of developing globally

competent students do not take place without interaction. Intercultural learning relies on interaction; and by allowing it to only take place in a select few outgoing individuals, international student programs do not help all students, which is their assumed or stated mission. Even more worrisome is what can happen to students who fail to interact at all, especially among international students. It is one thing to fail to teach students about global awareness, but for international students, failure to engage with the local community can be disastrous. Homesickness, bouts of depression, helplessness, and loneliness are all results of students not feeling connected with their school and their American peers. Discriminatory practices, either real or perceived, can also lead to long-term bias against persons of certain ethnicities. So for all students to feel engaged and for schools to understand overall well-being, interactions and friendship-making must be understood. The parallel streams and "school within a school" challenges, if existing, cannot continue if high school international student programs are truly going to be successful.

1.4   The Framework

The conceptual framework will take a holistic approach by seeking to understand interactions that take place in all major times and spaces of the students' school days as well as being inclusive of theories that can explain the phenomena happening in these settings. First, literature from the topic at the university level will be used for their empirical focus and practical applications to understand what could be happening in high schools. The empirical research can be used as a guide as certain patterns of behavior arise. This research will center on the concepts of internationalization and international student programs. Second, in order to conceptualize the entirety of the student experience, formal (what is done in the classroom) and informal (school programs outside of class) curriculum will be reviewed. Finally, intercultural communication theories will be looked at in order to understand what is happening with the interactions

that do take place. With an emphasis on the Contact Hypothesis and related studies, the nature of the interactions happening — and the conditions needed for positive interactions to occur — can be understood. Using this framework, a survey could be built around the theoretical nature of interactions as well as the empirical research to understand the issue from a more practical perspective, but while remaining inclusive of the entire student experience *as it relates to schools*.

1.5   The Study

Following this framework, this thesis will shed some light on these interactions at the high school level. It hopes to start a discussion on best practices in teaching and in policymaking for private schools that want to accept multiple international students into their communities. As mentioned previously, little research at the high school level exists, so inductive qualitative methods will be used in order to comprehend the student experience. An inductive nature is necessary to begin the process of forming hypotheses and future quantitative studies on the topic. In order to achieve the stated aims of educating school administrators and beginning research/discussion on international education at the secondary level, the following research questions will be used. To understand interactions between international Chinese and domestic "home" students, three research questions were created that focused first, on the characterization or nature of the interactions, second, where and how these types of interactions occur, and third, how the school or teacher plays a role in these types of interactions.

The study will survey Chinese international students only since they make up the majority of international students. Additionally, they are the students of sojourn — they experience the emotions that take place with interactions on a daily basis, and their perspective needs to be of central importance since it is their experience that schools are hoping to improve. For the issue of interactions, Chinese students also represent a definite out-group example, which can present the greatest challenge to intercultural

interaction. Students will stay in their ethnic and linguistic comfort zones when high numbers of these students exist. (Volet & Ang, 1998). This qualitative study uses a thematic content analysis based on open-ended questionnaires answered by Chinese international students from several different schools from different geographic areas in the United States. By analyzing data collected from 24 students and five different schools, the types of interactions as well as the spaces in which they occur could be identified. Using the aforementioned conceptual framework of this thesis, the entirety of the school day could be noted, including the role of the teacher, in-class activities (collaborative learning activities, i.e. 'groupwork'), and extracurricular school events. Intergroup contact theories also played a role in understanding the nature of interactions and could identify possible solutions to overcoming more negative interactions or perceived discrimination.

1.6   Background of the Researcher

Before getting into more detail of the study, as the author/researcher I offer a brief note about my own personal background and how it relates to the topic. Great care has been taken to base any underlying assumptions on previous academic research, but in some cases these assumptions may be influenced by my own personal background. Professionally, I have worked with international students in various capacities for almost ten years. It was my most recent position that inspired this study. I worked as the English as a Second Language (ESL) Director for an international student program at a private secondary school in the United States. At the beginning of 2010, our program had roughly twenty students, over half of which were from South Korea. By the end of 2014, more than 60 international students were enrolled with more than 50 coming from China. I have experienced first-hand the trends outlined in the introduction. I've also witnessed the challenges to interaction that can happen as students start to self-segregate themselves and stay within linguistic and cultural comfort zones. Even more worrisome are the schools I consulted with. I was fortunate to work in a program that had an entire

team of professionals dedicated to assisting international students in their academic and social transitions to the United States. At many other schools, enrollment of students took place before the hiring of people needed to support that process. Generally speaking, schools were under-resourced and ill-equipped to fully embrace culturally diverse students. Observing the deficiencies of many international student programs is what originally prompted the aim of this research. I desire to start a discussion that will lead to a set of 'best practices' for accepting international students into secondary schools. And that desire needs to be fully disclosed before addressing the topic in greater detail.

2 APPLICABLE DEFINITIONS

2.1 Internationalization and International Student Programs

Instead of defining some key terms throughout the conceptual framework, they will be defined at the outset since some of these terms can be, and have been, defined differently depending on perspective. 'Internationalization' is a term commonly used at the university level. The definition has not yet been made entirely universal, but the most commonly cited definition comes from Knight's 1994 original definition of the concept. Internationalization was defined as the "process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution" (Knight, 2004 p. 9). Knight does update this definition in future articles, but the concerns here are largely focused on the functions of the university. For the purpose of studying the consequences of internationalization on interactions at the secondary level, the original definition best suffices for two reasons. First, most high schools in the United States do not participate in university-level functions such as international partnerships in research or exchanges of scholars and academics. Therefore, more updated definitions that concern themselves with these aspects are not necessary for the purpose of understanding internationalization efforts in high schools. Second, high

school efforts in adding international or intercultural elements into the services provided are limited to this new phenomena of educational exchange. This follows early university efforts and therefore an early 1990s definition applies well. Thus, for the remainder of this thesis the term 'internationalization' and the applied definition by Knight can be used for the topic of high school international students because private high schools that are admitting large numbers of these students onto their campus represent the 'process of integrating' these intercultural and international elements into the classroom. It influences teaching practices as well as the services that schools need to provide with regard to counseling of students, recruitment overseas, and other added dimensions that schools must consider in order to sustain these international programs.

To further clarify a related term, 'international student programs' are often the main or only way of internationalizing the high school campus. In the same way as universities, it is often the internationalization of the study body that comes first (Hawawini, 2012). As such, these two terms—'internationalization' and 'international student programs'—are synonymous with each other for the purpose of this thesis. They both refer to an added element to high schools where teaching and services are adjusted in order to accommodate the financial or learning goals of the institution.

2.2   International and Home Students

International Students are defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as "…those who left their country of origin for the purpose of study" (OECD, 2015, p. 353). What may seem to be an obvious definition becomes more convoluted as immigration and permanent residency can also be included in some definitions as 'foreign students.' For the sake of clarity, the term 'foreign students' will not be used in this thesis. Furthermore, since an academic definition doesn't exist for international students specifically at the high school level, this thesis will add to the definition for the purpose of being descriptive to international students in secondary schools. In addition to leaving countries of origin for the sole purpose of study, a further

characteristic of these students is that they also do not live with immediate family members. In most cases, they live with host families or in boarding school dormitories. This added detail is also important as it relates to cross-cultural interactions, for many of the interpersonal interactions in these students' lives are under the direct or indirect control of the school. Host families or dormitories are responsible for a large part of the student experience—a key difference with university students who can often choose their own housing and live fairly independently. To clarify, the definition of international students for this thesis is as follows: *Secondary school international students are those that leave their immediate families in their countries of origin for the purpose of study and choose to live with a host family or in a boarding school dormitory.* In the United States, these students are either temporary exchange students (J-1 visa) or full-time diploma-seeking students (F-1).

In the American context, the term 'international students' must also be defined because of the high number of immigrants that are often enrolled in U.S. schools. This is also the reason why the term 'domestic' or 'home' student needs to be clarified. Does the domestic label refer to citizenship? Ethnicity? Surely the term 'American student' cannot be used for it makes the definition process much more difficult and even political. This thesis will follow the example of Leask (2009) and use the term 'home students' for the remainder of the thesis. 'Home students' refers to students that live primarily in the United States. This can include citizens, 'green card' holders, or students that speak a language other than English with immigrant parents/guardians living in the home. This is also opposed to the international student definition with regard to home living arrangements. It must be clear that international students are different in definition from home immigrant students.

A related term, 'student mobility' simply describes the phenomena and practice of international students leaving their home countries to study abroad. Therefore, the definition of international students applies. The practice of leaving one's own country for the purpose of study also defines student mobility, so a different definition would only confuse the topic.

2.3   Intercultural Learning and Intercultural Competence

This thesis begins with a notion that intercultural learning and developing intercultural competence are key skills needed in the 21st century, and that these skills can be developed when schools take on an international component or international student program (*if* necessary interactions are taking place, of course). Therefore, these terms must be defined in order to truly understand the benefits of internationalization. The term 'intercultural learning' can be understood on different levels.

> On a more literal level, intercultural learning refers to an individual process of acquiring knowledge, attitudes, or behavior that is connected with the interaction of different cultures. Very often, however, intercultural learning is seen in a larger context to denote a concept of how people with different backgrounds can live together peacefully, and the process that is needed to build such a society. (Gillert, Haji-Kella, Guedes, Raykova, Schachinger, & Taylor, 2000, p. 17)

This definition is used for the practicality of its focus with an emphasis on interactions. It is also used because the second part refers to the larger focus on building a more peaceful world as competencies are developed.

This definition then also applies to the goals many schools state when creating international student programs on their campus. Regardless of whether those competencies are cited for future professional skills or for developing a more peaceful and tolerant society, the learning via interaction must come first. Other terms, while not the same, are closely related. Lisa Salo-Lee (2007) best describes how a multitude of terms (intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural adaptation, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural communication, etc.) can make the concept of intercultural competency slightly confusing, but in essence all have similar traits. She goes on to use the definition of cultural literacy in defining intercultural competence:

> The ability to read, understand and find the significance of diverse cultures and, as a consequence, to be able to evaluate, compare and decode the varied cultures that are interwoven in a place. It allows one to attribute meaning and significance to anything seen and produced. It is a form of cultural capital that enables us to act sensitively and effectively in a world of differences. (Woody, Landry, Bloomfield as in Salo Lee, 2007, p. 75.)

Such a lengthy definition of intercultural competence needs to be used because so many factors are present in it. In order to effectively be aware of and interact with the world, knowledge is needed, differences are noted, and empathetic actions taken. These are the skills that are often cited as the competencies required in an increasingly connected and globalized world. Since these more work-oriented global skills are often used, the National Education Association (NEA) definition of global competence can also apply:

> Global competence refers to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community. (NEA, 2010, p. 1.)

For schools that tout the intercultural learning that can take place with having international students on campus, they are often referring to these more practical skills that can be of used in future professional work.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Internationalization

3.1.1 Benefits of Cross-Cultural Interactions

Just as the definitions of intercultural competency provide a sort of idealistic foundation for this thesis, so too must the conceptual framework begin with the benefits of internationalization. These benefits (which are a result of interactions between students of different cultures) must first be understood in order to fully comprehend the challenges or obstacles preventing the ideals from happening in educational institutions. Even though the study and methodology for this thesis focus on the high school level of education, the body of mostly empirical literature from international students at the university level can be used to understand what may be happening in high schools as it is the primary setting for this type of research on intercultural interactions. It must be, however, simultaneously admitted that secondary schools provide a much different environment that that of colleges. The topic of internationalization and the empirical research conducted from universities should be used as a guide, but not as proven ideas that would directly apply to high schools.

Anecdotal evidence has often comprised many of the arguments in support of creating international student programs at schools. Heartwarming stories about international friends or transformative cross-cultural experiences are commonly heard as people seek to describe the benefit of participating in internationalized activities in schools. While these narratives are essential to understanding the international student experience, data-driven research needs to become just as commonly used in order for the real benefits of international student programs to be understood. Correspondingly, the ideas of globalization are often cited as another reason for undertaking international components into educational activities. They provide some variation of the common argument: the world is becoming more interconnected, therefore students need to learn how to interact globally. Again, a good idea but thoroughly lacking in measurable proof.

Truthfully, perhaps these arguments in favor of internationalization ground themselves all too often in anecdotes and suppositions because the research is somewhat limited. However, enough does exist that can support the ideas that international students can, in fact, bring positive outcomes to educational institutions. These outcomes are predicated upon the idea that more diverse campuses do, in fact, create more

opportunities for cross-cultural interactions to take place (Luo & Jameson-Drake, 2013; Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado, 2006). In their study of graduating cohorts from the years 1985, 1995, and 2000 of four U.S. universities, Luo and Jameson-Drake (2013) were able to survey U.S. student levels of interaction as international student admission rates rose. Their first main finding was that with the increase of international students on campus came an increase in both cross-cultural interactions as well as students that considered themselves to be highly active in interacting with peers from outside their home countries. They could conclude that increasing rates of international students resulted in a greater opportunity to engage with people with vastly different cultural backgrounds and viewpoints from their own. Furthermore, these interactions—which fostered an openness to different perspectives as well as an ability to question their own beliefs and values—positively correlated to future education, leadership skills, and intellectual development. (Saenz et al., 2006.)

This study shows how international experiences and interactions with others can bring both educational benefits as well as a greater openness to diverse perspectives—research that supports the usefulness of intercultural competencies for both professional and idealistic notions. For the purpose of this thesis, the importance of this idea is even more striking with the realization that these skills can be developed in high schools. For Asian students that worked with diverse groups in high school situations, more positive cross-cultural interactions are likely to occur in college settings (Saenz et al., 2006). Furthermore, intercultural skills that can begin in high school and be further developed in university are 'prerequisites for success' in future transnational workplaces (McLean & Ransom, 2005, p. 45; NEA, 2010).

The benefits international students can bring to home students is not only limited to the American context. The lessons can transcend borders. In Jon's (2013) insight into the effect international students have on domestic Korean learners, Korean students that participated in peer buddy programs or language exchange programs with international students recorded learning benefits when compared with students that did not participate in programs creating conditions for interactions. Similar to the benefits found

in the United States study, those students that participated or were highly interactive with international students showed a positive increase in intercultural competencies. More frequent and more intensive interactions were positively associated with a higher level of intercultural competence (Jon, 2013). Additionally, in the qualitative portion of the study, students cited the effect intercultural interactions had on their intercultural awareness, personal growth, language acquisition, and future plans for study or work. Lastly, these interactions also helped reduce student anxiety in communicating with international students (Jon, 2013). This idea of developing confidence is especially important considering the effect anxiety and language can have on cross-cultural communication.

3.1.2   The Role of the Institution

As it relates to positive interactions, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that institutional factors are cited to be a determining factor in fostering interaction opportunities. In both the Korean and American studies, institutional support had a high effect in creating situations for these positive benefits to take place. Both studies, as well as others, maintain that simply bringing students onto campus does not improve the conditions for positive interactions to occur. Schools are directly responsible for creating the proper environments and programs for these benefits to be developed in both home and international students. (Jon, 2013; Luo & Jameson-Drake, 2013; Brown, 2009; Hanassab, 2006; Matthews, 2002; De Vita, 2005.) Without these key programs in place, conditions are ripe for discrimination and ethnocentric views to take place instead of intercultural learning.

Looking at the research, it is evident that international students do help home students become global learners—but it is the responsibility of the institution to improve conditions for interaction with all students (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). This point is not only emphasized by school officials and certain researchers in the field, but also cited by students themselves, who see the institution playing a key role in helping them interact

and develop these skills. Students see the benefit in these interactions, but they recognize the need of school support in helping them attain their goals (Peacock & Harrison, 2008). Intercultural competencies need to be seen as a learning goal on par with any other learning goal of the curriculum. In many teaching and learning environments, international students are viewed from a 'deficit' model, in which certain handicaps must be overcome (Leask, 2009, p. 218). But schools that are aware of international students' strengths, including their strong desire to add value to their relationships, will be better leveraged to promote positive outcomes. International students generally have a strong interest in teaching others, and this desire can be used in order to create programs involving international students (Mestenhauser, 2003).

The working paper "How Internationalized is your University?" further highlights the current research into the role of the institution. It first states that an internationalized campus does not necessarily equal an integrated community. Fostering interaction between all cultural groups is becoming the crucial factor in fostering learning. International education professionals cannot simply focus on recruitment and bringing students on campus. Without help, interaction is unlikely to occur (Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2015). Along the same theme, the paper argues that internationalization does not necessarily equal global skills. Without a focus on integration and interaction, the goals of intercultural learning are left unfulfilled. The paper, and this section, concludes with the following emphasis:

> Therefore, the truly internationalized HEI (Higher Education Institution) of the future will have to measure its success not only in terms of structural factors or the number/proportion of international students, staff and partnerships, but also by its ability to facilitate friendship-making and the development of those communicative skills that employers are seeking in their new employees. (Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2015, p. 14.)

3.1.3 The Importance of Cross-Cultural Friendships

Attention needs to be given to this idea of 'friendship-making' in the above quotation. This is not simply good advice—for friendship-making is discussed as central to the international student experience in how they feel and become part of (i.e. interact with) the school community. Not all interactions are based on making friends, so it is important to know what the research says regarding the importance of creating an environment where friendships can be made. Operating under the research-based assumption that friendship formation with home students can increase contentment, satisfaction, and social connectedness to the school, one study further investigated these ideas (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011). Further testing of hypotheses based on these ideas proved accurate. International students with a higher ratio of home friendships had higher degrees of satisfaction with their experience while at the same time decreasing the levels of homesickness felt. In contrast, students with a low level of home friendships showed much higher levels of homesickness with low levels of satisfaction with their study abroad experience. These researchers concluded there is a link between increased levels of social-connectedness and overall psychological well-being and happiness. (Hendrickson et al., 2011.) These are incredibly helpful lessons for understanding the role that friendships play in creating a school climate that fosters friendship formation, interaction, and the resulting intercultural competence.

