Being and Becoming in the Space Between: Co-Created Visual Storying through Community-Based Participatory Action Research

DISSERTATION

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By

Ah Ran Koo

Graduate Program in Arts Administration, Education and Policy

The Ohio State University

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Karen Hutzel, Advisor

Dr. Shari Savage

Dr. Joni Boyd Acuff

Dr. Timothy San Pedro
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Abstract

The main goal of this study was to expand understanding of a Korean-American community’s cultural identities through storytelling and artmaking, which was conceptualized as Visual Storying in this study. Ethnic minority students in the United States often experience confusion or conflict between American and their heritage cultures. This study sought to identify the experiences of a contemporary Korean-American community through learning and teaching Korean language, history, culture, and/or art.

The conceptual framework of this study combined the three following research backgrounds: (1) critical multiculturalism; (2) narrative inquiry and arts-based research; and (3) community-based participatory action research. Understanding cultural identities of Korean-American students is a complex process that required multiple approaches. In order to examine social and political backgrounds as well as power relations of the students’ multicultural settings, this study applied a theoretical framework of critical multiculturalism to the settings.

In addition, narrative inquiry and arts-based research were used as basic means of this study. Both practices were effective ways to convey thoughts, emotions, and experiences in approachable ways, which revealed unknown stories of a Korean-American community in multicultural settings.
Lastly, this study utilized a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) approach. Exploring a cultural and social aspect required deep integrations and interactions with the community members to gain better understandings of the local context. Therefore, CBPAR was the main methodology in this study that explored the complexity of the Korean-American community’s cultural understandings through deep engagement in their local community.

The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO)’s students participated in this study via two classes, *Advanced* and *Art & Craft* classes. In the *Advanced* class, the students learned Korean language, history, and culture while in the *Art & Craft* class, they created visual images working with peers. Key school events and classroom activities were documented through participant observation with audio recordings, field notes, and photo documentation. Additional formal interviews were conducted with KACSCO’s parents and teachers, and informal interviews were held with students. Students’ written and visual works were collected, copied, and analyzed as main data.

This study supported the Korean-American community members’ desire to teach/learn their cultural perspectives and express their feelings of being different while participating in collaborative learning and artmaking. It also opened conversations about unique experiences of a minority population, and brought out cultural aspects of a Korean-American community in the United States. Sharing stories and creating visual images with Korean-American students provided us with a better understanding of our
multicultural society and a space for the youth to challenge notions of cultural differences.
This dissertation is dedicated to the members of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community.
Acknowledgments

Most of all, I became who I am now greatly thanks to my advisor, Dr. Karen Hutzel. She guided me into this department, and allowed me to grow as a scholar. This dissertation began and ended with her insights, care, suggestions, and endless supports and mentorships. I am eternally indebted to her, my amazing mentor. My thanks go to the tremendous committee members. I have been sincerely moved by and grateful to Dr. Shari Savage for her infinite support. She was wholeheartedly ready to support me anytime anywhere. She also believed in my artistic ability, and deeply valued my personal stories as meaningful assets for my academic position and future growth. Great thanks to Dr. Joni Boyd Acuff for helping me link my personal background to cultural and social contexts of society via critical multiculturalism, which is central in this study. Her perspectives in this field have always been an inspiration to me as a scholar. I am very thankful to Dr. Timothy San Pedro for working outside of his home college of education and human ecology to provide me with insights and supports. His passion and thoughtful guidance led me to realize values of storying. I am truly fortunate to have these incredible scholars as my forever mentors.

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parents, and administrators, for opening their boundaries, sharing their stories and experiences, and co-creating this study with me. They continuously motivated and inspired me to pursue the direction of this research study, and it was extraordinary learning experience thanks to all the community members.
Vita

February 1999 ....................................... Jinmyeong Girls’ High School

2005 .................................................. B.F.A. Korean Painting, Ewha Womans University

2011 .................................................. M.F.A. Korean Painting, Ewha Womans University

2013 .................................................. M.A. Art Education, University of Florida

2013 - 2014 .................................. University Fellow, Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy, The Ohio State University

2014 - 2016 ............................. Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy, The Ohio State University

2015 - 2016 .............................. Schweitzer Fellow, Albert Schweitzer Fellowship

2016 to present ............................ Assistant Professor, Department of Art, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Publications


Fields of Study

Major Field: Arts Administration, Education and Policy
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Patricia Leavy (2015) and Margot Ely (2007) demonstrate that research is a process of crafting participants’ lived experiences to evoke dialogs. This community-based participatory action research study aimed to “craft” a Korean-American community’s lived experiences in a multicultural setting, while promoting meaningful “dialogs” about the people who have different cultural/historical/social/situational backgrounds.

Many Korean/Korean-American people including myself dwell in the United States as temporary residents, Asian immigrants, and/or hyphenated Americans. Although the number of the population has continuously grown, and dynamics around the Korean/Korean-American communities have changed (Kibria, 2002; Kim, 2014; Min, 1995, 2004; Min & Noh, 2014; Min & Kim, 1999), existing discourses about the experiences of Korean/Korean-American are still unrepresentative. Many scholars argue that the underrepresentation is due to socio-political structures in society (Kibria, 2002; Min, 1995). Among those, Nazli Kibria (2002) claims that there are existing dilemmas.

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1 In this study, hyphenated Americans indicate that American people who have multiple racial and/or ethnic backgrounds due to their foreign birth or origin. For example, African American and European American, or Irish-American and Mexican-American correspond to this categorization.
that public discourses are mainly focusing on “black and white experiences,” not Asians (p. ix).

I had observed several dilemmas of Korean/Korean-American communities in the United States while interacting with them as a member of the communities. There were external dilemmas as a non-White racial minority in American society (Kibria, 2002; Kim, 2014; Chung, 1999; Kang, 2014), and internal struggles as a transnational population (Kim, 2008; Min & Kim, 1999; Kang, 2014; Min & Noh, 2014). In order to deeply understand their unique experiences, the community members of Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) in Columbus, Ohio, and I co-designed and explored this participatory action research study.

The main goal of this study was to expand the understanding of a Korean-American community’s cultural identities through storytelling and visual artmaking, which is conceptualized as Visual Storying in this study. The Visual Storying that contains the Korean-American students’ thoughts, emotions, and experiences in multicultural settings might promote meaningful discourses about the culture of others.

