A Sense of Belonging: The Impact of Afterschool Programs on Asian American Youth

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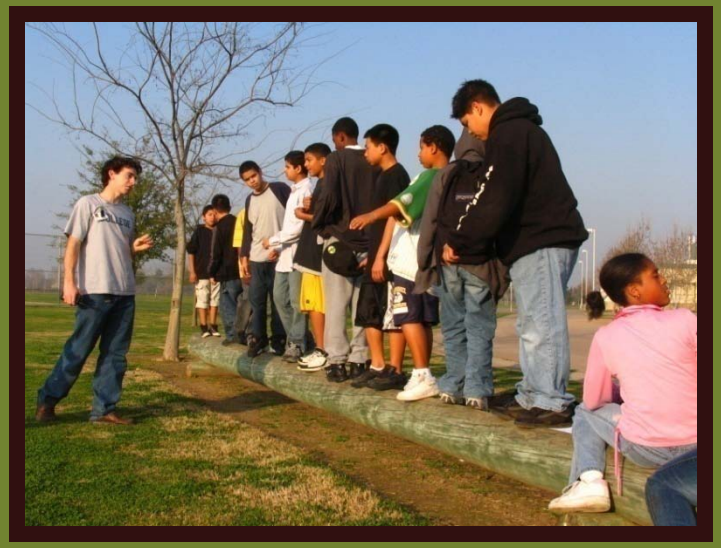
Fresno, California

2011 BOOST Conference

So who's in the room?

- Four corners
- Pennies and Dice
  - 5 rounds each



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Purpose

- To investigate differences when comparing Asian American youth in California who participate in grant funded high school after-school programs (treatment group) to Asian Americans youth who do not (comparison group).
  - Academic achievement
  - Social behavior
  - Self-esteem
  - Acculturation
- 21st Century Community Learning Center's High School After-School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program at three California schools
- My interest in this study

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Setting the Stage: California Department of Education (2008)

- California's average Asian American population is 10.9%
- In Fresno County, Asian Americans make up 13% of the population (mostly Southeast Asian)
- Many of them are of school age ranging from ages 5 to 17 years old

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Research Questions:

Quantitative and Qualitative

- To what extent does participation in after-school programs among Asian American subgroups make a difference on individual academic achievement, social behavior, self-esteem and acculturation?
- In further examining self-esteem and acculturation, what are the experiences among Asian American subgroups in regards to their school environment, family and after-school activities?

Study Variables

Independent variables: All Nominal

Race/Ethnicity: Asian subgroups

- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Cambodian
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Laotian
- Samoan or other Pacific Islander
- Other Asian

After-school Program participation

- Asian students attending the after-school program
- Asian students not attending the after-school program

Dependent variables: All Continuous

Academic achievement

- California Standards Test scores (quantitative)
- California High School Exit Exam scores (quantitative)

Social behavior

- Student attendance data (quantitative)

Self-esteem

- Rosenberg Self-Esteem measure (quantitative)
- Focus groups/interviews (qualitative)

Acculturation

- Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation measure (quantitative)
- Focus groups/interviews (qualitative)

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Results: Quantitative

- 258 study participants from two Central Valley high schools
  - 81 after-school participants
  - 177 non after-school participants

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- **Is there a difference among subgroups within the Asian American youth population in academic achievement, social behavior, self-esteem and acculturation?**
- **YES**

- **All grades**: multivariate results in self-esteem and acculturation (p=.041)
- **All grades:** univariate results in acculturation - Filipino/Japanese and Korean (p=.002)
- **Grade 10:** multivariate results in all dependent variables (p=.047)
- **Grade 10:** univariate results in acculturation -Thai/Cambodian (p=.002)
- **Grade 10:** univariate results in social behavior/school day attendance percentage -Hmong/Chinese (p=.007)
- **Grade 11:** univariate results in social behavior/school day attendance percentage - Filipino/Vietnamese
- (p **Grade 12:** multivariate results in all dependent variables (p<.001)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results in acculturation -Cambodian/Hmong (p<.001)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results in CST ELA -Filipino/Hmong (p=.037)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results approaching significant in CST Math - Filipino/Hmong (p=.097)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results in CAHSEE ELA (p=.012)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results in CAHSEE Math (p= .047) <.001)

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- More specifically, is there a difference between Asian American youth who participate in after-school programs and Asian American youth who do not on academic achievement, social behavior, self-esteem and acculturation?
  - YES: in all results, asp scores were higher

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- **Grade 11**: multivariate results in all dependent variables ($p<.001$)
- **Grade 11:** univariate results in self-esteem ($p=.009$), school day attendance percentage ($p<.001$), CST ELA ($p=.007$) and CST Math ($p=.003$)
- **Grade 12:** multivariate results approaching significant in all dependent variables ($p=.052$)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results in social behavior/school day attendance percentage ($p=.006$)
- **Grade 12:** univariate results approaching significant in acculturation ($p=.072$) and CST ELA ($p=.081$)

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Questions?