Brown (2009) emphasized the effect cross-national friendships can have on student well-being and intercultural learning before noting the separation of friendship networks between international students and home students. International students often cited a feeling of shared identity as an international student as a main reason for initially separating and creating friendship groups within the same nationality (or at minimum a friendship network amongst other international students). For these students, the shared feeling of coping with acculturation stress led to lasting friendship bonds with other international students. (Brown, 2009.) Anxiety and fear further increased this polarization of friendship groups (Brown, 2009, p. 250). These findings, however, do not imply that international and home students desire to remain separate. Rather, both groups want to

interact and were frustrated by their inability to do so. This inability can lead to a further 'disenchantment' from the school community (Brown, 2009).

In international student programs with learners from a wide array of countries, this may not be a particular negative issue as intercultural learning can take place cross-nationally within an international student program. Fellow international students can provide necessary emotional and academic support that they may not be able to receive from home students (Montgomery & McDowell, 2008). However, for the high school setting in U.S. private schools, these ideas may not apply since many of the international programs consist mainly of Chinese students. In that case, forming tight international bonds, while necessary and valuable, prevents deeper cross-cultural interactions from happening in schools. It's clear that an understanding of the benefits of cross-cultural friendship groups, as well as what can make them so polarized, is necessary if schools want to create the conditions necessary for intercultural learning and interactions occur.

3.1.4   Obstacles Limiting Interaction in Internationalized Environments

Quite obviously, cross-cultural contact is going to have some challenges. In some ways, more research exists in this area than on the positive characteristics as universities seek solutions to these obstacles. Peacock and Harrison (2008) list several key areas which mirror many of the findings in this research topic. Each of these areas needs to be thoroughly and separately discussed, even though some of these ideas will overlap with other parts of the framework. Since they accurately typify most of the commonly cited obstacles to intercultural interactions, in a description about the empirical and practical research associated with internationalization and its interactions, these must be clearly laid out. The researchers identified the following challenges in regards to how home students viewed the interactions with international students in the UK:

Language: Understandably, language is often seen as the obvious challenge; however, this study specified it even more in that home students lacked motivation because they

saw these interactions as taking a lot of concentration, empathy, and effort. Also, home students sometimes incorrectly assumed an international student was introverted if language skills were lacking (Peacock & Harrison, 2008, p. 491). Within this topic, cultural artifacts (TV, movies, etc.) and types of humor were also noted as points of language that hindered close interactions between the two groups (Peacock & Harrison, 2008, p. 500; Hail, 2015). Regardless of whether based on cultural artifacts or not, jokes can often be some of the hardest parts of a foreign language to understand. In environments with diverse learners, jokes do have the influence of creating solidarity, yet also exclusion at the same time. Humor can produce an "us" versus "them" mentality in both groups (Carroll, 2005). In contrast, higher language ability can mean better well-being in students as they are able to participate in psychologically rewarding self-expression and identity negotiation (Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2006).

Fears of Swamping: Home students had less desire to interact with international students, as more students of one nationality tended to group together. Feelings of annoyance and intimidation prevented home students from reaching out to the "out" groups. Chinese students were directly referred to in this study as a group the home students saw as impenetrable. (Peacock & Harrison, 2008)

Cultural and Academic Norms: Home students sometimes found it awkward or difficult to manage a different set of academic practices. Time management or boastfulness are two examples illustrating this idea (Peacock & Harrison, 2008).

Groupwork and Academic Success: Related to the idea of academic and/or cultural norms, home students often worried about working with international students when assignments were collectively graded (Peacock & Harrison, 2008). They worried that because of language or academic differences, international students might bring down the group's marks.

Peer Disapproval and "Mindfulness": Home students, being aware of cultural differences and mindful of language difficulties, often grew tired of worrying about offending or saying the wrong thing when working with diverse peers. Quite simply, it was easier and more freeing to work with culturally similar peers. High levels of anxiety and stress were also cited by the participants as they sought to understand and communicate with students with different accents. (Peacock & Harrison, 2008.)

3.1.5 Consequences of Negative or Nonexistent Interactions

So what happens then, when the positive goals are not realized and the obstacles remain? Again, empirical research done at universities points to alarming results in the form of either discrimination or mental health challenges international students face as they withdraw from the overall school community (Hanassab, 2006; Li, Liu, Wei, & Lan, 2013). If the described obstacles are allowed to remain without institutions setting up conditions for beneficial interactions to take place, this discrimination or feeling of isolation can result in a withdrawal from the community by international students. It's no surprise, then, that this withdrawal from the community is more likely to become a permanent choice and a more long-term challenge to intercultural interactions on school campuses. When international students are viewed as different, lacking, or deficient in academic areas, they often feel ignored by both professors and classmates. They can also feel further isolated when negative interactions with home students result in their feeling uncomfortable or discriminated against (Hanassab, 2006). Often, these instances of discomfort, awkwardness, or discrimination cannot be accurately described by the student. It is often just a 'feeling.' It can be perceived in a lack of patience from professors or in broad stereotyping from home students (Lee & Rice, 2007). The danger is that this can cause students to further isolate themselves into their comfort zones, and limit their desire to interact with home students or teachers.

Another study (Hail, 2015) sought to explain these negative interactions and the responses of the international students. Hail argues that home students do, in fact, wish

to interact but some of the small-talk or conversation starters are often based on misinformation of the international students' home country that leaves students feeling uncomfortable. In the case of China, anywhere from 70-90 percent of topics about the country on the news are negative. For misinformed home students, initial conversations might begin with communism, pollution, or another topic that leaves the student feeling uncomfortable (Hail, 2015). Unsurprisingly, Chinese students, feeling increasingly annoyed or irritated by political conversations with Americans, often choose to avoid such interactions as they feel either defensive or worried about such impressions of their home country (Hail, 2015). Under these conditions, further polarization of student groups can continue. These findings point towards the necessity of fostering intercultural knowledge (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011, p. 290). Again, the role of the teacher and school are cited as the main way that schools can facilitate these learning situations as they undergo the internationalization process (Hail, 2015).

Negative interactions and discrimination (perceived or actual) have the ability to drive apart home and international students and reduce chances for interaction. Even worse, however, is that a lack of relationship-building, friendship-making, and supportive community can lead to troubling signs of mental health problems in international students. It is widely understood that international students show higher levels of depression, loneliness, and homesickness (Li et al., 2013). Particularly, studies have shown that Chinese students often have higher rates of depression than their American counterparts, although depression is sometimes hard to identify with Chinese students since the topic of mental health problems remains culturally taboo (Redfern, 2015). While some studies explain the higher rates of mental health problems in international students as a result of the acculturation process of homesickness (Cheng, 2013; Li et al., 2013), and others point to dissonance within one's own identity (Lee & Rice, 2007), what is important for schools to understand is the effect that relationships (interactions) can have in mitigating the stressors that cause these feelings (Cheng, 2013). Ultimately, a feeling of inclusion results in better well-being and a consequent deeper

level of learning that can take place (Ryan & Hellmundt, 2005). Perhaps the following quote can conclude this up best:

> Many studies find cross-cultural contact with locals is positively correlated to the psychological adjustment, social adjustment, educational achievement, and educational or life satisfaction of international students (and sometimes also local students), and that such contact can improve cross-cultural understanding immediately or on a lasting basis. (Marginson & Sawir, 2011, p. 112.)

3.2   Interactions in the Curriculum

A common trend in the research on interactions between international and home students has been the emphasis on the school or institution creating programs and conditions that allow intercultural interactions to occur. This can be further investigated in greater detail by looking at the curriculum. For the school's and teacher's role to be understood in how interactions can or cannot take place, classroom practices and activities run by the school must be explored. Again, much of the empirical evidence comes from international education at the university level. Researchers in this area have developed internationalization topics such as Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC), Comprehensive Internationalization, and Internationalization at Home (IaH) (Leask, 2015; Mestenhauser, 2003).

Therefore, it is necessary for research to be taken from these fields and applied to the high school level as secondary schools become more and more internationalized. However, because the topic of the curriculum can include such ideas as cooperative learning and even research into ELL/ESL learners, more research does exist at the secondary level and some can be applied in understanding interactions between diverse learners. Understanding interactions in the curriculum serves two purposes for this study. First, it provides an understanding of the nature of interactions and where they occur. Second, it can more effectively show the entirety of the student experience as it

relates to the school day. Interactions happen in all hours and in all programs, so all functions of a school need to be specifically addressed to understand the experience of international students.

Betty Leask (2009) separates the formal and informal curriculum as she describes methods used by the University of South Australia. The "formal curriculum" focuses on the teaching practices and curriculum procedures of an institution, while the "informal curriculum" focuses on the activities done outside the classroom. Leask details the ways in which both of these parts of school life can impact and foster positive interactions between groups of students. Different from previously described literature on interactions between the students that come to the conclusion that institutional support is necessary, Leask starts from this assumption. She begins with the conclusions of others by saying that simply bringing together students is not enough to encourage intercultural dialogue and consequent learning.

As a result of complaints from both students and faculty regarding a difficulty in forming intercultural groups and/or social activities, Leask (2009) studied the results of universities' efforts at addressing these complaints. In the formal curriculum, she lists four lessons learned: First, the structure of the coursework needs to change to include intercultural learning objectives, corresponding assessments, and student awareness of the benefit of these learning goals/strategies. Second, it cannot be underestimated how difficult these intercultural interactions are and how hard it is for students to work together in diverse groups. Third, task design is of utmost importance. Specifically, tasks need to include intercultural elements, and without the interaction, they cannot be completed. Fourth, instructors need to have a certain set of skills and knowledge to foster interactions in the classroom. Cultural literacy and knowledge about global elements in one's own course can help create these types of interactions and tasks.

As important as the formal curriculum is, Leask (2009) also maintains the importance of the informal curriculum—such as extra-curricular or school programs not associated with any courses. At her university, some examples of this would be international lunches, the widely-used peer buddy system, orientation guides, and

conversation groups. Within programs that included intentional pairing of diverse students, both home and international students reported higher levels of communication skills across cultures (Leask, 2009). It is notable that these pairings included orientation sessions to new students. In the informal curriculum, task design and intentional activities can be as important as the formal curriculum tasks. Support for both home and international students in their efforts to interact can be the determining factor especially as it relates to home students. Quite often, international students are looked at as having deficiencies and bear the blame for not interacting in these school efforts, but guidance needs to be given to the home students as well (Leask, 2009).

Leask (2009) concludes this look at both the formal and informal curriculum in promoting intercultural interactions by advocating for a culture change on school campuses that really want to use diversity to achieve stated learning goals. Comprehensive planning across the whole institution is necessary. Coursework, school activities, teachers, home students, international students, and study abroad programs all play a role in creating an environment where intercultural learning can take place. Using Leask's example of dividing research into the formal and informal curriculum as our guide, it is possible to further investigate the roles of these two domains institutions have to control over.

3.2.1 Interactions in the Formal Curriculum

Many of the studies of interaction occurring in universities cite the work of Volet and Ang (1998). Their research has provided the groundwork for many of the studies that seek to improve interactions between international and home students. Volet and Ang found that a lack of interactions between student groups resulted in lost chances for intercultural learning. They also argued that (similar to high schools today) "ad-hoc" strategies for improvement were not working — that real research needed to be done on the topic (Volet & Ang, 1998).

Volet and Ang collected data from students that had participated in group learning exercises (i.e. groupwork). In this case, six of eleven groups included both home and international students while the others were made up of only home students or only international students (Volet & Ang, 1998). Overall, students preferred to work with homogenous group members. Most did not actively desire to work in a diverse group. In other words, given the choice, students would self-segregate themselves due to language, culture, and stay within their comfort zones. Negative stereotypes among both groups also play a role in students' self-segregating themselves for group activities; each group had some negative views about the other and this influenced their decision when selecting groups (Volet & Ang, 1998). In the groups that were mixed, positive examples of challenging negative stereotypes, working across differences, and revising perspectives did happen. International and home students worked together, and the students grew closer together during the process. Unfortunately, the study also found that students that participated in mixed groups would not purposefully seek out the same situation for the next assignment (Volet & Ang, 1998). One experience would not be enough to challenge students to purposefully seek out this type of experience. Once again the idea is noted that spontaneous interactions will not simply take place — they must be directed and guided as students undergo the mentally demanding effort of interacting across cultures (Volet & Ang, 1998).

Other scholars also state how intercultural learning cannot happen by itself and, therefore, the self-selection of groups is not always the best idea if intercultural interactions are an ideal. Where internationalization is the goal, teacher direction, group assessment, and well-designed tasks are crucial for developing skills through interaction. Additionally, ample time for student reflection after the work is done can further develop these goals in developing intercultural competencies (DeVita, 2005; Pitts and Brooks, 2016; Arkoudis; Cuickshank, Chen, & Warren, 2012).

Other key concepts are also introduced, such as the role that cultural differences play in academic work, or how socializing differences can make international students sometimes think their home counterparts are not as academically motivated as they are

(Wright & Lander, 2003). When conditions for interactions are created with this knowledge in mind, the benefits are measurable. Students who participated in responsibly maintained group tasks reported increased cultural self-awareness as well as increased friendship-formation (Hansell & Slavin, 1981). Surely, what takes place in the classroom can have a dramatic effect on the level of intercultural interactions that take place in schools.

As much of the research in these interactions within the formal curriculum is based on cooperative or collaborative learning activities, the elements of effective cooperative learning theories can help to explain what is happening with these formal learning activities. Five elements of effective cooperative learning have been found. First and foremost is positive interdependence, which occurs when outcomes are affected by one's own and others' efforts. This idea of positive interdependence as opposed to negative interdependence can also help explain why some interactions in group activities might be effective and others are not (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Effectiveness may not be simply be a result of 'group dynamics' or personality, but how the task was set up. Figure 1 further explains this element to cooperative learning. Positive interdependence results in effective actions, promotive (encouraging) interactions, and, ultimately, positive learning outcomes. Negative or nonexistent interdependence does the opposite. In these cases, ineffective group activities where students don't work together results in worse relationships or mental health. By looking at this model through the lens of intercultural interactions, task design becomes a critical element if sustaining lasting intercultural relationships inside the class curriculum.

Social Interdependence

Positive Interdependence — Negative Interdependence		No Interdependence

Actions

Effective	Bungling	None

Psychological Processes

Positive Cathexis Substitutability Inducibility	Negative Cathexis Nonsubstitutability Resistance	None

Interaction Patterns

Promotive	Contrient	None

Outcomes
Effort to Achieve, Higher Quality of Relationships,
Psychological Health

Positive	Negative	Negative

FIGURE 1. Overview of Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson and Johnson, 2009, p. 367)

The remaining elements of effective cooperative learning activities are individual accountability (own efforts, pulling one's own weight), promotive interaction (groupmates support each other), social skills (skills needed to interact and cooperate), and group processing (time for group reflection and subsequent improvement) (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). These characteristics of good group activities must be understood in

order to be fully aware of how culture, teaching, task design, and interactions all link together in the formal curriculum.

The Social Interdependence Theory and its research into creating meaningful cooperative learning activities automatically places a heavy emphasis on the role of the teacher. As such, a study of how students interact must include a discussion on the role of the teacher since he or she is the one directly responsible for designing the tasks and supporting student work. Simply put, teaching practices matter — they play a critical role in creating these interactions (Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000). Without intentionality, unplanned activities can work against school goals of intercultural learning (Cruickshank, Chen, & Warren, 2012). Some instructors are aware of this dynamic as they seek to teach in internationalized environments. And while certain instructor practices such as having clear notes, slowing down lectures, and other teaching practices are widely known, these do not concern the topic of interaction. However, in addition to these practices, the formation of culturally-mixed small groups can have an effect in how teachers integrate intercultural dialogue into their classes. (Arkoudis.)

Faculty members, however, do not only need to know best teaching practices, they need to be interculturally competent themselves in order to understand the nature of the learners and these interactions. Without this knowledge, it could be more likely that staff becomes critical of international students who they might see as being unwilling or not possessing skills necessary to actively participate in class (Robertson, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). Instead of marginalizing these learners, understanding the backgrounds of students can help teachers see international students as a resource. They can be used to enhance class discussions and stimulate learning in home students (Rance-Roney, 2008, p. 20). Also, the adult-child or teacher-student relationship is a key part of whether a student is feeling engaged in the classroom, which in turn affects feelings of isolation, well-being, and connectedness (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004, pp. 96, 108). Without cultural knowledge, the ability to foster relationship-building as a learning tool can be lost. Naturally, the role of teacher education comes up in this discussion (DeJong & Harper, 2005; Koizol, Greenberg, Williams, Niehaus, & Jacobson, 2011). While

highlighting its importance, it won't be discussed any further for the purpose of this thesis and its topic of intercultural interactions.

3.2.2   Interactions in the Informal Curriculum

The informal curriculum refers to the activities students participate in that are not related directly to coursework, homework, group assignments, etc. This would include social events organized with the approval of the institution, extracurricular activities, peer or buddy systems, and many other similar programs and activities. The important distinction for this thesis is that these are activities outside of the regular classwork but still remaining as function or process of the school or school personnel. To further clarify, this does not include any social events happening outside the authority of the school. As the secondary research question for this thesis asks about the role of the school and teacher, those social activities happening outside of school control, while important, will not be addressed.