Background of the Study

As a person of color, a woman, and an international student who moved to the United States about six years ago for study, exploring my own cultural and social identity outside of Korea encouraged me to think about the notion of difference (Patel, 2014). Changing environments and looking back at my own culture in a different setting made me become aware of my historical and cultural identities. Additionally, wherever I have
been in the United States, I have felt that I am an outsider (Mediratta, 1999). My racial identity, including appearance, signifies I am a minority from an Asian country (Kim, 2008; Kim, 2014). Moreover, anybody could easily recognize my strong accent, indicating that I am not an American, but a foreigner. Under those social perceptions or my personal sense of inferiority, being different from other people often implied that I do not fit in or I am deficient to be a part of the majority group in the United States (Ryu, 2014). Moreover, experiencing other Korean people’s different viewpoints about Korean cultural, historical, and political aspects encouraged me to think about cultural identity with multiple angles. The education and/or family backgrounds, socioeconomic status, or previous experiences of each individual impacted his or her understanding of his or her own culture. Through observation, I realized that different perceptions about a culture in diverse social and situational contexts can be valuable assets to understand our multicultural society.

To understand Koreans/Korean-Americans’ cultural perceptions in the United States, I volunteered to help the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community in Columbus, Ohio. While witnessing KACSCO students’ and parents’ identity concerns, and desires to teach/learn Korean language, history, and culture, I became curious about the influences of having multiple cultural backgrounds, Korean and American cultures in this case. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) state that

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2 Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio is a Sunday community school which is partially supported by South Korean government to promote learning Korean language, history, and culture. The school is open to any community members who want to learn Korean language and heritage culture. Most participants of the school are second generation Korean-Americans students, aged range from three to eleven years old, who aim to learn Korean language.
culture can be seen differently based on individuals’ backgrounds. In addition, each cultural setting has certain beliefs and rules of behavior. As a person who mainly grew up in Korea but moved to the United States, I have experienced that my ways of learning, thinking, and approaching subjects, or reactions to situations could be totally different from students who have different cultural backgrounds, especially in Western countries. On the other hand, the KACSCO students live in the two different cultural contexts with different beliefs and rules that I experienced, which I wanted to investigate via this research study. Therefore, this study was redirected to examine the KACSCO’s students’ experiences in the two cultures, Korean and American, related to their social setting and power structures in society.

As a volunteer at the community school since 2014, I observed authentic experiences of the Korean-American community. Whereas most parents grew up in Korea and immigrated or moved to the United States for their study or work, their children were born or raised in a community in Columbus, Ohio. The Korean-American students expressed that they feel more comfortable speaking English rather than Korean, so their parents brought them to the Korean-American community school to teach them Korean language and culture.

This Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) study was also inspired by a small pilot study that I conducted during the autumn semester in 2014. I had a chance to introduce my storybook\(^3\) to several researchers and kindergarten students, and

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\(^3\) I created the initial version of the storybook for the final project in Dr. Joni Acuff’s class, AE7795 *Reconstructing Identity and Cultural Conceptions in Art Education*. Exploring my identity as a minority in the United States led me to rethink experiences of minority groups in my country, South Korea. Later, in the EDUTL 7025 *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* class, Dr. Timothy San Pedro encouraged me to further
had meaningful conversations with them about the social and cultural issues in the stories and visual images. The storybook focused on the experiences of people who moved to South Korea from other Asian countries (Appendix A). They often suffer from discrimination and/or identity conflicts. For example, many women from South Asian countries married Korean farmers in rural areas. Although the number of these international marriages has been continuously increasing, they are still perceived more negatively than positively. They feel a sense of inferiority due to their language differences, appearance, and different cultural and social backgrounds. In particular, children from the international marriages are often marginalized by monoethnic Koreans both in school setting and society. These situations of multiethnic students in South Korea became the main motif of the storybook. Sharing the stories of three girls of multiethnic background, the main purposes of the storybook were to promote social awareness, understand other people, embrace differences, and move forward as a positive global community.

One of the researchers who learned about this social and cultural context wanted me to share the story with her kindergarten students, resulting in another important part of this pilot study. I presented my storybook to three researchers and six kindergarten students in the form of storytelling at a local kindergarten school in Columbus, Ohio. The kindergarten students from diverse countries including America, India, and the Philippines, never knew that multiethnic people are treated differently in South Korea, so develop its storyline and metaphors of the story in relation with culturally relevant pedagogy. This process led me to reconsider the possible values of Visual Storying, which connects stories, visual images, theories, and different individuals’ real life experiences while promoting meaningful dialogues in academia.
the students wanted to know more about the main characters, background of the story, and Korean culture and society. After the storytelling, the teacher could begin important conversations about human issues such as friendship, social status, equity, multiculturalism, and right of freedom regardless of people’s social and ethnic backgrounds. This pilot study revealed positive implications of sharing different experiences via stories and visual images. It opened a space for meaningful conversations about sensitive issues in our multicultural society. The students at that age could understand the issues and grasp the concepts at stake via this experience. Also, the realization at an early age may help them embrace cultural differences later on.

I had a vague understanding of Koreans/Korean-Americans’ experiences in the United States. Learning about the population via media or literature had obvious limitations. The secondhand experiences provided me with a certain stereotype about the people portrayed in a limited social context. The major population in those resources was generally older generations of Korean/Korean-American immigrants in two major cities, Los Angeles and New York City, into which many Korean people immigrated. However, my firsthand interactions with the current Korean/Korean-American generation in a community in Columbus, Ohio, offered me a new perspective about the population’s experiences in the United States. It was more complicated than I had anticipated. There were numerous social, cultural, and situational layers that I needed to consider to identify and understand Koreans/Korean-Americans’ cultural identity and their experiences in multicultural settings.
Statement of the Problem

Before the 1960s, major immigrants to the United States were from European countries. However, immigration law reforms in 1965 (Min, 1995; Min & Kim, 1999) and the enactment of civil rights legislation changed the pattern (Kibria, 2002). Although many new immigrants from non-European countries came to the United States after the 1960s and perceptions toward the new populations are continuously changing, over a half century a small number of studies have focused on these dynamic changes in terms of Asian-American immigrants’ cultural issues compared to other groups’ concerns. Cultural identity related inquiries about immigrants and second generations in the United States are mainly focused on the identity conflicts of Latino/a immigrants or racial issues between “black” and “white” experiences (Kibria, 2002; Gay, 2000; Park, 2009; Ancheta, 1998).