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Pick a card!

- Think about your own programs and your students participating.
- Share your responses with your group:
  - How do you recognize the cultural differences and similarities among ALL of your afterschool students?

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Results: Qualitative

- 14 study participants from two Central Valley high schools and one northern California high school
  - Participants represented 9 Asian subgroups
  - 6 after-school participants
  - 8 non after-school participants

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In further examining self-esteem and acculturation, what are the experiences among Asian American subgroups in regards to their school environment, family and after-school activities?

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- How will subgroups within the Asian American youth population each describe their experiences in their school environment?
  - Mixture of responses about school setting and adults
    - “In a school of mostly Caucasians, I feel outnumbered but not out of place.”
    - “They are people who are doing their jobs and who I respect. I don’t feel any strong connections to any… they are figures of authority that I don’t often question.”
  - Fitting in with peers was based on ethnic background, age or gender
    - Some or all

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- How will subgroups within the Asian American youth population each describe their experiences with family?
  - Combination of stable and unstable structures
  - Emphasis on education
    - "The purpose is to get a good job and be financially stable…because my parents don't have an education, they don't feel they have a meaning in life…"
  - Understanding two cultures
    - "My parents do not know how the kids are over here….They expect me to be like them and I don't even know how."
    - "(My parents) think going to school is simply just going to school…They don't understand how much we lose and the pressures to fit in. Sometimes they see the American culture as wrong, and don't see the things I feel."

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- How will subgroups within the Asian American youth population each describe their experiences after-school?
  - ASSETs or other school sponsored activity
  - Valuable time with adults and peers, time to meet new peers, a place to do meaningful work and be active
  - Emphasis on the arts and physical activity
  - An experience where they matter and where they belong
    - “I participate because I want to have friends and they welcome you.”

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Recommendations

- Availability of data
- Professional development opportunities for teachers, school day staff and after-school staff
  - Cultural competency
  - Re examining “at risk” behavior
- Implementation of courses and curriculum focusing on Asian American history or history of subgroups
  - All students can see the diversity of the AA population
  - Include Asian immigration patterns
  - Diversity of the AA experience in the US

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Recommendations

- For afterschool programs specifically:
  - Grant writers to utilize student focus groups and input prior to program implementation
  - After-school staff to utilize student focus groups and input to measure and reflect on program effectiveness
  - Merging of various school sponsored activities through collaboration
  - Implementation of more performing arts education and sports activities
  - Family involvement activities (student responses)

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Future Research

- History of years of after-school participation by students
- Examining competing factors related to non after-school participation
- Examining generation differences among Asian students
  - "It is like culture shock. I just moved to the States and began as a freshman. I feel like an outsider because I am Pacific Islander. I never felt like I fitted in."

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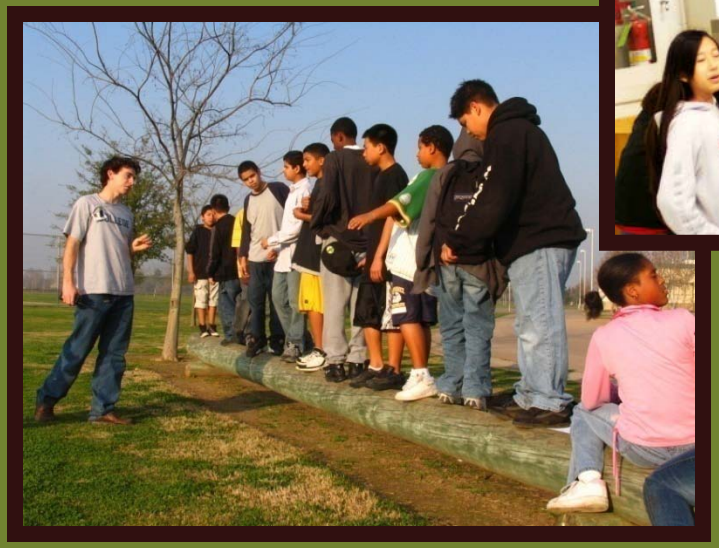
What our organization is doing…

- Focus on the performing arts
- Dance curriculum

Questions?



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Small group discussion

- Chart with paper
- How do you know the students in your program feel "a sense of belonging?"
  - What indicators do you use?

Gallery Walk: What information did you see that you can apply to your program?

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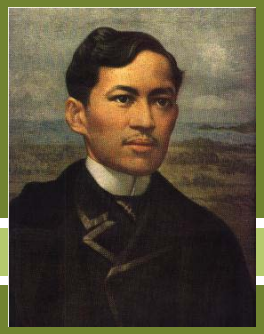

- “If knowledge is the heritage of mankind, it is only the courageous who inherit it.”

- “I was very privileged and really blessed with so many material and spiritual gifts that I should give back, … I should do something for my people, but … it’s not just in politics that you can be a servant of the people, you can do it in so many other ways.”

Thank you!

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