For high schools in the United States, while the formal curriculum shares some similarities with research conducted in universities in that teaching methods may include the same type of collaborative learning environments (i.e. groupwork) that can promote interactions, the informal curriculum has some key differences in the nature of extracurricular activities. Quite simply, students in high schools have a much higher likelihood of participating in after-school clubs, sports, and activities. It is a key part of school life in the United States, so these differences must be noted before looking at research from outside the U.S. or in universities. International and home students are sure to participate in these activities; only a cursory look at school websites as well as this researcher's own experiences proves that schools are actively encouraging international students to participate in extracurricular activities in order to encourage interaction, enhance college applications, and experience American school life. However, the academic research on the topic is quite limited. Therefore, once again applicable research

from the tertiary level can be applied while noting this difference and need for research conducted on the topic at the high school level.

University research can be applied because it shows that programs done in the informal curriculum are often used by the institutions to stimulate contact between international and home students. Additionally, this research can support generalized notions that these activities do help activate the benefits of intercultural communication—notions that occur at the high school level as well. Soria and Troisi (2013) investigated some of these activities as they used survey responses from over 15,000 undergraduates in the United States. Their initial data showed the importance of using both the informal and formal curriculum in developing intercultural competence in students: over 90 percent of students reported interacting with international students in both the formal and informal curriculum, and 86 percent reported having at least one international friend. These numbers are especially interesting since study-abroad programs, while having only a 10 to 12 percent participation rate, are often cited as producing intercultural competence (Soria & Troisi, 2013). The numbers show the importance of using international students on campus to develop this competence at home (Soria & Troisi, 2013). The study went on to show that by interacting and forming friendships with international students, home students were more likely to report a higher degree of intercultural competence and international awareness—which points to the importance of the informal curriculum in developing these skills (Soria & Troisi, 2013). Emphasizing the importance of the informal curriculum, interactions done in the classroom had less of an impact than those created outside of classroom environments (Soria & Troisi, 2013). The discussion on the formal curriculum stated that interactions can happen and they can produce results, but these findings show that activities outside of the classroom show more promise in fostering interactions and changing the current school environment.

More specific to the programs themselves, institution efforts in purposefully creating environments where students can interact also show promise. Most commonly used and researched are the peer and 'buddy' systems. One qualitative study focused

entirely on an international peer program (IPP) and the effect it had on the participants' cross-cultural awareness. Geelhoed, Abe, and Talbot (2003) looked at IPP programs that were established to help international students through the transition of starting academic life in the United States. At the beginning of the experience, home students reported their initial excitement subsiding after realizing the difficulties that can arise in communicating with students from different cultures. Students, even though they underwent some initial training, were not prepared for the 'awkward' moments of communicating cross-culturally (Geelhoed et al., 2003, p. 9-10). But for students that were able to move beyond this initial phase, the program resulted in more frequent interactions throughout the semester (Geelhoed et al., 2003). While some students did not meet with their assigned partners often, the ones that did reported improved communication skills, challenged stereotypes and incorrect assumptions, and more cultural knowledge (Geelhoed et al., 2003). Again, these interactions in the informal curriculum are not always natural or organic. Friendship formation and increased interactions that go beyond the initial uncomfortable stage need support from the school personnel. Students asked for more training and guidance from the school in order to more effectively deal with these situations (Geelhoed et al., 2003). This seems especially important in making sure that the school is supporting all students and not just those with superior social skills and extroverted personalities.

Related studies show similar patterns in their results. One study focused on a buddy project which was developed to help international students in their assimilation to life in another country as well as give them out-of-class cultural learning opportunities (Campbell, 2011). Again, the successes noted by students in cultural learning, experiencing intercultural communication, destroying incorrect stereotypes, enjoying the process, intercultural competence, and a greater likelihood of interacting with diverse peers in the future demonstrates the effect informal programs can have on fostering positive interactions between international and home students (Campbell, 2011). For students that would be unlikely to interact in school situations, the buddy project gave home and international students the 'push' they needed to interact. This presents more

evidence noting the importance of school-sponsored activities (Geelhoed et al, 2003). International students reported increased confidence in speaking English and a desire for more of these types of programs in the future as they realized the importance of growing their social network with home peers (Geelhoed et al., 2003).

Another study focused on the same topic of school-promoted interventions, but in contrast to the other research, focused on the differences between participants and non-participants of a school-sponsored interaction activity (Sukurai, McCall-Wolf, & Kashima, 2010). Of particular interest, participants in the interacting groups showed a greater, and statistically significant, likelihood of having more friends from the home country months after the program began (Sukurai et al., 2010). Furthermore, participants in the program were found to assimilate better to the local culture while nonparticipants developed a greater home (country of origin) cultural orientation. This is especially central to the idea that more assimilated students with more social ties report better overall satisfaction and mental health than those that fail to assimilate to the host country (Sukurai et al, 2010).

3.3 Applicable Theory

Regarding the topic of internationalized programs and the interactions between home and international students, it's beneficial to view the empirical research patterns first to fully understand both the benefits and limitations of an internationalized campus. Before delving into the theories of intercultural communication and other cultural theories that apply, the framework puts the empirical research first in order to fully understand the cultural division facing international students as they encounter a sense of isolation in a foreign country. It's also helpful to fully understand that the benefits of responsible program planning are evident and that by international students being on campus, intercultural learning goals can be attained. Now that the nature of the interactions between international and home students have been defined in both the formal and

informal curriculum, intercultural theories can be used to fully understand these interactions.

3.3.1 Allport's Contact Hypothesis and the Intergroup Contact Theory

Allport's Contact Hypothesis and the Intergroup Contact Theory is one of the more widely-used and commonly-cited works in studies concerning the interactions of international and home students. Originally intended as a method of reducing prejudice amongst in-groups and out-groups, Allport sought ways to reduce discrimination and conflict between groups that were at odds with each other. He stated that under the correct conditions, positive interactions could be achieved. (Pettigrew, 1998; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003.) His conditions originally included the following criteria:

Common Goals: In order to reduce prejudice, contact needs to be centered on an active and goal-oriented effort.

Equal Status: Amongst group members and for the task presented, all members need to feel that each possesses an equal ability to participate and contribute.

Interdependent Effort: Attainment of common goals requires collaboration and cooperation within the group. Allowing intergroup competition would lessen the positive effects of group contact.

Support of Authorities: When contact is sanctioned by an authority, the contact results in more positive effects and more willingness of the task participants. (Pettigrew, 1998; Dovidio et al., 2003)

These four conditions have been the focus of much testing by following researchers. Some of the conditions have been found to be more important than others, while still more

conditions have been added. Others have noted the correlating processes that occur at the same time as the conditions being met. They include the processes of learning about the out-group (in reducing prejudice or stereotypes), changing behavior (positive contact results in changing actions), generating affective ties (good emotions can overcome the anxiety that can prohibit positive interactions), and in-group reappraisal (changing perceptions of one's own group). (Pettigrew, 1998) Pettigrew goes on to reformulate the contact conditions of Allport's hypothesis after noting the importance of these interrelated processes. Most important, he adds a fifth condition that can affect all other conditions and processes. This fifth condition states that there must be an opportunity for friendship formation (also referred to as 'acquaintance potential). (Pettigrew, 1998.)

Other studies verify this fifth condition. Molina and Wittig (2006) sought to test which conditions were the best predictors of prejudice reduction and beneficial interaction. By surveying cohorts in Los Angeles schools, they found that the best predictor of reduced prejudice was this fifth condition of Pettigrew, an opportunity for friendship potential. They emphasize creating opportunities for students to interact on an individual level (Molina & Wittig, 2006). In the same study, group interdependence also played a key role in predicting student perceptions of having a common in-group identity in class—a key predictor of reduced prejudice (Molina & Wittig, 2006). Of particular note to this thesis, the conditions of individualized contact for friendship potential as well as developing a common in-group identity especially promoted positive interactions between white and Asian students (Molina & Wittig, 2006). Studies on the Contact Hypothesis are extensive, and the updated concept of what intergroup contact theory looks like in current research can be seen in figure 2:
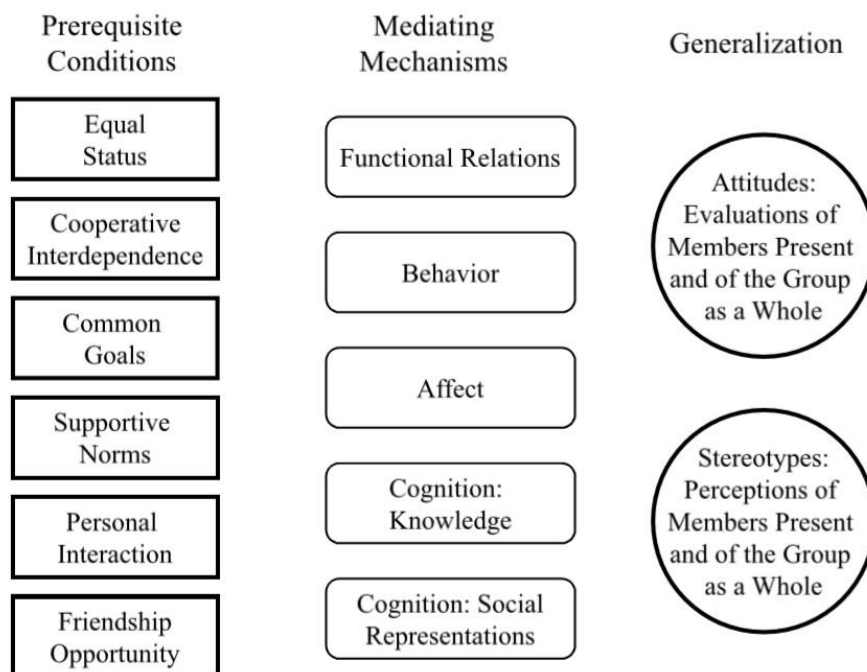
FIGURE 2: Updated Intergroup Contact Theory (Dovidio et al., 2003, p. 14)

On the left of Figure 2 are the still-cited conditions: four of which are the originals of Allport, and two updated conditions, one of which includes Pettigrew's friendship opportunity. In the middle are the beneficial processes that can happen at the same time, and on the right are the positive attitude adjustments that can happen as a result (Dovidio et al., 2003). While Allport's original conditions can provide an adequate lens into the nature of international and home student interactions, Figure 2 is an updated version that can account for some situations that may not be explained by the Contact Hypothesis. When looking at the previously discussed empirical research through the lens of the Intergroup Contact Theory, patterns and explanations start to emerge. More specifically, by analyzing the positive, negative, or unsuccessful interactions that are observed in the literature through the perspectives of this theory, explanations and possible solutions may present themselves.

3.3.2   Anxiety Uncertainty Management Theory

Another theory that could explain the findings of empirical research that observed international and home students' self-segregating habits is Gudykunst's (1998) Anxiety Uncertainty Management theory (AUM). According to this AUM theory, anxiety and uncertainty of 'the other,' especially in cross-cultural settings, are the reasons for the difficulties in communication. Managing these feelings of uncertainty through awareness and mindfulness is essential to effective intercultural communication. (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Croucher, Sommier, & Rahmani, 2015.) The feelings of anxiety and uncertainty are a result of the different ways people can interact. When a person does not know the cultural norms for feedback and engagement in conversations, uncertainty and anxiety spike (Croucher et al., 2015).

When anxiety levels rise, people read others' behaviors according to simplistic information processing (stereotypes) and therefore cannot effectively communicate. Similarly, when uncertainty increases, people trying to communicate are unable to predict and read the behavior of others and, again, misunderstandings and poor communication happen. (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Gudykunst, 2004; Gudykunst, 1998.) This can explain why some students initially try to interact but then those efforts fade over time. These feelings of anxiety could help to explain the difficulties students face as they try to interact, for Gudykunst notes that motivation to interact will decrease (2004). This could also explain why students in several studies asked for more specific training and knowledge in the interactions with peer buddies. Requesting these sets of skills would be a natural way of attempting to manage those "awkward" initial stages to reduce anxiety. Figure 3 illustrates these ideas in more detail as it describes the causes of effective communication across cultures.
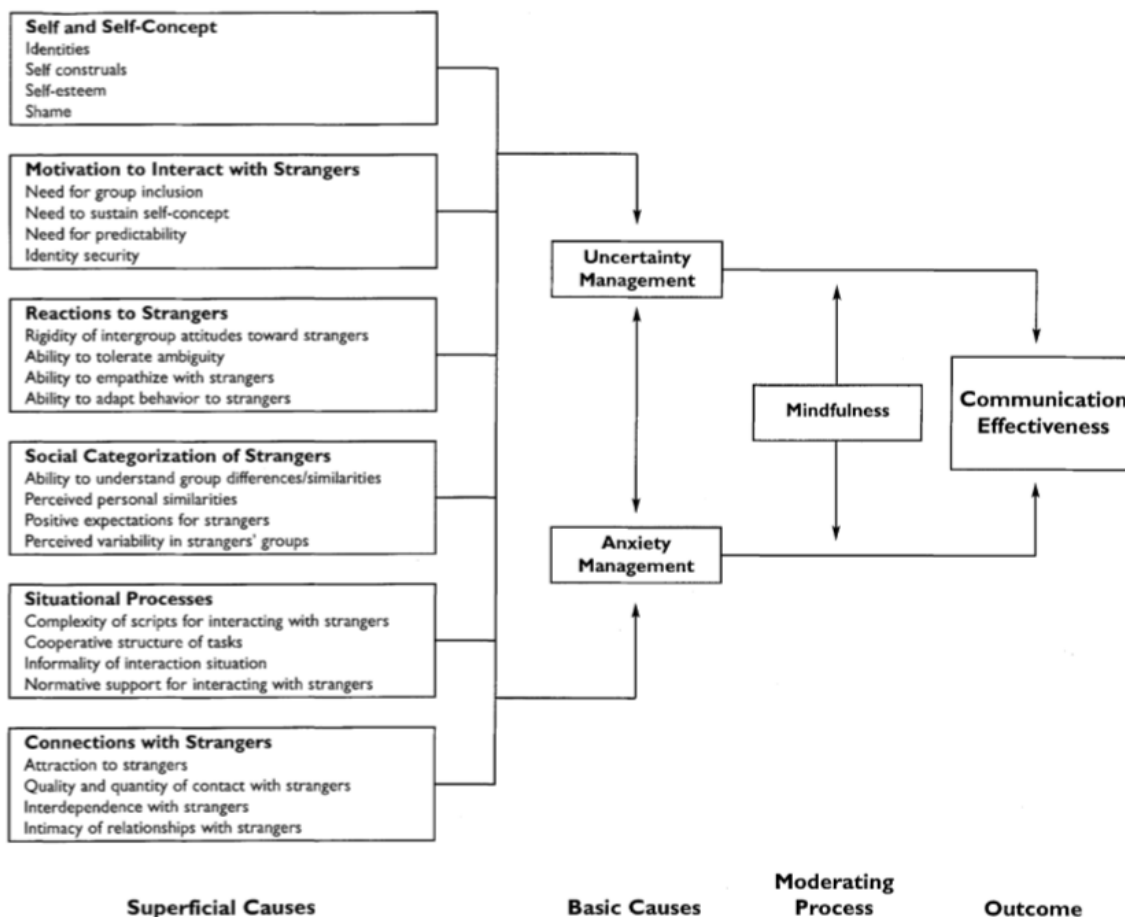
Self and Self-Concept
Identities
Self construals
Self-esteem
Shame

Motivation to Interact with Strangers
Need for group inclusion
Need to sustain self-concept
Need for predictability
Identity security

Reactions to Strangers
Rigidity of intergroup attitudes toward strangers
Ability to tolerate ambiguity
Ability to empathize with strangers
Ability to adapt behavior to strangers

Social Categorization of Strangers
Ability to understand group differences/similarities
Perceived personal similarities
Positive expectations for strangers
Perceived variability in strangers' groups

Situational Processes
Complexity of scripts for interacting with strangers
Cooperative structure of tasks
Informality of interaction situation
Normative support for interacting with strangers

Connections with Strangers
Attraction to strangers
Quality and quantity of contact with strangers
Interdependence with strangers
Intimacy of relationships with strangers

Uncertainty Management

Anxiety Management

Mindfulness

Communication Effectiveness

Superficial Causes   **Basic Causes**   **Moderating Process**   **Outcome**

FIGURE 3: An Illustration of the basic AUM Theory (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001, p. 57)

3.3.3 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Since this thesis is focused on the interactions between Chinese international and home students in the United States, cultural differences must be noted between the two groups. Key cultural differences could play a role in inhibiting interactions between international and home students. Geert Hofstede is one of the most widely known names in describing cultural differences amongst groups. Using the definition of culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of the human group from

one another," Hofstede broke cultural differences down into the following major dimensions (Gillert et al., 2000, pp. 20-22):

Power Distance refers to the accepted hierarchy in a society or culture. Differences exist between cultures that value equality and democratically made decisions, versus placing that ability in the hands of an authority.

Uncertainty Avoidance describes the extent people feel threatened by uncertain or ambiguous situations. This characteristic can include risk-taking or attitudes to change/reform processes.

Individualism/Collectivism refers to how individuals identify themselves. Collectivists often see themselves as part of a social group, or family, whereas individualistic societies put an emphasis on immediate family and less so on social grouping or status.

Masculinity/Femininity is often simply viewed as "tough versus tender" cultures where strength and heroism are idealized. Masculine cultures tend to be more competitive while feminine cultures value cooperation and harmony.