Furthermore, there were multiple misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Asian-American cultural identity (Park, 2005; Kang, 2004; Kang & Lo, 2005; Palmer, 2007; Meier, 1999; Oh, 2011; Choi, 2015; Kibria, 2002). Based on the record of the US Census Bureau’s 2010 Census, the Asian population increased by 46 percent between 2000 and 2010, growing “faster than any other group.” The Korean-American population (1.7 million) is the fourth biggest population following Chinese-American (3.8 million), Filipinos-American (3.4 million), and Asian Indians (3.2 million) (US Bureau of Census, 2010). However, there are largely hidden and unstated complexities about cultural integration among the Korean-American population in contrast to other immigrant groups (Kibria, 2002).
Many scholars argue that there is a certain bias by which Korean-Americans are successfully integrated into the dominant society (Choi, 2015; Hovey et al., 2006; Jung & Lee, 2004; Kang, 2013; Kim, 2007; Pak, 2006; Shraeke & Rhee, 2004; You, 2005; Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014). Park (2011) and Park (2005) criticize that people consider Korean-American immigrants and their descendants as a “model minority” group who are well educated and hardworking but submissive. Is it really true? This study began with my question about whether Korean-American students are assimilated to American mainstream culture as a model minority.

Park (2005) points out that Korean-American students are continuously experiencing marginalization and isolation, which often leads to the students’ low self-esteem and weak self-identity. Pang (1991) adds that many of them suffer from anxiety and stress due to this stereotype. As a person who tries to value people or situations not based on presumptions, but based on real engagements within local circumstances, I decided to investigate the community more closely and deeply through this community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) study.

Korean American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO)’s students experience multiple cultural settings such as home, school, and in-between cultures in their daily lives. Alim (2007) argues that experiences of people of color in the United States are different from the others not only due to their cultural backgrounds but also because of social structures. Similarly, Korean/Korean-American students often feel a sense of difference and also experience transnational/hybrid/fluid cultural identities in their home, school, and in-between cultural settings (Kang, 2014; Chung, 1999; Kim,
Many Korean/Korean-American related studies underline the gap between the two or multiple disparate cultural situations that are embedded in American society (Kim, 2014; Kim & Oh, 2014; Kang, 2014). Therefore, this CBPAR study explored both the KACSCO’s cultural multiple layers and existences of cultures as well as the social and situational structures which impact the community’s cultural identity.

Research Questions

The specific aims of this research study were: (1) to identify how various factors including social structure, social relationships, previous experiences, and situational factors in their environment influence the Korean-American community’s cultural identity; (2) to identify and describe how Korean-American students learn Korean language, history, culture, and/or art in multicultural settings constructing their identity as part of their learning; and (3) to explore roles and impacts of storytelling and visual artmaking components addressing their experiences. Therefore the research questions reflect the three main goals:

1. How do external factors including social perceptions, social structures, and situational factors influence the Korean-American community members’ cultural identity?
2. How do internal factors such as family backgrounds, parental influences, and age differences affect the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio students’ learning Korean language, history, culture, and/or art in multicultural settings, constructing their identity as part of the learning process?
3. What are the roles and impacts of storytelling and visual artmaking components in addressing the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community members’ cultural understandings and experiences?

Definition of Terms

Visual Storying

I created the notion of “Visual Storying” to connect Storying and visual arts. Visual Storying is a way of expanding our understanding of human beings through a form of visual art. Visual Storying is not a fixed format, rule, or structure, rather it is a snapshot of those moments when Visual Storying is created. In this study, Visual Storying was used as a metaphor of an ongoing process of making and talking about art with people in a community in Columbus, Ohio. In this context, it included artmaking with the Korean-American students, discussions about their background ideas, thoughts and experiences which are related to Korean-American cultural identity, the created visual works themselves, and the feedback about the artworks in the community school.

Co-Created Visual Storying

The notion of “Co-Created” Visual Storying is another key element of this CBPAR study. A community-based participatory action research study emphasizes a collaborative process from the planning stage of a study (Stringer, 2008). All stakeholders work together to build visions and goals of a study. Therefore, I want to highlight the collaboration process of Visual Storying interwoven with each individual’s diverse opinions and perspectives. Therefore, it is not created by myself but co-created
with the participants of this study. As a CBPAR study, I aimed to build meaningful relationships and create connections between art and participants, among participants, and the bigger community of Columbus, Ohio. As I mentioned above, Visual Storying happens when participants open their boundaries and try to understand their own and other people’s cultural and societal identities. Making collaborative art or sharing participants’ artworks with other community members can be a good way to create these co-created experiences for the individuals who share their art, space, time, and stories. Creating this *shared space* is one of my ways of enjoying art with other people.

*Digital Visual Storying*

**Digital Visual Storying** is a combination of Visual Storying and technology. Art is expressed via digital media, compared to traditional media, e.g. paper. As technology develops, younger generations are more exposed to and familiar with digital interactions. Digital Visual Storying offers another alternative for expression, communication and interaction with other people and can be more effective than Visual Storying depending on the target population. Additionally, the aspects of collaboration can be applied to Digital Visual Storying as Co-Created Digital Visual Storying, similar to Co-Created Visual Storying (See Figure 1).
Figure 1. Visualization of definitions of terms

**Storying**

The concept of Visual Storying was inspired by Timothy San Pedro’s concept, “Storying.” San Pedro introduced me to the notion of Storying through a *Culturally Relevant Teaching* course at The Ohio State University (2014 Fall semester). San Pedro explained indigenous pedagogy of storytelling as a theoretical and methodological tool. He developed Bryan Brayboy’s Tribal Critical Race Theory that “story is *theory* and *factual*” as a pedagogical approach through his research. In his notion, Storying includes
the “dialogicality of speaking and listening to stories” (a personal conversation, January 31, 2015). Based on trust among people, individuals can build an ongoing relationship through Storying. While learning this concept of Storying, I made connections of functions and values between Storying and the visual art that I want to pursue, while developing a meaningful relationship and understanding of others with visual images. Therefore, I created the concept of “Visual Storying” that includes creating and talking about visual images with people to expand our understanding of human beings.

A Shared Space/Space Between

Kinloch and San Pedro (2014) point out that Storying creates a “shared space” between people who are willing to share their story with vulnerability. This idea of shared space is my concept of community. Community does not indicate a physical space for me. Rather, “it is a state of mind” (Stringer, 2014). Through this CBPAR, I intended to create that kind of shared space where the Korean-American students, teachers, and parents could easily and openly talk about their struggles, achievements, worries, confusions, and changes through stories and visual images. The shared space of this CBPAR study within an open boundary of a community created meaningful connections between people in the community and outside of the community. This bridge or linked components where numerous connections have emerged is my notion of Space Between. In this “Space Between,” people care and listen to the stories of others, express their thoughts and experiences in visual forms, and communicate through the stories and visual images. In this space, the participants and I continuously developed our co-created Visual Storying.
Adapted and Adaptive Curriculum

The conceptual framework of teaching and learning in this study is both an Adapted and Adaptive Curriculum. Based on an initial assessment of the students’ interests and backgrounds, an Adapted Curriculum was developed in order to provide an effective learning experience. However, as interests and social backgrounds evolve over time and students’ reactions and feedbacks are taken into account, the curriculum needed to continuously be adapted in order to best fit the circumstances and provide the most effective learning experience. This ongoing process is the Adaptive Curriculum. Based on students’ learning outcomes, I questioned, modified, and developed the Adapted and Adaptive Curriculum to address the community’s expectations.

Significance of the Study

“I see no conclusions here, but rather openings” (Glesne, 1997, p. 218.) This study opens conversations and presents a cultural aspect of Korean-American students in Columbus, Ohio. There are few research studies that investigate Korean-American cultural identities with visual artmaking approaches. As art can “tap into emotions and may jar us into seeing or thinking differently” (Yorks and Kasl, 2006, retrieved from Leavy, 2015, p.12), the aim of this study is not drawing a fixed conclusion. Eisner (2008) states that “Mind, for us, is much more likely to be a fluid stream rather than a fixed rock” (p. 25). Therefore, the contribution of this study can be re-visiting the notion of cultural identity of Korean-American community through a participatory action research
study, and “that contribution could be, in the long run, it’s most important” (Eisner, 2008, p. 26).

As Paris (2009) mentions, a space in a multicultural setting can function as a “social and cultural space centered on youth communication” and/or a free and healing space “where youth challenge and reinforce notions of difference” (p. 430). In addition, youth in multicultural settings are underrepresented in “all aspects of research, theory, and practice” (Gay, 2000, p. xviii), and there are certain needs for the study of individuals across cultures and communities (Dyson & Genishi, 1994, retrieved from Ball, 1995, p. 278). Therefore, sharing stories and creating visual images with a Korean-American community provided us with a better understanding about our society.

Furthermore, this CBPAR study supported the KACSCO members’ desire to learn their cultural perspectives and express their feelings of being different while participating in cultural and language learning, and/or artmaking. Silko (1997) stresses that “as long as you remember what you have seen, then nothing is gone. As long as you remember, it is part of this story we have together” (p. 215). This CBPAR study is a way of remembering a community’s lived experiences while playing with the visual components of this project, a yearbook and storybook, which was shared with other community members through Visual Storying.

Sharing stories and creating visual images in diverse communities with other people supports a better understanding about our society (Phillion & Connelly, 2005). It also helps me define what makes art effective at unifying communities instead of dividing them. Through this research study, I would like to contribute to this valuable
“sharing process” with children, students, teachers, researchers, and community members.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The theoretical framework of this study combines critical multiculturalism and narrative inquiry and arts-based research. I will review critical multiculturalism in Part I while narrative inquiry and arts-based research will be discussed in Part II. First of all, this study is rooted in critical multiculturalism. Cultural identity cannot be understood without its socio-cultural contexts which critical multiculturalism focuses on (Kanpol & McLaren, 1995). Understanding cultural identity including racial and ethnic identities is a complex process (May, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Min, 2004; Min & Noh, 2014). Furthermore, cultural identity is fluid, situation specific, and historically and politically contingent on social structures (May & Sleeter, 2010; McLaren, 1989 & 2007; Kanpol & McLaren, 1995). May & Sleeter (2010) state that cultural identity is “multilayered, fluid, complex…, and at the same time as being continually reconstructed through participation in social situations” (p. 10). Each individual’s cultural identity can be interpreted and established differently based on each particular situation (Ladson-Billings, 1995 & 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the social, cultural, and situational contexts of the research and the community settings while examining on-going inequity and social and political power relations of society (Kang, 2014).
Part I consists of five sections that address Korean-American cultural and social contexts under the framework of critical multiculturalism: Critical theory, critical multiculturalism, hyphenated Americans’ cultural aspects, uniqueness of Asian-American identity, and Korean-American identity. The first section, critical theory, explores fundamental notions and background ideas of critical theory by examining race, social structure, power relationships, and inequity. The second section, critical multiculturalism, sheds light on multiculturalism in education with a critical approach in relation to social contexts. The third section, hyphenated Americans’ cultural aspects, highlights different cultural aspects of hyphenated Americans who have cultural multiplicity and race and/or immigration related issues. The fourth section, uniqueness of Asian-American identity, pays attention to the distinctive aspects of the Asian-American population by discussing several dissimilarities between East-Asian and South-Asian groups, and challenging the perspectives of model minority (Kim, 2014; Kim & Oh, 2014; Kang, 2014). Lastly, the final section, Korean-American identity, sheds new light on contemporary Korean-Americans’ identity and experiences in multicultural settings (Min & Noh, 2014; Park, 2014).