Time Orientation indicates the amount societies base their decisions on traditions or events in the past. Some focus more on present gains while others look to the past to guide decision-making. (Gillert et al., 2000, p. 19-22.)

Indulgence versus Restraint is the ability of a country's citizens to delay gratification. Indulgent countries tend to seek instant pleasure, while those that show restraint either self-control or set up structures to control people's actions. (Hofstede Center.)

Even though they are cultural generalizations, these well-researched dimensions could help in explaining why home and international students feel difficulties in communicating and interacting and also why they might feel anxious or uncertain about interacting with someone from a different nationality. While not necessarily addressing interactions themselves, the theory can explain the reasons for anxiety or discrimination by ethnocentric individuals.

These six dimensions can be looked at even closer with a comparison tool from the Hofstede Center. Figure 4 shows the areas of culture in which China and the United States differ. While similar in favoring competition (masculinity), they differ in all other categories; thus, it becomes obvious that cultural differences may result in communication difficulties between the groups. American would favor more equal status while Chinese might be more willing to tolerate inequality in decisions—important for classroom dynamics. Those decisions made by the Chinese would be based more on past events and traditions—something Americans would be less likely to understand. An area of wide difference is individualism: Chinese students would want to be seen as part of a group and not 'stick out'—something often cited with regard to participation differences in classroom discussions. Finally, Americans would be more likely to immediately indulge in certain behaviors while Chinese students may focus more on academics as they restrain social events for later reward. Clearly, these differences can account for communication difficulties between the groups of students in secondary schools.
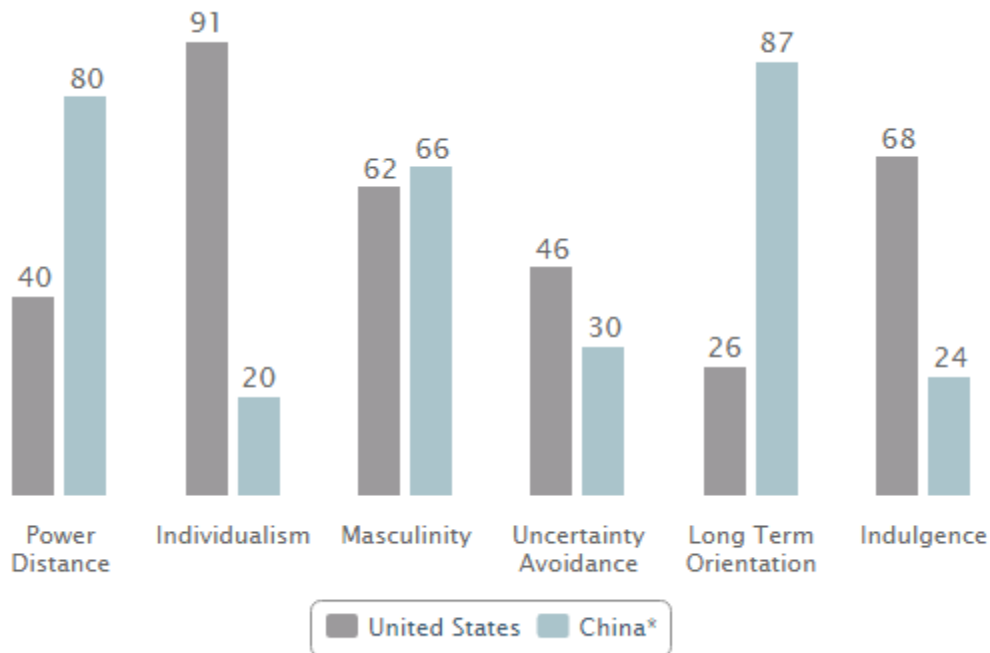
FIGURE 4: Comparison of China and the United States Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede Center)

Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide a general glimpse into certain cultural dispositions that could inhibit comfortable interactions across cultures. However, culture is quite obviously complex and the differences are too numerous to detail in entirety. These dimensions are used of an example to illustrate the effect cultural differences can have on communication between home and Chinese international students.

3.3.4 Acculturation and Transition

Theories that explain the process of moving from one culture to another might also be able to account for the difficulties in interacting across cultures. Now that the some key cultural differences can be understood with Hofstede's dimensions, an investigation of how people respond to those differences can help describe the dynamics at play with intercultural interactions. As student mobility happens, the changes, conflicts, and reorientations that can happen in individuals cannot be underestimated in how they

might impact communication and interaction. It can also explain why some might withdraw from future interactions while others seek it out. Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity is one such theory. When faced with cultural differences of a different group, reactions can be measured according to the Bennett Scale (Figure 5).

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENCE

Denial Defense Minimization Acceptance Adaptation Integration

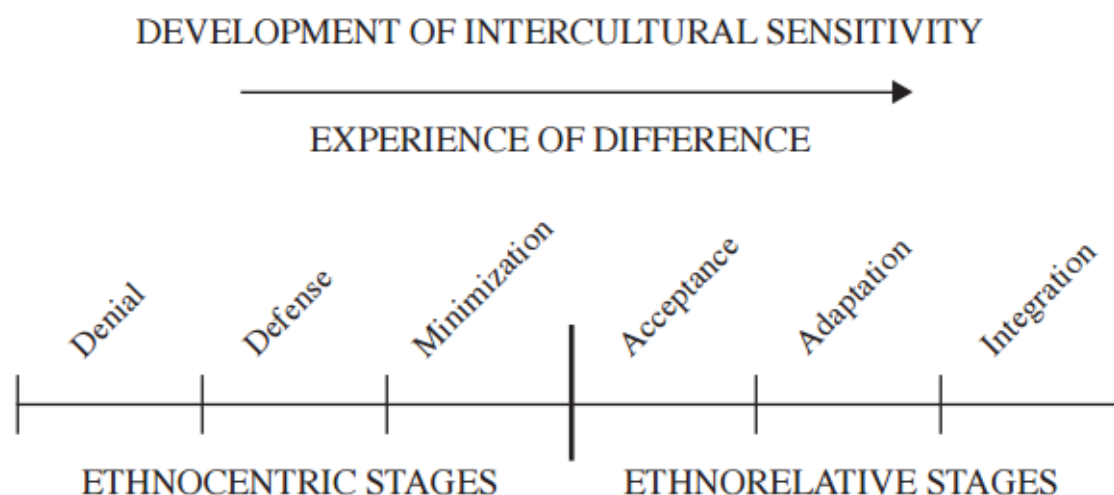ETHNOCENTRIC STAGES   ETHNORELATIVE STAGES

FIGURE 5: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 153)

The Development of Intercultural sensitivity scale developed by Bennett is a theory that explains the patterns of how people react when confronted by cultural differences. It is established on the idea that as experience increases, intercultural competence does too. The scale simply explains the typical process a person might go through as that experience increases. It is also important to note that it does not show simply a change in behavior; rather, it demonstrates a change in an individual's cognitive structures and their understanding of reality. (Bennett & Bennett, 2004.) The changes that happen in behavior are a result of a changing mindset, or worldview. The scale defines two main parts of this development. The beginning ethnocentric stages describe an individual that sees his or her own culture as being central to reality. These people often avoid difference. An individual in the ethnorelative stages often sees his or her own culture in relation to

or in the context of other cultures. These people often seek out difference rather than deny, avoid, or minimize. To briefly summarize, then, these six stages of intercultural sensitivity can show the movement of a person's mindset and correlating behavior from the ethnocentric to the ethno-relative.

The first stage, *denial*, exists when one's own culture is reality, and any others are avoided entirely. *Defense* is viewing one's own culture as the only 'good' one and other cultures as inferior. *Minimization* indicates a person that sees all cultures and people being basically the same, despite some superficial difference. People in this stage commonly use terms such as 'colorblind,' and quite often people of majority groups in this stage are unaware of any institutional privilege that may exist. Moving to the ethnorelative stages, *acceptance* means including other cultures as an equally complex way of looking at reality. Someone in this stage might categorize others as being equal, yet different. In the *adaptation* stage, cultural viewpoints can be shifted to view the world through a different cultural perspective. Quite simply, it means trying to understand an issue from a different cultural perspective, and it often happens after significant cultural experiences such as living, studying, or working abroad. The last stage, *integration*, is where the sense of self is expanded to move in and out of different cultural viewpoints. It describes a person for whom various cultures have become a part of their identity. (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

For the topic of international and home student interactions in high schools, these different stages could explain why certain individuals choose to self-segregate themselves if ethnocentric attitudes are prevalent in either an international or home student. Ethnocentric attitudes could also result in behavior that results in conflict and further segregation of the groups as conflict is avoided. While not an intercultural communication theory showing the nature of interactions, the fact that it describes how some people seek out differences rather than avoiding them shows its applicability to the topic of interactions and community/friendship formation.

Berry's Four-Fold Model of Acculturation (1997) is another theory outside the realm of intercultural communication that can help to explain the student behaviors involved in school internationalization efforts. More specifically, it can help explain why

both positive (intercultural interactions and learning) and negative (self-segregation, lack of contact) behaviors occur when international students are present on a school's campus. The model (Figure 6) sheds light on the acculturation process of the sojourners themselves. It looks at the choices made by immigrant or mobile individuals as they seek to transition and come in daily contact with a new host culture. It is mostly concerned with the ideas of cultural maintenance (the extent of identification with one's own culture) versus contact and participation (the extent to which sojourners seek out contact with the new host culture) (Berry, 1997).
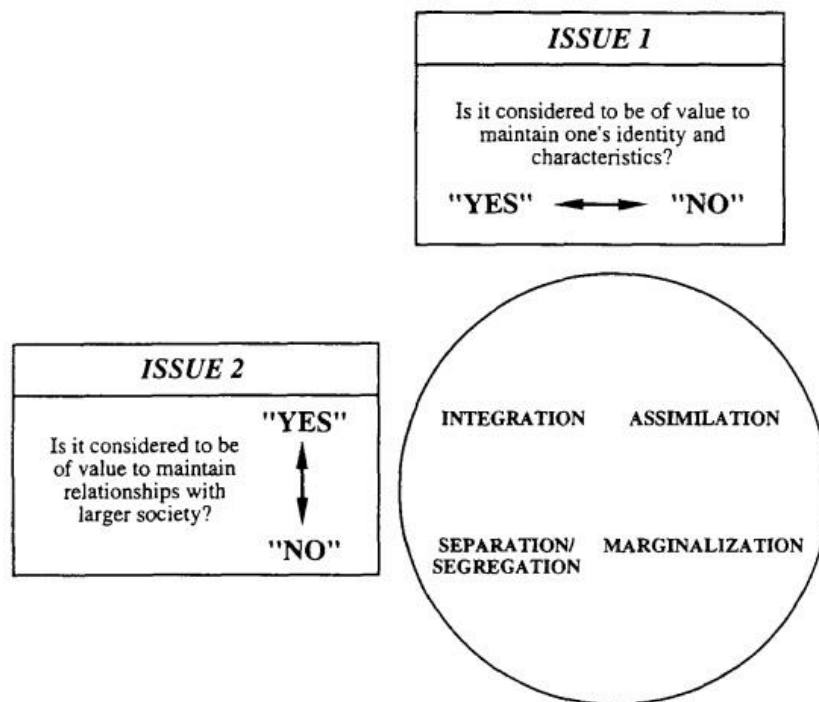
FIGURE 6: Acculturation Strategies (Berry, 1997, p. 10)

Representing the choice sojourners have with the two aspects of cultural maintenance and participation, four key responses arise. One such response is *assimilation,* which describes a person that does not try to maintain a cultural identity from the country of origin. These people will seek out interactions with the host persons as much as possible. On the opposite side of the spectrum, *separation* occurs when individuals choose to

interact and identify only with the country of origin's culture and people. This is the 'self-segregation' idea discussed previously. *Integration* includes both maintenance and interaction. *Marginalization* happens when neither in-group nor out-group interactions are sought out (Berry, 1997). It is important to note that these behaviors are chosen, not forced. Additionally, mutual accommodation is needed if assimilation or integration are going to happen. It is just as important to allow choice of participation for host individuals, for active discrimination quite obviously leads to further separation (Berry, 1997). These choices share similarities with unrelated research of international students themselves, who were also generally categorized into four groups based on willingness and ability to succeed in universities, both academically and socially (Choudaha, Orosz, & Chang, 2012). Some students are more capable to choose participation and contact while other students might not have the skills to choose interactions. Clearly, the role of responsible school support is once again noted. Without school support, the interactions will only happen with students who have the ability and personality to create friendship networks with home students.

4   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

4.1   The Research Approach

Based on the framework presented in the previous chapter, a qualitative research design was configured with a decidedly inductive and social constructivist perspective. Qualitative methods (as well as a thematic content analysis of these methods) were chosen primarily for their nature as an exploration process. By hearing unheard voices or investigating unknown problems, the hope was that the voices of international students could add to the work of international education professionals (Creswell, 2012, p. 40). More specifically, social constructivist research approach aims at seeing the world from the perspective of the participants while finding patterns of meaning (Creswell, 2012).

This perspective works well in a study that wants to gain understanding of the entirety of the international student's school life. As an inductive design with qualitative methodology, the sense of discovery is paramount (Patton, 2002, p. 453). The design as an inductive work of discovery was necessary for the lack of research done at the high school level regarding international and home student interactions. One could assume that the patterns of interactions would be similar to those unearthed in university research, but a qualitative investigation into what, exactly, happens at the high school level is needed before more specific future studies can be done. Most importantly, with the problem of university international students being the separation between the two groups of students, exploration is needed to see if this is also happening at the high school level before more analysis can be done regarding the nature of these interactions.

4.2   Research Aim and Questions

That being said, this thesis does operate under an assumption that some obstacles and challenges to interactions do exist. Therefore, the aim of this research is two-fold. First, the study hopes to explore the state of interactions in high schools so that future studies might be based on the ideas to be presented here. As of now, one would be hard-pressed to produce a research-backed hypothesis on the topic because the phenomenon of international students in U.S. high schools is so recent. Second, the primary and original aim the study was to provide some practical guidance for school staff members to understand and assist international students in their social transition into American schools. By starting the discussion, the hope is that if international students are feeling isolated and separate from the whole community, more steps to increase integration for all students can happen so that intercultural learning becomes more possible. While a 'best practices' guide would require much more research on the topic, the aim is that this study could be a practical beginning of the process. Although the aims of the study are more abstract in nature, the research questions focus on the practicality of interactions. The research questions are as follows:

1) How can the interactions between Chinese international and home students in American secondary schools be characterized?

2) Where and how do these interactions occur?

3) How do teacher practices and/or school policies play a role in these interactions?

4.3   The Participants

From the outset of the research design, international students from China were the intended voices present in the data. As the persons of sojourn, it is likely that they reflect more on their experiences with home students. The data taken from their perspective is expected to be rich in detail and experience. Their level of satisfaction in communicating with home peers is also an important and crucial perspective in studying the interactions between the two groups. International students, as the sojourners, are the ones that can face discrimination or mental health challenges as a result of negative or lacking interactions. Additionally, the aim of the study influenced this choice to survey international students solely. The aim itself comes from the perspective of professionals that work with international students; therefore it is these students' voices that need to be heard first in order to improve their transition to life in the United States. Admittedly, the voice of the in-group (home students) will also be needed in future study, but the concern was that with the level of separation of student groups noted in universities, data from home students would not show as much detail, as perhaps not much thought has been given to why they do or do not interact with international students. For a qualitative study with fewer than thirty participants, splitting the number between home and internationals would reduce the "voice" of the international students and result in a bias.

In order to participate in the study, the only requirements were to be a Chinese international student and 18 years old. Chinese students were chosen because they are

the majority of international students in the U.S. and therefore represent the greatest challenge in creating positive interactions between home and international students. A greater concentration of one type of student usually means that more separation is possible. To study the one student from Honduras or the two from Ukraine, for example, would not reflect useful data in a question of interaction—these students are forced, out of necessity and a lack of linguistically-similar students, to interact. A definite in-group and out-group is also more useful when considering the theories of intercultural communication and acculturation.

For the second requirement, students had to be 18 years of age to make participation more convenient. Including younger ages would require parental permission that would have to be navigated through schools, educational agents or guardians, and then parents located in different time zones. Since students were desired from several different schools, this choice of convenience needed to be made. Also, students of this age were likely to have been in the United States for two or more years, which makes their experience vast and their level of English more advanced. In total, 24 students from mainland China participated in the survey. Of these 24, 11 were male and 13 female, while six of them were 19 years old with the remaining being 18. Twenty of the students had been attending their school for three years or more. Three respondents attended their school for two years and one for just one year.

Participants were found through contacting the schools first. School administrators were contacted for their permission, and then surveys were emailed or given to their students. As a broad student experience was desired, several schools needed to be found. This was not a 'backyard' study or a study of convenience. Schools around the U.S. were contacted in order to fully gauge how international and home students were interacting with each other. Private schools vary greatly in how resources and personnel are allocated, and therefore there are likely discrepancies in how different schools train and equip students to interact with each other. The only requirement before contacting schools was that they had to have a dedicated international student program which also provided host families or boarding dormitories. This was the easiest way to

know immediately if the schools had large international student programs or not. Schools with only a few international exchange students would not represent the challenges schools might face when large numbers of international students are enrolled. The school profiles of international and home student numbers can be seen in Table 1 along with the number of students from the school that participated in the survey. The difference in number of participants between schools depended on how schools chose to find students willing to participate. Higher numbers of participants meant that the school personnel spent class time for students to fill out surveys. Lower participation rates from a school was the result of school personnel simply emailing the questionnaire to students. In total, fifteen schools were contacted in the fall of 2015 and five chose to participate. Some schools did not respond to the request, while several cited concerns that their 12th grade students were too busy to participate. A few others emailed the information to their students but none responded to the survey request. The participating schools' information is as follows in Table 1 (with the school name being withheld):

TABLE 1: Participating Schools' Information

	Total Enrollment (High School)	Total International Student Enrollment (High School)	Number of Chinese International Students	Number of students participating in the survey
School A	385	64	57	6
School B	300	80	70	12
School C	650	62	46	4
School D	930	43	31	1
School E	836	95	56	1

Participating schools represented the ideal numbers desired at the outset of the research design. This means that the international student programs are robust and quite typical for schools that choose to admit international boarding students. These five schools also

represent varying geographic locations of the United States, ensuring a higher level of validity for the results.