In Part II, narrative inquiry and arts-based research are reviewed. Firstly, many fields in social science have discussed the power of story through their research, especially in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Phillion et al., 2005; Clandinin et al., 2007; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Brown, 2006). The importance of narrative inquiry and its role of sharing experiences through stories will be stressed in the first section. Secondly, this study incorporates visual artmaking as an
important tool to present people’s experiences (Leavy, 2015; Rolling, 2013; Rose, 2001). As a form of language, visual language can imply several metaphors, which delivers lived stories, experiences, and social contexts (Carrington et al., 2007; Rose, 2001; Barone, 2012; Pink, 2001). By reviewing arts-based research, the values of visual image as a communicative resource will be highlighted (Mitchell, 2011; Carrington et al., 2007; Harper, 1998; Leavy, 2015).

Part I: Critical Multiculturalism

Critical Theories

Critical theory aims to transform society, of which approach is the key reason why critical theorists weave theories and practices (Rasmussen, 1996; McCarthy, 1996). Moreover, critical theorists challenge social structure and hegemony to shift and deconstruct existing knowledge (Benhabib, 1996) by applying theories to philosophical, social, and political contexts (Rasmussen, 1996). Regardless of these common aspects, critical theories evolve continuously and organically (Rasmussen, 1996), so it is difficult to define a singular boundary of critical theory. However, without discussing fundamental concepts of critical theory, it is impossible to understand critical multiculturalism. In this section, I will address main viewpoints of race and social structure, social inequity, and power relationships via critical race theory and critical pedagogy in order to identify basic notions of critical theory.

Critical theory deepens and expands research’s focus by paying attention to the bigger boundary of society including the social structure of racism. Critical race theorists
criticize the prejudiced notion of social hierarchy and racial inequity (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Ladson-Billings refers Delgado’s (1995b) judgment that “Racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society” (p. xiv, retrieved from Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 264) to emphasize the fact that our society tolerates racial discrimination even though there are numerous barriers for people of color (May, 1999). May (1999) asserts that critical race theory focuses on social inequity and racial equality, concepts deeply impacted through critical multiculturalism.

Furthermore, critical theories offer “multicultural education a perspective on teaching and learning that can foreground such concepts as ideology, hegemony, resistance, power, knowledge construction, class, cultural politics, and emancipatory actions” (Vavrus, 2010, p. 27). The fundamental aspect of power in education settings is often embedded in our social structure while generating biased cultural perspectives (Giroux, 1988 & 1992) toward minority groups. Giroux (1988) argues that we need to question our reproduction of dominant ideology in a broad social and political boundary. He also underlines Freire’s concept of power/domination as a means of reproducing “knowledge, social relations, and other concrete cultural forms that indirectly silence people” (p. 115). Similarly, May and Sleeter (2010) assert that critical theory underlines the concepts of “voice, dialog, power, and social class” that we often take for granted (p. 9). As Giroux (1988) claims, we are not fully aware of the hegemonies behind our education system, although cultural perceptions are politically generated in relationships with power. In this vein, we need to reexamine how society has produced political
ideology and power, and how they have affected people’s cultural identity perceptions in multicultural circumstances, especially in educational settings.

*Critical Multiculturalism*

**Culture and Cultural Identity**

Dipti Desai (2003) questions “What constitutes the notion of culture? Who can claim a culture? Can some cultural groups claim more legitimacy than others?” (p. 147-148). Some people might wonder if it is possible to define a culture, and other people might delineate that culture is simply the indication of things in common. Very often, people symbolize or devalue others’ culture based on superficial information of its characteristics (Desai, 2005).

Defining a culture and cultural identity is not easy due to individuals’ diversity within a cultural boundary and multiple layers of social and political structures of society (Tatum, 2010; Bridwell-Bowles, 1992). Culture and cultural identity reflect on multiple elements shaped by multidimensional aspects of society such as race, ethnicity, religious, class, gender, age, belief, language, education, value, geographic location, and social and political contexts. Indeed, a culture can also be interpreted in numerous ways depending on the scholarly angles of a describer or theorist and/or the situation of which culture is labeled. For example, the same culture can be addressed differently owing to the varied perceptions of each individual who might have different gender, age, social class, academic position, religion, political background, and/or social context. Nevertheless, educators and teachers who promote multiculturalism often believe that they can “teach”
cultures of others through sharing superficial information such as cultural artifacts (May & Sleeter, 2010).

Teaching and learning the shallow characteristics such as clothing, traditions, or food of each country can rather convey an ignorance of cultural conflicts, diversity, or differences within the cultural boundary. Certainly, multicultural education advocates recognize that “This is more complicated than studying cultural artifacts or the practices of others, and it requires a depth of understanding of culture that most educators have not developed” (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 5). In addition to the need of deep understanding of culture and cultural identity, critical multiculturalism points out the significance of recognizing contemporary contexts including cultural hybridity and fluidity that are addressed in the following section.

**Critical Standpoint**

Critical multiculturalism raises fundamental questions regarding the concepts that people habitually pay no attention to such as “what is normal or common sense?” People are used to learning the knowledge that certain groups of people categorized as “useful” or “common” knowledge, and they also believe that this knowledge is what everybody should be taught. However, people often ignore the process of how the knowledge is structured (Giroux, 1988; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995), the process of which brings the distorted or unveiled concept of normal and common knowledge. Therefore, critical multiculturalism emphasizes the importance of critical thinking about the hegemony in which we “inhabit” and “embody” the culture defined by the privileged groups of people.
Lea (2010) claims that “Hegemony results in our agreeing to certain dominant ideas, values, and beliefs that have the consequence of reproducing asymmetrical power relationships” (Lea, 2010, p. 33). Without critical approach to the hegemony, we continuously believe that the knowledge of the privileged people who have power is what we need to agree with. Moreover, unfortunately, we repeat the history to maintain the unequal social structure (Giroux, 1988). That is one of the main reasons why we need to shed light on critical multiculturalism.

Critical multiculturalism centers on wider social and cultural power relations. May and Sleeter (2010) note that “critical multiculturalism gives priority to structural analysis of unequal power relationships, analyzing the role of institutionalized inequities” (p. 10). Beyond understanding of other cultures, educators and researchers in critical multiculturalism advocate the need for further investigation in terms of the social structure and political influence behind the scenes which leads to educational and social inequity. Nevertheless, issues of minority groups are often overlooked due to political and social power relations behind the educational structure.