4.4   Research Methods

In the fall of 2016, a qualitative survey was emailed to either school personnel or to the participating students directly. An open-ended written survey (Appendix A) was used and consisted of sixteen questions formulated on the thesis' framework. The sixteen survey questions were based on the research questions as well as the patterns outlined in the conceptual framework. Similar to the framework itself, questions were used to understand as much of the school experience as possible. Even though the research is not deductive in nature (meaning that questions were grounded in, and being tested on, already developed theories), the survey used patterns from previous research to ensure that key points were not overlooked in understanding interactions during the school day. Especially since the data collection was a written survey and not an oral interview, care was taken to ensure certain points regarding the place or nature of interactions were included. This is how previous research was used in developing this inductive inquiry. Some questions were then based on previous empirical findings from research on interactions between home and international students. The intercultural communication or cultural theories given in the framework would be used more as a way to analyze and discuss the findings. For example, a question might ask students about extracurricular activities and their impact on interactions, stemming from the empirical findings. Intercultural communication theory could then be applied to understand the nature of interactions in that student response.

A written survey with primarily open-ended questions was decided upon because of this researcher's own past experience with interviewing hundreds of prospective international students from China. With a written survey, the idea was that students had more time to think and reflect on their answers. With participants whose original language is not English, this time to think about the answers can ensure more authentic

responses in comparison to oral Skype interviews. Additionally, a nationwide reach was more possible. The thought was that an anonymous survey given in writing would ensure more participants than oral interviews where student anxiety and time zone considerations could result in too few students willing to participate. That being said, these last considerations were not the primary reason for this design. The overarching assumption was that more authentic answers would be given in written answers where confidentiality was ensured.

4.5 Ethical Solutions

As stated, student confidentiality and anonymity were key characteristics from the very beginning of the research design. Considering that students were contacted through school personnel, careful attention regarding anonymity became a key issue in the ethical considerations. In the directions of the survey (~~seen in~~ Appendix A) students were told that their identities and answers would remain confidential and anonymous. However, several steps needed to be taken to ensure a low chance of school personnel tracing their own students' quotes found in the following results. As a result, student quotations found in the results and discussion sections are mostly short answers, and the gender, name, age, or school are not included. Short quotations were decided upon in the event that any sort of syntax or topic of overall discussion would identify the participant to his or her school administrator. Names were collected to identify different surveys for the researcher, but were not reported to anyone else. Answers were also not inclusive of the school attended because the enrollment data collected from the schools would reveal student and school connection to these personnel. As a result, school and participant anonymity was upheld to the greatest degree in the reporting of data collected. Even in the cases of schools where only one student completed the survey, the link was distributed to several students in that school. Unless disclosed by the student him or herself, school personnel would not know who, exactly, participated. The collection of answers was stored online and under ID and password in the Webropol survey collection

software which was recommended by the University of Jyvaskyla and this researcher's academic advisor. One copy of printed data was used for data collection and was always in the care of the researcher. (This hard copy of the data will be shredded upon final evaluation of the thesis.) Examples of data shown to the thesis advisor did not include student or school names.

Permission was granted by school officials as they distributed the online survey link to students that met the criteria of being 18 or older and from the country of China. In two cases, a letter of permission from the researcher's home university was provided to the schools that requested further information (Appendix B). Via email, information was given to school personnel to inform schools about the topic of research as well as what type of students were desired for participation. As it concerned the participants, the directions included a statement that allowed permission for answers to be used in this thesis upon submission of the online questionnaire. The results of this study will be shared with schools and participants in the same way that the participants were originally found—through the same school personnel. A summarized PowerPoint report and a link to the published thesis will be provided and asked to be forwarded to the emails of students that were asked to participate.

4.6   The Questionnaire

The survey itself can be viewed in Appendix A but the following questions are listed with a brief justification for their use are listed below:

2. How long have you attended school in the United States?
Question 2 was used to simply ensure an appropriate amount of experience with being an international student.
3. Overall, are you happy with how much you've been able interact with American students? Please explain why.

Question 3 is used as a purely open-ended introductory question to both get initial reactions and also to start garnering responses for the first research question.

4. How many <u>close</u> American friends do you have that you hang out with regularly?

Based on both theoretical and empirical research, this question is influenced by findings on the importance of friendships on regular and high-quality interactions. It is also used to gauge the level of connectedness a student may or may not feel to the school community.

5. How and where did you meet your best American friend(s)?

Based on the second research question, this question was used to find specific spaces or times where positive interactions were made that resulted in friendship.

6. Think about the times where you have felt happy after interacting with American students. Where or in what situations do these most positive interactions with American students usually take place? You may answer as many as you think.

Similar to question 5, spaces and times for positive interactions (based on student feelings) were being sought.

7. List several (3 or more) challenges you see that make it difficult when interacting with American students. Briefly explain each challenge.

Three challenges were asked because it was assumed that two of these answers would entail "language" and "culture." The third answer may show something unknown.

8. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or discriminated against in school because you're an international student?

9. If you answered "yes" to the above question, please describe a situation or situations where you felt uncomfortable or discriminated against.

Wanting to characterize current interactions and based on empirical evidence of integration challenges, negative feelings or situations needed to be asked about.

10. Do you feel supported or helped by your teachers to participate, interact, and work <u>with</u> American students during class? Please explain why you feel this way.

Based on empirical evidence showing the importance of formal curriculum, task design, and role of authorities, this question comes from the third research question.

11. In your classes, do you sometimes complete group assignments or projects with American students?

This question represents the formal curriculum aspects of the framework and the importance of cooperative learning activities often used.

12. If you answered "yes" to question number 11: How do you usually feel after completing these group assignments with American students? Please explain why.

The question seeks to gauge the effectiveness of group learning on interactions.

13. How many extracurricular activities do you participate in?

14. In your opinion, do extracurricular activities help you have more positive interactions with American students? Please explain why or why not.

This question refers to the importance of informal activities in the curriculum or school day.

15. Please describe and evaluate your own efforts in purposefully interacting with American students. Are these efforts successful? Why or Why not?

Using the ideas of social interdependence and collaborative learning, the question also wants to get student thoughts on the ideas of self-segregation and individual effort.

16. Give some of your own ideas: What do you think your school or teachers could do to help you interact more with American students? Please explain.

This question was used to discover any new student ideas for the topic as well as an open-ended question to determine what school efforts could work or even have worked well in the past.

After introducing the questions, it is important to again note that the questions themselves were not being tested individually. Rather, these questions were used as a way to understand the whole story of the international students' experiences. Answers were combined and coding was not categorized according to questions. These justifications written below each question are simply to show the basis for asking each. As a written survey, follow-up questions that are often included in semi-structured interviews needed to be "predicted" and were asked in the survey itself.

4.7   Data Analysis

After 24 surveys were completed by the participants, answers were read through thoroughly and then compiled into a document for further analysis. The resulting document contained 104 pages of double-spaced text that could be analyzed and coded. All participants seemed to take the task seriously, as there were no questions left 'blank' or inadequately answered. Therefore, all survey answers received were used in the analysis as each individual painted a rich and seemingly authentic picture of their experiences interacting with home students.

According to a thematic content analysis design, text was analyzed according to a series of codes so that certain patterns and trends would emerge. These patterns could then be grouped according to categories and themes that took shape as the data was being coded. Early in the process, four main categories emerged and subsequent codes could be applied to each of these four categories. As the topic focused on the nature and characterization of interactions at the high school level, codes were placed into a simple table (Table 2) from these emergent categories where codes could be placed in one of the four quadrants and then further analyzed.

TABLE 2. Analysis Quadrants

	Time or Space	Nature or Characteristics of Interactions
Negative Interactions		
Positive Interactions		

As the questionnaire followed patterns of previous research in including both positive and negative effects of interactions that followed internationalization efforts, it is unsurprising that student answers at the high school level could also be placed into these categories of both positive and negative interactions. The positive and negative codes were interpreted and placed into the grid by the researcher. Positive codes could be easily identified by the language used by the students in being satisfied or happy. It could also be labelled as a positive if interactions were described as taking place. Negative codes could be identified as either frustrations felt by students or as obstacles to interactions taking place. For example, a student speaking of 'a wall' between the two student groups would be classified as negative.

Time and space refers to the place or setting in which that interactions took place. Characteristics and nature refers to how students described the interactions they had with home students. Additionally, this analysis grid was also able to be used for each of the three research questions as each question resulted in answers that were both positive and negative. The codes and categories were prescribed in such a way that codes representing all three research questions could be located on this layout. For example, codes referring to answers about teacher activities or school policies could be isolated and looked at separately to answer research question number 3. More than 100 original codes were first counted for frequency and then separated into themes that are described in the following results section. By counting codes for frequency, the validity of interpretation of the results could be more highly assured. Recurrent themes and codes provided the basis for all findings. Themes were found by combining similar codes (e.g., the original codes of feeling 'separate' and 'isolated' could be combined together). Furthermore, a second-level analysis was conducted on the nature of interactions and will also be discussed.

5   RESULTS

5.1 First Research Question: How can the interactions between Chinese and home students in American secondary schools be characterized?

After looking at previous research on the interactions between international and home students, the initial findings are of no surprise—namely, in that both positive and negative (or nonexistent) interactions occur with roughly equal frequency. Codes labeled as positive or negative were almost equal in number. Any hypothesis that high schools would provide a more structured environment which would result in a better state of interactions between the two groups was rejected. Even some simple calculations at the outset show a divided experience on the part of Chinese international students. Of the 24 participants, 12 were happy with the overall frequency of interactions with home students while 10 reported negative feelings regarding their interaction experience and 2 gave "so-so" type answers. Furthermore, 10 students total reported having not even one close home student friend. Seven students reported having 1 or 2 friends, 4 students had 3 to 4 friends and only 3 had four or more friends they would hang out with on a regular basis. Of the students that reported having one or two friends, several reported never spending time with them, so the numbers may not represent true friend relationships. However, the friendships numbers do not portray the entire picture as some students that didn't claim to have any home friends were perfectly happy with their overall level of interactions with local peers. For a final simple calculation, 7 students reported never feeling discrimination in school and 5 students rarely felt discriminated against. 12 total students felt discriminated against occasionally, and no students reported feeling discriminated against on a regular basis.

These simple numbers are useful in quickly showing the differences in the international student experience, but they fail to show the complexity of the issue. Looking at the themes that emerged from the data paints a richer picture of why these interactions are so varying in nature. In summary to the first question of how these interactions can be described, it is strongly evident that overall, while many positive interactions do take place, Chinese international students are often feeling left-out,

isolated, or separate and have a strong desire for more chances to interact and communicate with home students. Amongst the international students, a feeling of being separate or isolated is often reported. This same idea came out when students reported not feeling "close" with home students. After looking at the frequency of the codes, this feeling of being separate from home students was one of the most common ideas reported by many of the students. The quotes that follow illustrate the frequency with which these feelings occur.

I cannot say I'm happy with the amount of interaction because honestly I don't really hang out with American students.

I'm kind of happy with how much we've been able to interact because we have opportunities to work with American students. But after classes, we always separate from each other.

No. We generally hang out within certain groups. We talk to each other but not super close.

I'm not very satisfied because I thought international students and American students could get along fine, but after I came I figured that there was a wall in between us.

They just do not want to hang out with us. But they are nice and friendly.

To be honest, I feel more comfortable hanging out with a group of Chinese students even though I don't know them very well.

I prefer to hang out with friends from my home country because it makes me feel more comfortable.

Not all of them are willing to hang out with you although they are kind.

In these cases, characterizing or typifying the interactions taking place is difficult because this division between the international and home students is so commonly reported. Positive or negative interactions need to also include a 'lack thereof' in following research questions. While negative interactions and discrimination did occur, they were not even close in the frequency of codes regarding isolation, "left out," and separateness. The first and main finding needs to be clearly understood: of the schools sampled, clear divisions exist in the student population between home and international students.

A majority of students, even those happy with their abilities to interact with home students, describe the feeling of isolation, being left out as a result of their status as an international student. As a result, these feelings of separateness lead to increased levels of segregation—both involuntarily or voluntarily chosen (meaning sometimes it was the home students' behavior that made them feel separate or their own choice to separate themselves).

In class, I am the only international student so it's hard for me to find a partner for group work.

Many times I will feel left out by the American students. They talk to their friends and ignore my opinion.

I would not chose to interact with American students if I have a choice.

Both of us prefer to stay in our comfort zones.

Related to this idea is the feeling of 'giving up' by several students. In the beginning, efforts to make friends with home students were not successful, which resulted in further barriers between the groups for the future. For some students that have attended these schools for multiple years, this means that poor interactions in the beginning of the experience can result in years of future division between the students.

I have several American friends, but we rarely have time to talk. For my first year in American, I tried to make only American friends. It was hard for me because my English was bad and I felt lonely and left out among the American groups. The rest of the years I just chose to stick with my Chinese friends because they are just more comfortable to be with.

I put my efforts but when I got rejected, I started to give up. Rejections are what drag me down.

However, self-segregation habits are not only a result of feeling isolated. Clear challenges exist that further polarizes the two groups. Language plays the most obvious role, but it's not simply a matter of lacking in formal linguistic English ability. When hanging out with home students, student jokes and humor are often described as being incredibly hard to follow. Besides general descriptions about language being difficult, statements like these were easily the most common pattern in specifying which type of language was particularly difficult when interacting with American students. Perhaps a bit surprising, students did not refer to following class discussions or participating in conversations as much of a challenge. The following quotes about difficulty in following home students' joking and sense of humor represent the most common phrases that detail the difficulty of the language barrier. Again, many of the quotes, though not all, are shown to illustrate the frequency with which these ideas came out.

Language barrier is one challenge. Because of the language, sometimes the jokes or something fun can be hard to understand.

American jokes or improve when everyone is laughing except for me.

I cannot understand their jokes.

Sometimes I cannot get the point of their jokes.

I usually cannot get the point of their joke.

Sometimes we cannot understand why they laugh when make jokes.

I don't get their jokes. Sometimes when everyone is laughing but I don't get it.

In addition to language, culture was also (and predictably) listed as a common barrier to student interactions and helps explain why this division exists between student groups. However, the majority of students did not explain exactly what was different about culture. Culture is a notoriously hard issue to grasp, even amongst academics, researchers, and scholars; however, some students did begin to describe how culture also plays a role. Even one student seemed to note this difference more generally:

It is hard to have real friend with Americans. Even most Americans are hard to open with each other. So don't think you are real friends if they give you candy or help you with homework.

Others described how culture can also play an important role in students lacking common interests or topics of conversation. One of the highest reported difficulties in making friends or interacting was the inability to find common interests to talk about.

Not really because I have limited American friends and it's hard for me to find anything in common with them.

I wanted to interact with them, but it feels like there is not much to say.

Cultural differences—American students and international students grew up with different cartoons, books, celebrities, etc. Sometimes it is hard to find a common topic.

I cannot find a good topic for conversation, even though I want to talk to them.

We like different kind of celebrities and we don't have common shows that we watch.

While these differences do result in some separation of home and international students, it is especially important as possible solutions may be able to be found in the situations that result in positive interactions. Midway through the analysis of the codes and data, in became clear that two main types of positive interactions were taking place between students. The one more closely associated with very positive emotions and feelings was found in students that described situations in which they had close friends or meaningful conversations with home students.

Yes. I have several friends which I appreciate a lot. We share the same interests (i.e. art, literature, history) and we hang out after school in the library. We text each other and are thinking of hanging out on the weekends. Sometimes we are able to go out for lunch. I like the degree I interact with tem and also the space I can keep to myself.

I really wanted to have a good relationship with my desk-mate. So, when we have a class discussion, I am really happy when he found me as his partner. I tried to make friends with him and my effort was successful.

I have two really close American friends who I met during the school musical and during a school service trip.

When only one international student and one American student stay alone, we can talk deeply with each other, and no one will bother us. Wherever the place is, we can be happy.

The other type of positive interactions reported, and which was significantly separate with those discussing friendship, referenced the ideas of help or supportive interactions. While mentioning all good qualities such as home students' being "nice" or "friendly," overall the students focusing on qualities of helping interactions were less likely to report

satisfaction with interactions. Interestingly, it became evident early on that the students who spoke of being 'helped,' even though as a good thing, did not seem to have as much of a connection with home students.

As a result of this difference between 'friendship' or 'helping' interactions as well as hints towards different levels of satisfaction between these students, a second-level analysis was carried out. Student surveys were separated into two distinct groups—those that spoke of interactions in terms of friendships, and those that answered questions about interactions using phases referring to 'help.' Unexpectedly, only one student did not fit either category as he or she spoke of both simultaneously. These two groups of answers were then checked with the first two questions of the survey asking about the number of friends those students had as well as their overall level of satisfaction regarding how much they have been able to interact. The difference was quite striking. Students who reported feeling close to home students and reported high numbers of friends were much more likely to report feeling satisfied with the experience they have had interacting with home students. Most students that spoke of 'help' did indeed have fewer friends or lower levels of satisfaction. Both factors needed to be checked, as some students were happy with the amount they have interacted even though not feeling close or connected with many friends. A good example of this is a student who reported enjoying his interactions with American friends. He does admit, however, that these are not close relationships. This student, though happy with the amount of interactions taking place, reported having only one friend. While these students are interacting, and may even be pleased with the amount of interactions with home students, close bonds were not reported in this group of students.

Yes, I am happy interacting with American students. They are nice and willing to help international students with any homework questions. However… I feel like I cannot get really close to them.

Honestly, I did not always hang out with American students … However, most of Americans students are happy to help us on the homework.

They have good ideas and are glad to help us with our understanding.

Or consider the following quote from a student who reported having no friendships with local students:

Most Americans are really friendly. They help us a lot. It is good to learn about American culture.

Yet there must be some students who do feel connected because of the overall friendliness they perceived, as the following quote implies. In this study a lone student did not fit into just one category of having close relationships or receiving help. He or she reported both types of positive interactions. He or she spoke often of getting help from home students, yet at the same time having many friends. For the others who mostly spoke of interactions in terms of being 'helped,' there were not any associated codes with feeling connected with, close to, or making several close friendships. This student is the only outlier on this theme.

So far I have been happy with how much I am able to interact with American students. Everything has its negative side, but what I have seen at my school is American students are open and very welcoming to all the international students. The help us a lot, they care about us, and they understand us as we sometimes struggle with the language barrier.

This second-level analysis was then conducted, and resulted in another finding for both research questions numbers one and two. Both answers will be described here so that the second-level analysis won't be divided and lose clarity as some overlap does exist. The second-level analysis also checked for any other commonalities between themes, as well as for being distinct for either the 'friendship' or 'helping' interactions. One similarity and key difference was found: of the students that mostly talked about interactions in terms of friendships, only one found this level of connectedness through in-class activities. The rest found this connection during after-school and extra-curricular activities (i.e. the

informal curriculum). Service trips, sporting events, school parties and other activities were all cited by students as ways they could make friends with home students.

Interactions for academic purposes are simply not long enough. After a service trip, our flight got canceled which became a reason why I had a three hour conversation with an American girl. She is my best friend now.

Although we are different, we can be friends on the court. Through basketball games, we can have a good friendship between each other.

I met my best friends through school social activities.

I feel happy when I am playing sports with American students. After excellent cooperation with my teammates, I will feel that we are the best friends in the world. Sports don't have limitations.

The second level analysis found that the students who focused on the ideas of help and support were mostly talking about, in contrast to the friendship answers, class activities. However, the lessons are far from clear, since some students were happy with just receiving help. For those students, interactions of help and classroom-only interactions were sufficient. Some of these students also seemed to view home students more as a resource for completing homework or getting help with group activities. The following quotes are representative of several answers concerning this idea.

I like to work with them because they are nice and they know more about the American culture which can help some class project be easier. In Bible class, they know more about Christianity and they can explain to me and help me on my part to finish better.

It is better to do a job with them so that I can improve my ability.

Normally I hang out with friends from our home country, but if there are some social studies we need to do, I will participate into American student groups.

Clearly, the first findings of research question one were that the challenges of colloquial-type language and culture result in a clear division between international and home students in these high schools. This is the most prevalent form of negative interactions—the fact that they may not even be taking place. Second, two more positive types of interactions do occur frequently—those interactions between cross-cultural friendships and those interactions where help is being given by a home student to an international student. However, though referred to directly as a positive interaction, these students who only spoke of interacting in this way also reported lower levels of satisfaction in their interactions with home students. Furthermore, and a bit overlapping with research question number 2, friendships were often made during extracurricular activities whereas help was predominately an in-class interaction.

5.2 Second Research Question: Where and how do these interactions (positive, negative, or lack thereof) occur?

As already stated from the second-level analysis, both group activities and extracurricular activities provided means for a space in which students could interact. In the initial analysis, group activities were cited as a space in which positive interactions did occur. Even though these students tended to be less happy overall with their interactions, the fact remains that it was one of the most often referenced settings in which conversations could take place between students. The following quote from one student is similar to many other identical answers.

After group activities, I feel that I can be involved in the American student groups and I feel more confident.

However, answers regarding group activities are very split in their opinions. While interactions do take place during these activities, group dynamics and more negative interactions were often cited. In fact, when counting the frequency of the codes regarding the space of class activities, they were split evenly in how much positive and negative talk was associated with group work. Furthermore, feelings of being discriminated against often occurred in these spaces of class activities, formal curriculum, and group work. Students were quite strong in voicing the problems that arise in group work as the following show:

I'd rather do it by myself because I have my own pace on doing things and sometimes it ends up I am the only one who is working.

I am quite organized and tried not to procrastinate, so sometimes working together in a group drives me nuts. However, I don't think this only occurs with American students. I find the same thing with non-Americans as well.

No, because when American students cannot understand what we were saying, they were impatient. It usually hurt our feeling and makes us stop our explaining.

And they just finish the assignment by themselves though I am one of their group partners. I don't know why they want to do this all by themselves, but the fact is international students are smart too.

I feel good to work with them but sometimes I feel I am more focused on grades but they are only focused on finishing it.

Some Americans don't keep their time, which makes it harder for us to work together.

They don't seem to care about the work and it's hard to contact them.

Group work … when other people aren't working but chatting.

Teachers do not want the groups only have international students. After the group assignments with American students, we did not even do anything because some of American students just skipped our jobs and did it for us.

In contrast, informal curricular activities are only once cited as a space for negative interactions to occur. The rest of the students strongly associated positive ideas with after-school activities. Additionally, even though a more informal setting, answers to the question regarding discrimination never directly cited outside-of-class activities as a space where discrimination was felt.

Usually it is through school activities, including band practice or concerts, school events, service projects, etc.

When we do volunteering job together it feels good to work together for one goal. We laugh, we work hard, and everything is fantastic.

After basketball games or parties it's easier to make conversation.

My favorite extracurricular activity is Mock Trial. I made the varsity and committed to the team. It pushes me to use my knowledge to help, grow, and build up one another.

When we do the extracurricular activities we will get more time to spend with American students and we will get more familiar with each other and talk more.

After I experienced a lot of activities, I feel like I am more talkative, and I get to know more about American students' lives. I will have more ideas about what they like better.

Absolutely extra-curricular activities help. The more activities you join, the more people you will be able to meet.

Extra-curriculars help because we have things in common and we work together.

As for the nature of the interactions, and how they take place in these settings, certain patterns emerge in how interactions were made. The first is when one-on-one contact can be made. Two of the following quotes are repeated from earlier, but they illustrate this characteristic of one-on-one situations that was repeated across several student answers. While large group activities were referenced both positively and negatively, these one-on-one situations were only brought up in positive ways. This was a frequent code that did not have an opposite in the negative quadrant.

When one American friend was in China, I showed her around and had fun discovering things.

I really wanted to have a good relationship with my desk-mate. So, when we have a class discussion, I am really happy when he found me as his partner.

When only one international student and one American student stay alone, we can talk deeply with each other, and no one will bother us. Wherever the place is, we can be happy.

Another pattern that emerged is sharing about one's own culture. Some of the most positive expressions in the surveys regarding interactions was when students talked about being able to share with others their own culture. This was a frequent idea that was almost entirely viewed as a positive. International Chinese students greatly enjoyed being able to share about their own culture.

When they're interested in our home country's culture, we explain to them and they were happy to listen to us.

Have more group work that includes both cultures. Create more common topics between American students and international students.

I'm happy when after we discuss the homework, we chat about some interesting things and they are willing to know more about my culture.

Sometimes, I really want American students to ask me some questions that I know really well. For example, something interesting about my country and I feel like it is pretty fun to share about the cultural differences.

Sometimes they will ask about my culture and it seems like they are very interested in us.

Although, it must be noted that negative perceptions about China can reduce this satisfaction in sharing.

Some people will think China or other Asian countries are a lot less developed than the U.S. and our politics/laws/order are horrible. One time the whole History class of American students thought China owes the U.S. money. That was ironic because the fact is that the U.S. borrowed a huge amount of money from China.

Effort and motivation to communicate also play a role with both groups of students, which has some overlap with the codes regarding sharing about one's own culture. Though slightly different, both themes include the idea of home students showing an interest in communicating with international students. The following quotes show this idea that international students want more communication with home students, but they are often waiting for the home student to show the motivation. When looking at the previously discussed ideas of international students self-segregating themselves, motivation seems to be an issue in cross-cultural communication amongst both groups of students.

Don't only talk to me and engage me in class, saying hi to me after class is also really important.

Once after school I was sitting alone and waiting for my host family. Two American girls come to me and talked to me, asking about my hobbies, my family, my friends. I was so happy and grateful that they talked to me.

Furthermore, direct negative behavior of both groups of students can reduce contact. However, this is not always because of the often-assumed discriminatory behaviors of home students. Rather, peer pressure and large numbers of international students also prevent positive interactions from being made. Several students blamed their co-national peers of inhibiting their chances to communicate with home students.

I think the reason is that previous international students had made the relationships harder than expected. It is more difficult than making American friends in America than in China. I have more American friends in China than here.

I think I am happy interacting with American students when there aren't other international students with us because I think there will be no one judging me and I don't have to consider the feeling of international friends and American friends. There are too many international students in the school, so they created a culture that international students only hang out with each other, and if you are hanging out with American students, then you will be left out, so peer pressure caused this problem.

Having less international students might push me to interact with Americans more.

I have gained many friends, but peer pressure also affects me since international students might judge us.

Though spoken of more generally, negative behaviors do exist amongst the home students as well. In addition to the negative references regarding group activities as a

place in which discrimination occurred, general codes of feeling "belittled" or "left out" by home students were just as frequent as negative comments referring to co-nationals.

When they make fun of our culture.

They make fun of our culture.

Sometimes it is hard to join a group of people's conversation. I knew that they were not discriminating against me on purpose, but it still doesn't feel very good.

When students talk about the international students and I heard all the conversation.

5.3   Third Research Question: How do teacher practices and school policies play a role in these interactions?

Again using the quadrants from the original analysis, school policies and teacher practices could be looked at by isolating and analyzing the codes including any reference to school or teacher practices. Similar to the first two questions, both positive and negative aspects were found. The first negative associated aspect can be described as 'policies that isolate.' Several different school policies were referred to, but all had to do with school rules or practices that made international students feel different and isolated from home students.

It must be stressed that these were not simple complaints about rules. Rather, students described these school policies or actions as something that made them feel different. While it may not directly refer to negative or positive interactions, it is clear that international students felt different from home students and as a result refrained from communicating more. For example, one policy had to do with international students driving or riding with home students. These phrases came up in questions about discrimination or even general comments about interactions. The school policy was either

creating a sense of difference or preventing ability to have more social interactions. (School policies obviously include complex issues of liability and student safety, which will be detailed in the discussion section.)

We cannot drive. If we want to go somewhere, we must ask the host family and it can be really awkward. In fact, it can also raise conflict.

Something American students can do but we cannot. Like driving and even taking a ride with someone.

Only at school. We are not allowed to ride in other American students' vehicles.

Other students cited certain places set up by the school as causing more isolation and as a result, more difficulty in interacting. The most common was the international student center. Often set up with good intentions, some students saw it as further isolating them from the overall community. While some said it can be a good thing or was started from good intentions, they see it as an obstacle to interaction. In fact, references to the international student center only described the center as negatively impacting communication with home students. Having such a center was never brought up as a positive policy for fostering intercultural communication.

I think it is good to have an international student center because it can help some international students feel comfortable when they first came to America. However, I think international student center will make it hard for Americans to make friends with international students.

I think the international center should be removed. If so, international students will not go to the center right after school. Then they will have more time and more opportunities to talk with American students.

I think the international center is a good idea in a way, but sometimes this will stop us from interacting with the rest of the school because people will close themselves inside this small community instead of reaching out with others. I think American students want to know us and we also want to interact with them. Don't make us look special and hard to reach.

We have the international center which will make the American students think the international students are special.

Certain school actions, even if not official policies or rules, can also result in feelings of difference that could cause students to withdraw. In answers to the question regarding feeling uncomfortable or discriminated against because of being an international student, an often-repeated example was the confusion over joining the American "Pledge of Allegiance."

When they say "join the Pledge of Allegiance" I do not know they words and because I am not the citizen of the U.S., I do not know if I need to do the same thing as the native students.

In government class when the teacher says join the salute but I am the only one who does not know the words.

Specific to teachers, the most commonly cited way of teachers helping the interactions was in creating class groups. It seems to be a very common strategy to create groups where international and home students are mixed together.

Teachers intentionally assign groups for students that mix American and International students together.

Most of our teachers will help us by assigning international students to groups full of Americans.

For students that sometimes tend to self-segregate or perhaps be more introverted or shy, this practice, while obvious in its intent, needs to be emphasized because of answers such as this:

I will only make a team with American students because of the teacher's command.

It is understandable to me and I appreciate the effort that teachers want to mix our groups.

However, while many answers referred to teachers diversifying groups, only one response described a teacher that discussed openly the issue of home and international students interacting and becoming close. The rest focused only on creating mixed groups.

My English teacher always helps us interact with the local students and do things together. She likes to say a word which is "interrelationship."

Unfortunately, teachers also exhibit negative practices, perhaps unintentionally. Similar to the policies that isolate, certain teacher actions also lead to students feeling more isolated or more of a part of the international community rather than the overall student body.

I feel uncomfortable when teachers tell international students to stand up all together and sit with American students.

They label us as 'the internationals.'

My Bible teacher always makes me strongly aware of my identity as an international student.

Additionally, international students pick up more indirect and subtle behaviors by teachers. A theme was picked up in that some students felt different in how teachers were interacting with them in class or not even asking them to participate.

Teachers will spend lots of time chatting with American students but say they don't have any time for us.

Teachers should make us answer more questions during class.

Let the teachers give encouragement to us during the class and show our forte or advantage because it would make us have more confidence.

Teachers mostly don't help. They treat everyone the same but it becomes a personal choice to interact with international or American students.

Without a doubt, international students see schools and school activities or practices as necessary to fostering more interactions between international and home students. These themes were cited by almost every student as least once. The international students were consistently asking the schools to do more in order to promote this cross-cultural contact. Even the students who were satisfied with their interactions or had several friends recognized the need for schools to get involved.

Schools definitely need to create more opportunities to induce interactions between international and American students.

If the teachers and American students have any ways to break into the group and not let all the international students to stick with each other all the time would be great.

Schools need to have more parties. People communicate a lot when they are playing. Parties can improve people's relationships.

The school needs to organize more fun stuff to do with American students.

Create more activities to build a bridge between two different cultures.

One student was more descriptive in how the school should help. Rather than simply requesting more activities, this student approached the question of difference.

Respect the difference between cultures but also do not emphasize on this difference because it can be really annoying. Difference is not bad, but friendships are created with common interests.

Most of the suggestions offered had to do with social activities. Several students, however, asked for more group activities. Perhaps this is because they recognize the absence of social activities they can attend after school, as the following quote illustrates:

I'm excited for the next projects because I do not hang out with them during free time or on the weekend. I only have time with them during the class period.