**Hybridity and Fluidity**

The perception of identity in this study addresses postmodern accounts (Giroux, 1992) of an Asian-American ethnic group, whose history as immigrants in America differs from other minority groups. This dissimilarity brings a different angle of critical discourse. Dipti Desai (2005) sheds new light on the notion of culture and the role of multicultural education. Although in her article, she mainly focuses on multicultural art education and postmodern art approaches in a global setting, it has numerous
implications beyond that boundary. First, she addresses the relationship between local and global identity by discussing several cases of artists who travel globally for their exhibitions. Desai (2005) states that “Today, artists born in one culture may grow up in another culture and then, as adults, might move yet again to another culture or cultures. Each location may or may not influence their work. No longer is their artwork an expression of a national or ethnic culture marked by birth. Therefore, defining an artist solely by nationality is problematic” (p. 300). This is not only limited to those artists. As Desai (2005) asserts, “We need to move beyond the narrow confines of cultural origin and nationality in this global era” (p. 303). Since many people travel or move to other countries or are even being exposed to other cultures in their own home countries, the influence of other cultures is difficult to ignore in this global era. “The naming of identity based on the culture where one was born… can no longer be the primary way” (Desai, 2005, p. 300) of describing one’s real identity.

The fluidity of cultural boundaries and people’s identity is a pivotal concept that this study focuses on. Vavrus (2010) states that “identity is fluid, situation specific, and historically contingent on power relations that constitute a society's cultural, political, and economic practices” (p. 28), while Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001) present that “the personal, national, and global aspects of culture make up a fluid, dynamic mesh of an individual’s cultural identity” (p. 8). Based on the political and social statuses of individuals’ cultural origin, or the social contexts of where the individuals currently belong, their perceptions of identity can change. In addition, individuals’ relationship with others impacts one’s identity fluidity. Therefore, culture and identity should be
understood as “multilayered, fluid, complex, and encompassing multiple social categories” (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10).

**Hyphenated Americans (Racial Identity vs. Nationality)**

The question, “what it means to be an American,” is an ongoing matter of struggling for many people, especially for those who are not in the mainstream. Although the United States has a long history of immigration from more than a hundred different ethnic groups (Papajohn, 1999; Carnoy, 1989), there are clear distinctions between white hyphenated mainstream Americans and non-white hyphenated minority Americans. This section mainly focuses on non-white, people of color, hyphenated Americans’ identity conflicts in terms of racial and national identities.

Many individuals try to challenge the narrow notion of white Americans being the only American. Chung (1999) argues that “a new national identity that includes all those who have come and will yet come to [America], regardless of race and skin color” should be constructed, which exemplifies “the true spirit of what American stands for” (p. 68).

Hyphenate Americans, especially people of color, are strongly influenced by other people’s perception of them and the way the dominant group treats them during the process of developing their identity and self-esteem (Min, 1999; Kang, 2014). Kang (2014) claims that maintaining an identity as minority hyphenate Americans requires “survival needs” rather than maintaining “self-esteem” (p. 237-241). Particularly, minority hyphenated students who are building their identity place importance on their peer group’s perception about them. Awareness of being different from other peers often leads the students to “disguise” (Chung, 1999, p. 60) their difference, or to put “enormous
Many students reveal that they feel a sense of social and situational pressure to choose one among their multiple identities (Chung, 1999; Ryu, 2014; Kim, 1999; Mori-Quayle, 1999; Bose, 1999). Bose (1999) states that he was asked “whether [he] was black or white” and was called “brownie” in his early age (p. 122-123). These peers’ visible and invisible discriminations often result in minority hyphenated students to put “blind effort to blend in” with their peers, or to avoid mingling with their minority peers (Chung, 1999, p. 54).

At the same time, the white privileged group often sees the cultural differences of hyphenated Americans, especially people of color, through a deficit perspective (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Tatum (2000) argues that dominant groups stereotype and label other minority groups’ culture as defective. These concepts of cultural poverty attribute the people of color to feel deprived (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Moreover, schools also try to replace the minority students’ existing knowledge with the mainstream ideology (Carnoy, 1989; Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Teachers, mostly white-middle class females, try hard to decrease the educational gap between white students and students of color by convincing students to follow their standard curriculum (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Therefore, the cultures of students of color among hyphenated Americans are often ignored or conflicted with the white Americans’ standard.

Unique Aspects of Asian-American Identity

Although recent Asian-Americans are treated more favorably than their parents’ generation, they still often encounter prejudice and discrimination. While some people
have a positive image of Asian-Americans, others have strange feelings toward people of non-white skin color. Min (1999) addresses these ironic perceptions through examining the situation of American-born Asian-Americans who are often asked “What country are you from” or told to “Go back to your country” (p. 26).

Furthermore, unlike most white people who define themselves as “white,” many Asian-American people who have a shorter history in the United States than the white hyphenated groups wonder why they are characterized as one group despite of distinct differences among the Asian-American cultures. Min (1999) argues that “Asian ethnic groups are diverse in culture and physical characteristics, more so than Latino ethnic groups, who share a common language and religion” (p. 30). For example, the three East Asian groups, Chinese, Korean and Japanese, share similar culture while South Asian group including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Asian groups are similar to one another. They have their own distinct language(s), cultures, and religious backgrounds.

In fact, Gupta reports that South Asians prefer to identify themselves as South Asians or persons of color rather than Asian-Americans in general (Min, 1999, p. 31). Min (1999) exemplifies a survey of Asian-Americans in Queens, New York, to show this phenomenon. He reviews that “most Indian respondents identified with their place of origin [such as Gujarati or Caribbean] rather than as Indian, while almost all Korean respondents identified as Korean” (Min & Chen, 1997, as cited in Min, 1999, p. 27). He explains that “Many Indian immigrants seem to have multiple identities, adopting a religious identity (such as Muslim) in one situation, identifying with a regional language
in another, and then identifying as Indian when engaged in political activities” (Gupta, 1975, as cited in Min, 1999, p. 27).

Asian immigrants in the United States brought a unique background compared to non-Asian immigrants in terms of religious difference, which became a big part of their culture (Takaki, 1998). For instance, there are Confucian and Buddhist influences in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese’s cultures while India and other South Asian immigrants are influenced by Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam (Min, 1999). Min (1999) points out that most Indian Americans create communities based on their religious identity such as Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Jains, and Parsis.