It is also important to point out that of the 24 students surveyed, only one student thought that bridging the different was impossible and that schools cannot help the situation. The remainder of the surveys contained comments asking schools for help in creating these opportunities. Students were not successful at creating social interactions on their own, so it appears they see the school as the impetus to bridging the divide between international and home students.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 A Summary of the Results

In this comprehensive look at the interactions of home and international students in a variety of school settings, it is apparent that cross-cultural experiences between the two groups can be improved. It is clear that an 'us' and 'them' mentality exists and that it limits the interactions between the two groups. Perhaps the student who described a 'wall' between the two groups summarized the main findings best. This does, in fact, support the original assumption of this research study: that there is room for improvement in interactions in high schools. High school interactions do seem to follow, in large part, the trends and patterns seen in the empirical research from the university level. Furthermore, applicable theory from a variety of fields can help to both explain and offer solutions to this problem. Of course, it is important to highlight that some extremely positive interactions are taking place on high school campuses, and these must be viewed as ideal goals that need to be reached for all students. By discussing both the positive and negative aspects of these interactions, as well as how or where these interactions are made, good practices can be identified using applicable research to create more of these positive intercultural learning experiences. The summarized results of both the positive and negative (or, rather, lack thereof) can be viewed in Figure 7.
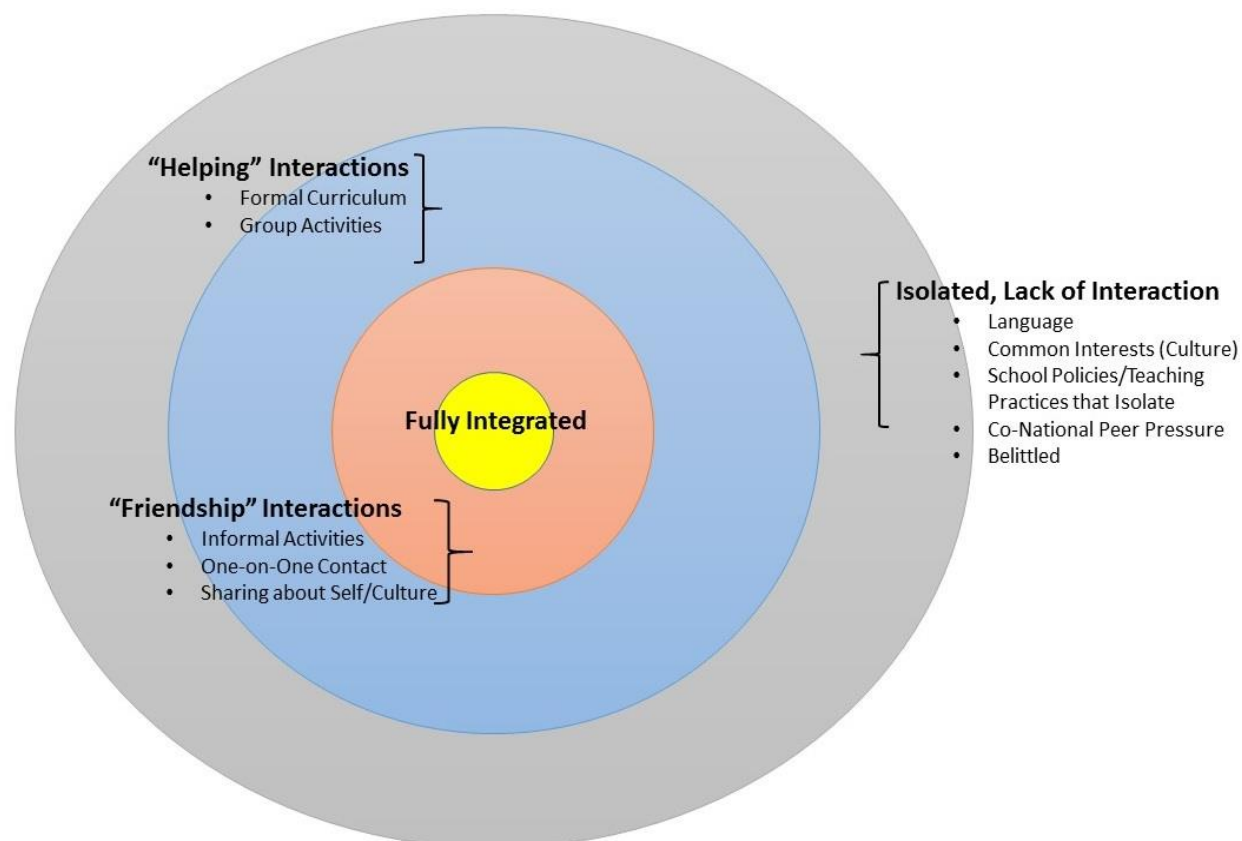
Figure 7: Layers of Interactions between Home and Chinese International Students in Secondary Schools

The types of interactions can be seen in Figure 7 relative to each interaction's proximity to full integration, connectedness, or full participation in the school community. The outside layer represents those students and/or situations where students feel furthest from the central integrated student body. As the data showed, these feelings of not being close to home students were the most commonly cited feelings overall. The details listed are sub-themes that can add to the barriers that exist between the student groups such as colloquial language, a lack of common interests, etc. and will be further discussed below. The next layer, those interactions labeled 'helping,' are placed in the middle because they do bring students closer to full integration or connectedness. While these interactions do produce positive feelings towards communication with home students, overall satisfaction and friendship networks are not reported in these situations. The interactions

at this level were largely made either in class or during group activities in the formal curriculum. At this level, it is important to note both the positive and negative aspects of these interactions. Formal activities do represent a place where interactions are taking place, yet at the same time certain characteristics of these types of interactions still prevent more inclusion of international students. Some degree of isolation still exists. Closer to the center of full integration is the third layer—that of 'friendship' interactions. Students citing ways in which they could interact in one-one-one settings, in informal school events, or when sharing about one's own culture spoke in terms of feeling 'close' or of having a sense of 'friendship.' These types of interactions brought students much closer to the center—full integration in the student body. However, some of these students still described ways in which they felt separate from their home peers; as a result, these interactions cannot be placed in the center of the figure.

6.2 A Closer Examination of the Results

The first research question was able identify the types of interactions that occur, and it was quickly apparent that the most negative type of interactions was actually the lack thereof (i.e., two separate communities or student bodies existing in the overall school population). Similar to the study done in Australia, certainly "parallel streams of non-communication" exist in American high schools as well. What makes this even more concerning is the one student that pointed to this as the 'culture' of the school itself. Negative interactions can become a problem that is entrenched in the institution's hidden curriculum. Hopefully, further understanding through this study's findings can start a discussion among schools to improve the interactions between students instead of relying on the status quo.

Upon reflection in the light of the theories described earlier, the conceptual framework is in need of some adjustment. While the interactions that do exist can by analyzed through intergroup and intercultural communication theory, this clear division amongst students shows evidence of the Social Identity Theory—namely, the presence of

an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. This theory describes how a person's need for positive self-esteem motivates one to view their own identified social group as more positive than the other when comparisons are made. This creates the dual 'us' and 'them' groups within a community (Brown, 2000, p. 747). Berry's acculturation model and Bennett's intercultural sensitivity scale can also be helpful in understanding this division, particularly in the ease with which students choose certain 'comfort' zones, but the idea of forming an identity with a certain social group may be may be a more dominant factor. It especially shows in the comments regarding belittlement or more prejudiced behaviors which can further isolate the out-group from the overall community. It can also help explain the peer pressure of the international student group to dissuade individuals from interacting more fully. At the same time, a collectivist culture might also be more inclined to stay within the group in order to create more harmony amongst Chinese student groups.

Though difficult to define and address, the barriers of culture and language are the most obvious practical barriers to integrating the student body, yet the most necessary to tackle. Following other research that highlights these difficulties, schools will need to continue creating strategies to erode these obstacles. The particular findings regarding slang or joking might point to a shift in how language courses (ESL) need to be taught. Similarly, since many students cited a lack of common interests to talk about, key cultural knowledge needs to be learned in both groups for more lasting interactions to occur. Interestingly, even though Hofstede's cultural dimensions surely inform these barriers, students were mostly seeking ways in which they could simply converse with home students. Rather than pointing to behaviors, they were looking for ways to make conversation easier by having things to talk about or understanding colloquial language. Perhaps this points to the idea shown in the study where peer buddies had difficulty getting over the first 'awkward' stage of communication. If students have a different set of cultural backgrounds and knowledge that prevents them from speaking with each other, this anxiety can erode future communication. It may also be explained with Gudykunst's (2001) ideas of anxiety and uncertainty management in communication.

Students in other research were asking for support, and perhaps the reduction of anxiety through increased cultural knowledge capital plays an important part.

The two positive interactions found in the study were surprising, not necessarily for the findings themselves, but for how divided and separate the answers were. Just under half of the students reported interactions that involved being close with or making friends with home peers, hereon referred to as 'friendship' interactions. The rest, though sometimes happy with the amount they could interact, spoke of interactions mainly in terms of receiving 'help' or support, which will be referred to as 'helping' interactions. Though positive in nature (of course friendly and helpful students are needed), students in this category were more likely to be unhappy with their interactions or not have as many friendships with home students. In these cases, are international students themselves subscribing to the 'deficit' model of thinking which is so highly criticized by industry scholars (Leask, 2009; MacLean & Ransom, 2005)? Could a culture of helping interactions further entrench an 'us' versus 'them' community as these types of relationships denote feelings of being unequal? Of course, balance is necessary; interactions of help and support need to be present, but cannot be the only form of interaction. While some students did not show a strong need for cross-cultural friendships in order to be satisfied with the level of interactions, research on international students is clear that a more developed friendship network can improve student mental health and overall well-being (Cheng, 2013; Hendrickson et al., 2011; Brown, 2009). While this study did not inquire about students' overall psychological happiness or well-being, the results point to more satisfaction if reporting closer or larger numbers of friendships with home students.

Characteristics of 'friendship' interactions described by students show the importance of Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory (as well as Pettigrew's additions to it) in explaining why these more positive interactions occur (Pettigrew, 1998). The activity or task situation which includes common goals, an equal status amongst members, a collaborative and interdependent effort, the support of authorities (in this case, school personnel), and acquaintance potential are shown to increase positive interactions and

reduce prejudice between diverse participants. Comparing the five elements of the intergroup contact theory with the student descriptions of extracurricular activities on interactions, the similarities are striking. To illustrate this idea, the following are quotes already highlighted in the results section concerting informal or extracurricular activities:

Interactions for academic purposes are simply not long enough. After a service trip, our flight got canceled which became a reason why I had a three hour conversation with an American girl. She is my best friend now.

Although we are different, we can be friends on the court. Through basketball games, we can have a good friendship between each other.

I met my best friends through school social activities.

I feel happy when I am playing sports with American students. After excellent cooperation with my teammates, I will feel that we are the best friends in the world. Sports don't have limitations. Usually it is through school activities, including band practice or concerts, school events, service projects, etc.

When we do volunteering job together it feels good to work together for one goal. We laugh, we work hard, and everything is fantastic.

After basketball games or parties it's easier to make conversation.

My favorite extracurricular activity is Mock Trial. I made the varsity and committed to the team. It pushes me to use my knowledge to help, grow, and build up one another.

When we do the extracurricular activities we will get more time to spend with American students and we will get more familiar with each other and talk more.

After I experienced a lot of activities, I feel like I am more talkative, and I get to know more about American student' lives. I will have more ideas about what they like better.

Absolutely extra-curricular activities help. The more activities you join, the more people you will be able to meet.

Extra-curriculars help because we have things in common and we work together.

In these descriptions, not one of five traits of effective intergroup activities is excluded. Especially encouraging is the ability for informal activities to enhance acquaintance

potential among students. Though perhaps not specifically encouraged, the creation of friendships occurs in these times and spaces where students are brought together with the support of the school authorities. The existence of interdependency, equal status, and common goals then create a space where friendships are made. It signals a balance of purposeful, yet organic interactions where students can become close. With closer 'friendship' interactions, students reported a more positive experience. Friendship provides an experience where international students are happier, are more interdependent, possess more agency to make social choices, and have more desire to interact in the future with diverse peers. In referencing the Social Identity Theory, it also becomes clear that if students are not participating in activities that include these elements, their only group membership is that of being part of an international community. It demonstrates further the importance of friendship interactions that can happen in the informal curriculum.

In contrast, the 'help' interactions made primarily in the classroom do not include all of these five elements nearly as often. This 'deficit' model thinking in students suggests an unequal relationship amongst students. In these interactions, interdependence has more negative characteristics, as shown in student surveys that told of U.S. students completing the work for them. In an unbalanced relationship, can a situation exist for acquaintance potential? Helping-only relationships can result in inequality, which can lead to a loss of independence and empowerment, and in turn can lead to further social isolation. Even more worrisome is that this can become *accepted* isolation, where students choose not to further participate in the life of the school community as a whole.

A question then presents itself: How can the potential for friendships be replicated in other situations, particularly in class-time situations where almost half of the students are getting their *only* contact time with home students? Furthermore, as these interactions happen largely in group activities, task design becomes the crucial element in order to ensure that positive contact is happening between all students—including those more introverted students who may not extend further effort to interact after school or between classes. As the results showed, opinions about the effectiveness of group activities are

quite diverse among students; however, previous research supports the notion that students enjoy group activities when forced to participate—especially if group members are seen as equals (Cruickshank, Chen, & Warren, 2012). Similarly, the same research contends that poorly planned activities actually work against positive interactions, supporting the findings in this data (Cruickshank et al., 2012). Effort and attention needs to be given to how tasks and schoolwork are carried out more equally so that a 'we' mentality can lead to organic friendship situations or at least a deeper level of intercultural contact (further ideas on this topic can be read in the Recommendations section). Truly, the right elements and setting can create friendship possibilities in cooperative learning activities (Hansell & Slavin, 1981, p. 104). Teachers need to think about how class activities can function in similar ways to informal activities so that the formal curriculum can also create spaces which include elements of the Intergroup Contact Theory, as well as help international students view their identity through school connections rather than through co-national, ethnic, or linguistic lines.

The students themselves seem to be unconsciously aware of these same characteristics in their descriptions of situations that stimulated positive contact. This is particularly evident in the positive language they associated with one-on-one contact situations or at least situations where home students showed an interest in the international students' home culture. In these one-on-one interactions, more equal communication exists, and it elicits strong positive emotions. Though lacking of something such as a common goal, the equal status element is what students desire in their interactions. A common goal could be introduced by school personnel in one-on-one settings to reduce student feelings of awkwardness after these initial conversations come to a close. Creating opportunities for these one-on-one interactions could lead to more feelings of equality, keeping in mind that international students also have a strong desire to feel like an expert (as evidenced by their descriptions of happiness in sharing about their home culture). International students quite simply seem to be tired of unequal relationships; they want to be viewed just as confident and capable as their home counterparts. As one student noted, closer friendships are made through similarities, not

differences. Schools can take heed of this advice by creating times and spaces where common goals can produce equal, interdependent, meaningful, and lasting communication. Simple activities that highlight the differences between cultures cannot be seen as a sustainable and lasting interaction stimulant.

Student activities (whether in the formal or informal curriculum) that include the five elements of the Intergroup Contact Theory might also help to reduce the amount of negative peer pressure or discrimination by creating a culture of 'we' instead of 'us versus them.' Many students cited either negative peer pressure from fellow co-nationals or instances where home students made fun of international students' home culture. Creating an integrated culture can minimize the negative effects of the Social Identity Theory. In a process of re-categorization, a broader and more inclusive culture can exist in the school, just as the common in-group identity model states. In this model, the idea is that the effects of bias and discrimination (or in this case, isolation) felt by a polarized group can be reduced by re-categorizing the in-group and out-group into one single entity. By becoming a single group, positive feelings are associated towards all group members, regardless of previously noted differences. (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman & Rust, 1993.) Once again, there is potential for using the five elements of Intergroup Contact Theory to help create school situations where students can view the student body as 'we,' thereby creating environments where more togetherness can result in deeper contact and interactions. Students themselves seemed to realize the positive role schools and teachers can play in fostering positive interaction between students, as they asked for schools to create more opportunities for contact.

6.2.1   Highlighting the Role of the School and Teacher

Schools also need to understand, then, how certain *policies that isolate* are keeping students from interacting. The study shows that certain actions of the school, even if not directly influencing the actual communication and interactions, can further polarize the two groups of students, thus limiting their chances to interact on an equal level. For students

to interact freely in their communities, agency and independence are needed (Marginson & Sawir, 2011). When agency is limited, negative feelings and feelings of difference can influence how students interact. In some cases, such as the noted rule of not riding in cars with home students, policies can actually take away opportunities for socialization. In others, school practices can lead to feelings of anxiety (such as in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance), or situations that further isolate or polarize international students (such as the international student centers).

It cannot be ignored that these policies that isolate are, however, incredibly complex for schools to navigate. For example, obtaining a license and driving or owning a car with their parents living in an entirely different country obviously presents issues of liability for schools who assume protective care of students while they are in the United States. Riding with home students who can drive also presents safety and liability issues. However, it needs to be noted that such policies, while necessary, do, in fact, isolate the international students from the student body. As it relates to the example of vehicle policies, American socializing has often revolved around students getting a license during their high school years; this leads to having easy access to the socializing that happens both during school (in many schools around the U.S., students leave campus during lunch) and outside of school hours. By preventing students from riding with home students, schools have created a policy that prevents intercultural experiences from taking place. Again, because of liability issues a policy such as this may not be changed; however, it does provide a lesson to schools that each policy that has a separate rule for international students must be examined to determine if it is truly necessary. Any rule that exists only for the international student will result in feeling a lack of agency and independence and may deepen the 'us and them' divide.

The presence of an international student center also illustrates this idea of schools creating a culture of difference. Although they have good intentions, schools may be creating *spaces that segregate*. This too presents a complex scenario. International student centers are often used by schools to meet with students, create spaces for homework tutoring, and perform a host of other functions that can help international students in

their transition to the United States. However, as some students pointed out, a student center that becomes a popular and comfortable meeting spot for students can create a space that further isolates students from the community as a whole. While such a space may be necessary, more integrative student spaces may also need to be considered.

Any *practices that confuse* need to be examined by school authorities as well. As illustrated by references to the Pledge of Allegiance, multiple students felt different or uncomfortable when the whole school or class is asked to stand up and repeat the words pledging loyalty to the United States. What is an assumed practice for many becomes an uncomfortable weekly or daily occurrence that points out difference to international students. However, international students themselves noted the key aspect: rather than calling for the end of saying the pledge, they identified that anxiety and confusion over how to act is what caused the feelings of isolation and discomfort. Rather than ending practices that can cause confusion, schools may simply need to inform and communicate to students what is expected of them during these school traditions. Ideally, this communication should also happen with home students so that international student behavior is understood and accepted—not viewed as rebelliousness or resistance on the part of the international student. It should be noted that this can also be the case in religious classes. Since religious private schools are often the ones admitting international students, courses on religious practices can be a space where identities are challenged as a result of being different, as one student noted. Once again, this does not mean accepted school norms need to be cut for international students—that would only make international students even more separate from the community. Instead, behaviors and expectations can be clearly communicated to both groups of students so that confusion and resulting isolation does not take place.

Finally, there are lessons that apply to teachers, who sometimes contribute to feelings of separateness in their *actions that differentiate*. Though often spoken of positively by students, teachers themselves need to be aware of actions that can isolate or make students confused because of a different set of expectations. Making all international students stand up together or calling them 'the internationals' in class are teacher actions

that set apart, distinguish, or differentiate students because of their identity as an 'out-group' international student. Student comments about both these positive and negative interactions with teachers support those researchers who advocate for more global lessons in teacher education and professional development (DeJong & Harper, 2005; Koizol et al., 2011).