Compared to other minority groups, this distinctiveness enables some Asian-American groups to maintain their ethnic identity, being separate from Asian-American identity. In consequence, many Asian immigrants create their own territorial community such as Chinatown or Koreatown where they can freely speak their own language without a language deficiency.

**Korean-American Identity**

Among Asian-Americans, Korean-American group has its own unique characteristics. First of all, Koreans/Korean-Americans share one national origin, resulting in their strong bond to their ethnicity. Min (1999) compares Korean-Americans with Chinese immigrants in terms of the degree of loyalty to their ethnical belonging. He says that previous Chinese generations were described as a group with a strong desire to maintain their ethnic ties. However, due to the differences of political ideology, socioeconomic background, and other factors, current Chinese immigrants from mainland
China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore show different feelings regarding Chinese ethnicity. Meanwhile, Koreans/Korean-Americans hold the same national root, which links the community more closely.

Another main component of ethnic distinction or connection is language. As a key component of culture, maintaining their mother tongue supports emotional ties of immigrant groups. Learning and speaking their own inherited languages, Korean, Korean-American people feel a sense of belonging to their ethnic groups (Min, 1999). Korean-Americans can communicate with any other Korean-Americans via using Korean. Min (1999) argues that “Korean immigrants have the highest level of homogeneity” among Asian immigrant groups because they “have advantages for maintaining ethnic solidarity” (p. 20). Unlike Indian or Filipino immigrants who have less difficulty using English, Korean ethnic group keep their own communication via Korean to feel emotional stability. On the other hand, Chinese immigrants have different languages even in the same mainland China, which creates communication barriers like those of India. Indeed, Indian people have diverse regional languages within the country, so sometimes they have a communication barrier among the same ethnicity.

Influences of Korean church on maintaining Korean culture and identity among Korean-Americans are significant. Min (1999) points out that “It is important to note that immigrants usually establish ethnic language schools within ethnic churches to transmit their language and culture to the second generation” (p. 19). Through church, Korean/Korean-American people continue social interactions with the same ethnic group, which helps maintain their cultural attachment to their heritage culture.
Nevertheless, over the last four decades after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1945, demographic of Korean-Americans has changed dramatically (Kim, 2014; Min & Noh, 2014), leading to its diversity. Most previous generation Koreans/Korean-Americans in the United States were single-ethnic Koreans (Min & Kim, 2014; Kim, 2014). However, the number of multi-racial/ethnic Korean-Americans increased tremendously (Kim, 2014), which led to unique characteristics of the population.

Part II: Narrative Inquiry/Arts-Based Research

**Narrative Inquiry**

Individuals have many things to share, interpret, understand, and develop through stories. Besides, stories lead us to reflect, rethink, and understand experiences/situations/circumstances around us. Since all individuals have stories to share based on their own experiences in relationship with others and society, in this second part of Chapter II, I present the importance of stories via two sections: Importance of stories for individuals and community/society.

**Importance of stories for each individual**

We are the storytelling species. Storytelling is in our blood. We think in story form, speak in story form, and bring meaning to our lives through story. Our life stories connect us to our roots, give us direction, validate our own experience, and restore value to our lives. Life stories can fulfill important functions for us, and, as we recognize now more than
ever, everyone has a story to tell about his or her life, and they are indeed important stories. (Atkinson, 1995, 1998; Gubrium & Holstein, 1998; Kenyon & Randall, 1997; Randall, 1995, as cited in Atkinson, 2007, p. 224)

Telling a story is a significant part of our lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2013; Atkinson, 2007; Okri, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As Atkinson (2007) indicates, we are the “storytelling species” who have strong desire to tell stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Phipps et al., 2005; Clandinin et al., 2007; Knowles & Cole, 2008). As a means of self-representation, people express who they are, how they think, and what they imagine via storytelling (Goodall, 2008; Iseke & Brennus, 2011).

Moreover, storytelling leads people to think about themselves and their surroundings. The reflective function of storytelling (Savage, 2009) makes people mirror their own experiences and social and cultural situations around them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kim, 2006; Cazden & Leggett, 1976). Through stories, people review their memories and experiences, in addition to having chances to reconsider their situational contexts. As a tool of self- and social reflective approach, storytelling has its own significance.

**Rethinking experiences**

Stories begin with experiences (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). On one hand, telling a story helps individuals review their own experiences. People need to think about what they have done in their daily lives when they present their stories of experiences. With
storytelling, sometimes people look back and reconsider their previous memories and involvement, which can make them think about the experiences differently. On the other hand, people appreciate other individuals’ experiences through reading or listening to stories. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) underline that stories help us understand people’s lived experiences and “how they are composed and lived out” their lives (2000, p. xxii). People can be exposed to diverse experiences of other individuals through stories and storytelling. In both ways, stories play a key role in sharing and understanding individuals’ experiences (Diversi, 1998).

Many scholars indicate that studying stories are studying people’s experiences (Chase, 2011; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007). Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2000, 2006) describe John Dewey’s theory of experience (1938) in relationship with stories, defining it as “narrative inquiry” (Clandinin, 2013). In particular, Clandinin presents the idea of narrative inquiry as “the study of experience as story” (p. 375, as cited in Bach, 2007, p. 282) in many books and articles, working with Michael Connelly (1990, 2006), Jerry Rosiek (2007), and other scholars (Clandinin et al., 2007). As a research methodology, narrative inquiry explores and crafts participants’ experiences via stories and storytelling (Leavy, 2015; Ely, 2007).

This study explores a Korean-American community’s experiences in the United States to expand our understandings of the community’s cultural, social, and situational contexts. Reconsidering the community’s experiences via sharing stories and studying their stories will be supported by narrative inquiry. Investigating people’s experiences via stories fits well into the framework of this study.
Importance of stories for community and society

We live with other people, objects, words, time, space, history, culture, etc., interacting with one another. Stories have a significant value as a means of connecting people. We share stories and often empathize or make connections with other people’s stories. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) approach stories as evolving units in the progression of “continuity, interaction, and relationality” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 33). People develop links with other people as “relational” species via stories (Clandinin, 2013). Stories further play a role as the things beyond fixed entities (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998), creating bridges within communities and society. While reflecting on shared stories, people begin to “tell and live new stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 71). Stories create bonds between/among communities and societies.