6.2.2 Practical Recommendations for Schools

Keeping in mind the original aim of the study, which was to begin a discussion amongst international student administrators and to develop a set of best practices in integration efforts, some recommendations or guidelines are offered here for their potential as practical and pragmatic steps schools can take to further integrate their student body. The discussion above sets out some important themes for schools to consider; this section provides some suggestions that schools implement immediately. It is encouraging that high school campuses, by their very nature, present an environment where the following ideas can be fostered more than in universities. Secondary schools control a large portion of the student's day — more than university students — and as a result need to start leading these practices rather than following. Even more important, it would be to schools' advantage to take these lessons from research rather than relying on a time-consuming trial-and-error process towards improving international student programs. The following are several ideas that can begin the discussion, and hopefully further research into international student programs at the high school level.

One-on-one contact between students: Described with some of the most positive expressions in the data, more situations are needed for students to interact one on one. Interestingly, one of the most common forms of integration and transition in universities — peer buddy programs — was not mentioned once by students in this study. Empirical research has shown the potential of these programs, if they are done correctly and with proper guidance. Since students in this study did not cite programs like these,

either they are not being done, or they are lacking effectiveness. As another option, more class activities could include partners, rather than groups. This would require students to interact and would decrease the presence of negative peer influence. It would also help prevent home students from completing all the work without the international student's input.

Integrated informal activities: This study uses lessons from the positive characteristics of current interactions just as much as the lessons from what is negative in order to seek improvement ideas for schools. In this case, informal activities were shown for their effectiveness; in fact, students were requesting more of them. Student government associations, coaches, school leaders, and program coordinators can ensure that all-school activities include members from both groups of students so that a more cohesive 'we' becomes the culture of the school.

Well-designed group work: As pointed out, group activities in classes have the potential for being a positive space for student interactions to occur. Some scholars have pointed out jigsaw activities as a way for students to be included and equal, especially among diverse learners (Walker and Crogan, 1998). But other recent trends in educational activities can also provide the elements of the intergroup contact theory. Authentic assignments with real-world implications or assessments, project-based learning, flipped classroom instruction, and regular formative assessments by teachers can create a classroom focused on bringing both educational and intercultural learning benefits as equality and interdependence is established amongst students. Perhaps most obviously, teachers need to continue forming diverse groups, but must ensure that groups are created by the teacher prior to the activity in order to avoid student self-selection and self-segregation. (Otherwise, teachers may have to awkwardly and publicly force the international students to stand up and change groups, further increasing social discomfort as a result of their social identities.)

International student program mission and enrollment numbers: Schools need to define the purpose of their international student programs honestly and directly. Are the motives mostly financial or for enrollment growth? Are they mostly concerned with helping students in their personal future goals of applying to American universities? If so, larger numbers of students, some with lower-level language abilities, can be admitted. Schools can then primarily focus student care on directing resources to college guidance counseling, academic tutors, or SAT preparation courses. Activities can provide international students with field trips while remaining separate from home student activities.

However, if the mission of the international student program is focused on intercultural learning, communication, and global competencies in students, then more interactive and integrative activities need to be sought. In these cases, field trips and other school activities should not be conducted separately. Every school event or activity needs to be re-examined, since it has been shown that intercultural communication will not usually take place without some prompting. Perhaps most importantly, some data makes the case for a limit in the size of international student programs if optimal integration is the mission of the program. More students can mean more chances for contact, but the data in this study suggests that larger numbers of international students can lead to further isolation and a polarization of student groups. Of course, a balance needs to be sought between these two different program purposes, but prioritizing one over the other can more clearly influence current school policies and practices.

Integrated student centers: If an international student center becomes a popular socializing zone for international students only, it becomes a school cultural artifact signifying a division between students. International student centers have their role, but should be for academic and transitioning purposes only. They should not become a place to hang out for only one group of students.

Comprehensive Internationalization: Betty Leask (2009) calls for an institutional cultural shift in order to fully integrate international students and create an internationalized campus. Comprehensive Internationalization, a term used in universities around the world, may point to a way for intercultural communication and subsequent learning to fully take place. In this model, schools undergo a process in order to create more globally competent students. It uses curriculum, student mobility, language courses, and other elements to foster global competence in students. This may represent a more long-term ideal for U.S. secondary schools. A more immediate practical step is in shifting the role of the international student administrator. Rather than focusing only on the recruitment and care of international students, international staff can integrate language study, international students, study abroad, global partnerships, and elements of the curriculum (Figure 8) together in a way that makes international perspectives a part of the culture of the school, rather than simply something different between student groups. In this model, international students can be viewed as a resource—as students that show incredibly enterprising behaviors in order to succeed—rather than viewed through a 'deficit' lens where a handicap needs to be overcome—thus creating a sense of inclusion where greater intercultural communication and learning can take hold.
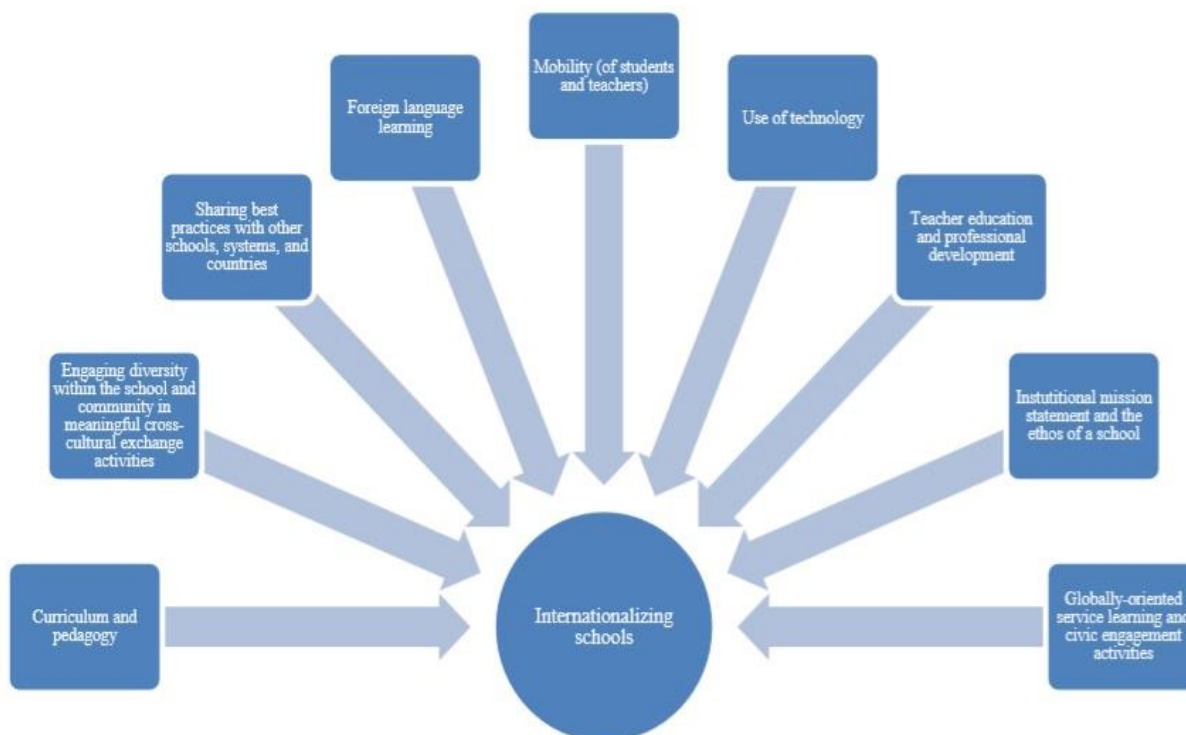
FIGURE 8. Approaches to Internationalizing Schools (Engle, 2015, p. 5)

Figure 8 on the internationalization of schools illustrates this idea of a shift in the role of the international program coordinator. Rather than focusing solely on the recruitment and transition of international students onto school campuses, international program administrators need to become more of a facilitator amongst varying stakeholders in the school to foster more effective integration and resulting global competencies. If schools truly want to become more 'global,' and if developing global competence in students is a school value, then schools need to develop an international perspective in more than just admitting diverse learners onto their campus. If done properly, then international students are able to fit seamlessly into a school culture that values the richness they bring to the school community. Without this culture shift, international student programs will continue to run parallel to the domestic programs schools have in place.

6.3   Generalizability and Limitations

As a qualitative study, the sought-after outcome was to begin a discussion and provide thoughts for future quantitative study. Also, as it was a qualitative study, the findings, recommendations, and points for examination cannot be necessarily generalizable to all schools in the United States. Especially considering the fact that private schools operate very differently from one to the other in their approaches to internationalization, it cannot be said that these findings are true for all school settings. Some schools might report less division between home and international students as a result of their own unique culture or policies. That being said, this study does follow in large part the similar patterns and trends seen in the conceptual framework. By looking at interactions from empirical studies in both the formal and informal curriculum and using theory to understand said interactions, it can be confidently stated that these same phenomena are taking place at many schools that enroll international Chinese students onto their campus in large numbers.

Furthermore, as it concerns the idea of separation between two very distinct groups of students, the lessons contained in this discussion may also be applied to any educational situation where culturally and linguistically similar students face some amount of separation from the larger student body. At the time of this writing, educational institutions at all levels are struggling with the question of how to integrate asylum seekers into the larger society. Schools are often seen as part of the solution to this issue, and the hope is that studies such as this become much more common topics for research in primary, middle, or secondary schools. As the initial language barrier is overcome, schools can use this understanding of interactions in order to reduce prejudice, create friendships, and use quality interactions to foster intercultural empathy and tolerance.

Several limitations of the study do arise. First is the narrative survey itself. In creating a survey that will be answered by an open ended narrative, the original intention seemed to be successful in that anonymous surveys and a written form allowed students to have time to answer openly and honestly. Furthermore, it did give the ability to reach

out to a more national network of schools around the country. However, a written survey for an inductive qualitative study did have one main drawback. In comparison to a semi-structured interview format done orally, follow-up questions were not asked. This would have been extremely helpful in several cases where questions were misunderstood by the participants. It would have also allowed more encouragement to explain certain answers so that more specific details could be found on certain topics such as 'culture' being a barrier to interaction. The unequal number of participants from included schools could also limit the findings of the data. In two cases, only one student completed the survey from that school. In these cases, surveys were examined closely to ensure interaction issues did not represent an outlier view that perhaps was not representative of the school. However, it was found that these two participants included answers rich in detail with seemingly honest answers that followed similar patterns to others' responses. It was decided to include these participants even though they were the sole representatives of their school. Finally, more perspectives could be used effectively in this research. This can also point to ideas for future research; in including home student voices, teachers, or school administrators, these interactions could be understood on a deeper level.

6.4   Ideas for Further Research

One of the two aims for the research conducted in this study was to explore areas in which future hypotheses could be studied with more quantitative and perhaps even longitudinal studies. More specific or targeted research could test certain ideas that came out in this qualitative research. One such idea that was touched on previously would be to study several schools with varying international student enrollment numbers to test at what point or at what number there are 'too many' international students, in that it restricts, rather than enhances, positive cross-cultural contact. Another idea would be to further test the idea of 'helping' versus 'friendship' interactions. Specifically, do helping interactions, though viewed as a positive, actually restrict or prevent quality intercultural learning from taking place? The answer to this could have important ramifications for

task design, buddy programs, and other school events. More research could even be done specific to extra-curricular activities and their effectiveness in promoting cross-cultural learning. Lastly, the question of student motivation, which has been studied at the university level, could be considered. Motivation from adolescent secondary school students may be different from university students from a developmental psychology perspective. Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and Berry's Acculturation Model may present different findings related to the adolescent mind. In particular, studying the intercultural sensitivity scale, and its ethnorelative stages, through the lens of adolescent psychology would bring further clarification on intercultural communication at the high school level. While this idea strays from the findings of this thesis, student maturity could, perhaps, play a role in these interactions in high schools. The patterns of research found in universities cannot fully be applied to high schools because of the difference in ages and development stages.

7 CONCLUSION

Clearly, the often-cited 21st-century skills of global and intercultural competencies will not take place by simply admitting international students onto school campuses. Placing diverse students in classrooms together will not magically stimulate lasting connections between students. Moreover, as international student programs in schools nationwide are admitting higher numbers of Chinese students into their burgeoning international student programs, it is clear that schools face growing challenges in transitioning students onto their campus. If schools place a high value on intercultural learning and interactions between these students and their home counterparts, special attention needs to be paid to the best ways and spaces in which cross-cultural contact can occur. Drawing on a framework built on patterns that have emerged from empirical research done in universities in both the informal and formal curriculum, as well as models in intergroup and intercultural theory, a qualitative study was designed to understand the status of current interactions between students in American high schools.

By looking at the current state of interactions between international and home students in several schools around the United States, the data collected in this qualitative study shed light on several positive and negative characteristics of interactions that can be useful in designing future practices and policies at schools. Overwhelmingly, social isolation and segregation were widely cited by students as the key problem restricting more positive interactions from happening. While discriminating behaviors were occasionally experienced, it was the social segregation that students most often gave as the reason for a lack of interactions. By using the lessons from the Intergroup Contact Theory, schools can learn where and how the best interactions are taking place (such as in informal activities) and apply that understanding to possible weak points, such as in-class group activities. Within the areas lacking interaction, schools and teachers can promote practices that create a greater sense of "we" in order to reduce the social separateness and isolation international students are feeling in school. Isolation and non-communication between student groups represents the biggest threat in students' achieving the intercultural competency that is necessary in this ever-shrinking and highly globalized society. By re-thinking current school 'policies that isolate,' 'spaces that segregate,' 'practices that confuse,' and 'actions that differentiate,' international program administrators can enhance their programs in sustainable ways that promote a cohesive community, build well-being, and foster intercultural learning in all students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A   Survey

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

International Student Survey

Greetings!
I am so happy that you are able to help me with this research project about the interactions between International and American high school students. While I am now a graduate student at the University of Jyvaskyla in Finland, I used to be an English teacher for international students just like you. Your participation in this survey means that you will be helping me better understand your experience as an international student in the United States.

Please know that by submitting this survey, you are giving me permission to use only your answers in my research. Your identity and the school you attend will not be made public or used in any publications.

When answering these questions, please be as thorough as possible--every detail helps, even those which you may think aren't necessary. And just to make it clear: when you see the word "interactions" in the following questions, that means any kind of conversation you have with fellow students. It could also mean times when you are hanging out with your friends or working together in class.

Again, thank you very much for answering these questions. I am so grateful for your help. If you have any questions about this study, please email me at rickhuiz@gmail.com.

Have a great day!

Rick Huizinga

1. Please enter the following information. Remember that your name and school will remain confidential. *

Name (Either English or legal name is ok)
Age
Home Country
Name of your school

2. How long have you attended school in the United States? *

○ Less than 1 year

○ 1 year

○ 2 years

○ 3 years

ᵣ⌐ 4 or more years

3. Overall, are you happy with how much you've been able interact with American students? Please explain why. *

4. How many <u>close</u> American friends do you have that you hang out with regularly? *

5. How and where did you meet your best American friend(s)? *

6. Think about the times where you have felt happy after interacting with American students. Where or in what situations do these most positive interactions with American students usually take place? You may answer as many as you think. *

7. List several (3 or more) challenges you see that make it difficult when interacting with American students. Briefly explain each challenge. *

8. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or discriminated against in school because you're an international student? *

- ◌ No. Never.

- ◌ Yes, but rarely.

- ◌ Yes. Sometimes.

- ◌ Yes. Regularly.

9. If you answered "yes" to the above question, please describe a situation or situations where you felt uncomfortable or discriminated against.

10. Do you feel supported or helped by your teachers to participate, interact, and work <u>with</u> American students during class? Please explain why you feel this way. *

11. In your classes, do you sometimes complete group assignments or projects with American students? *

- ◌ Yes

- ◌ No

12. If you answered "yes" to question number 10: How do you usually feel after completing these group assignments with American students? Please explain why.

13. How many extracurricular activities do you participate in? *

- ◌ 0

⬚ 1

⬚ 2

⬚ 3

⬚ 4 or more

14. In your opinion, do extracurricular activities help you have more positive interactions with American students? Please explain why or why not. *

15. Please describe and evaluate your own efforts in purposefully interacting with American students. Are these efforts successful? Why or Why not? *

For this question, it might help to think about some questions like: How often do you choose to sit or hang out with American friends? How often do you choose to sit or hang out with friends from your home country? How often do you choose to form study groups with American students? Etc.

16. Give some of your own ideas: What do you think your school or teachers could do to help you interact more with American students? Please explain. *

Appendix B   Letter of Acknowledgement: Research permit request

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

November 11, 2015

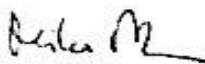REF.   Mr. Rick Huizinga's research permit request

LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to certify that Rick Huizinga is a full time student in our Master's Degree
Programme of Educational Leadership as of autumn 2014 and has completed all the studies
as required, cumulatively circa 60 ECTS by the end of spring term 2015

Rick Huizinga is planning to write his Master's thesis on the topic of interactions between
international and home students in U.S. secondary schools for which purpose he is
contacting you to gain access to research data in your institution

The research topic is fully acknowledged by our institution and the thesis part the
Master's Degree Programme.

Mika Risku
Director

Tel. +358-400-247 420
Email: mika.risku@jyu.fi

The permit to pursue data collection for the master's thesis has been given by the 1st advisor
of the thesis on November 11, 2015.

Signed by 1st advisor