Furthermore, stories reveal social and cultural contexts of community and society. Brown (2006) states that stories are “the product of particular contexts” of society (p. 732). People can unfold their different identities and understandings of society through stories. Clandinín and Connelly (2000) also state that “In essence, narrative inquiry involves the reconstruction of a person’s experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu” (as cited in Daynes, 2007, p. 5). We represent our experience through stories interacting with our own reality (Clandinín, 2013). While sharing stories, people expose their situations in relationships with others in a social and cultural context. Therefore, it is important to explore stories as a method to understand our communities and society.

Andrew Brown utilizes the term, narrative, instead of stories in his article.
**Stories as a socio-cultural connection and relationship**

As human beings who interact and communicate with others, we embrace stories in the center of our relationships and existence. In order to maintain our relationship with others, and in order to live and exist with other human beings, sharing, listening, reflecting, understanding, and building stories together are pivotal aspects of our society. Dyson and Genishi (1994) state that there is a certain "need for story for individuals across cultures and communities for providing some kind of social connection" (retrieved from Ball, 1995, p. 278). Goodall (2008) also indicates that “stories weave time, events, and people in ways that chronologies don’t” (p. 141). Narrative inquiry offers these links and connections that each individual’s experiences and perspectives are related to one another in their socio-cultural contexts (Leavy, 2015).

Relationship is central in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquiry not only develops connections between people’s experiences via stories, but also leads researchers to be involved in the relationship. Clandinin (2013) argues that “[researchers] are part of the storied landscapes [they] are studying” and “[they] become part of participants’ lives and [the participants become] part of [the researchers’ lives]” (p. 24). In narrative inquiry, stories make connections in relation to others among participants including researchers. Clandinin (2013) insists that stories are always “co-composed in the space between [researcher] and participants” (p. 24). These connections and relationships between researcher and participant or among participants determine the quality of a study in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).
Revealing social, cultural, and situational contexts of community and society

Stories belong to contexts of storytelling (Okri, 1997). Since we live in social and cultural contexts of stories (Clandinin, 2013), narrative inquiry focuses on experiences in relation to those contexts (Kim, 2006). In narrative inquiry, it is important to understand the context of storytelling of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin (2013) refers to Dewey’s perspective that “In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it” (p. 14). Unlike the perspective that a representation is independent from one’s reality, personal representations through stories are in relationship with each individual’s social and cultural contexts in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013).

Stories and experiences should be understood based on their situational context. Individuals’ stories differ “within a particular context at a particular time” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 25). Clandinin et al. (2007) point out that “events and people always have a past, present, and future. In narrative inquiry it is important to always try to understand people, places, and events as in process, as always in transition” (p. 23). Clandinin (2013) further indicates that we “live in cultural temporal stories, stories that have shaped each of our cultures” (p. 22). Therefore, the contexts that have been shaping people’s previous and current stories should be considered under categories of both temporality and continuity. As stories shape our cultural, academic, social, and personal
aspects in a particular time, investigating situational contexts of stories will unveil the
snapshots of the contexts of individuals’ experiences.

*Arts-Based Research*

All individuals want to tell their stories through various ways. Some may reveal
their stories through actions or movements, but other may express their thinking through
storytelling or visual images. Similar to the Clandinin and Connelly (2000)’s perspective
of narrative inquiry as an alternative way of approaching research, arts-based research
can be another tool to present people’s life experiences and a way of education (Read,
1945).

Arts-based research is an effective means of understanding people’s lives (Leavy,
2009, 2015; Rosunee, 2012; Eisner, 2002). Bach (2007) points out that narrative inquiry
through visual components is a reflective and “active human process in which researchers
and participants explore and make meaning of experience both visually and narratively”
(p. 281). In recent years storytelling through visual images has been used as a key data
source in projects that aim to understand diversity (Moss, 2001, 2003; Moss & Hay,
2004; Leavy, 2015), because visual images “provide researchers with a different order of
data and, more importantly, an alternative to the way we have perceived data in the past”
(Prosser, 1998, p. 1). Additionally, the use of image-based research contributes to
epistemological understandings that are potentially transformative for the researcher and
the researched (Carrington et al., 2007, p. 9).

Moreover, arts-based research can be an approachable way for certain populations
who may have different cultural backgrounds. For example, some groups of people are
expecting to use several different languages in their social contexts such as home and school settings; others can be asked to use their second language as a main communicative tool in their social settings. For the two cases, sharing stories both verbally and visually can expand the possibility of understanding individuals’ unique experiences and sharing meanings of them.

Both narratives of/about artworks and creating visual art can easily deal with social concerns related to people’s everyday lives, which further disrupts those (Quinn et al., 2012). Bach (2007) says that visual component has its own power as Okri (1997) claims that stories are also a form of art that disturbs a sense of boundary. Moreover, narratives and visual arts can play a major role in teaching diversity (Leavy, 2015). These approaches provide all students with “an opportunity to contribute something” and create a space where “all participants are the chief carrier[s] of control” (Dewey, 1938, p. 56) by taking ownership of constructing experiences together as a “social process” (Dewey, 1938, p. 59). Visual narrative is "therefore presented as a platform for engaged and transformative learning (Eisner 2001, 2002), where students work between personal experiences, social realities, the beliefs of family, peers, and significant others” (Grushka, 2009, p. 239).

**Assembling Experiences through Storytelling and Visual Storying**

Research is a process of crafting participants’ experiences to promote a meaningful discourse (Leavy, 2015; Ely, 2007). As a way to understand people’s lives (Goodall, 2008), narrative inquiry and arts-based research concentrate on human experience. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that narrative inquiry is “an experience
of the experience” (p. 189) “being in relation with participants” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 43). Leavy also states that arts-based research can be used for understanding people’s experience (Leavy, 2015).
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Exploring cultural and social aspects of a community requires deep integrations and interactions with community members to gain better understandings of the local context. Community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) has been utilized in many research projects with diverse communities to help people understand aspects of identity and life experiences in their community settings (Stringer, 2008, 2014; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Irizarry & Brown, 2014; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Among those, Stringer (2014) emphasizes the importance of getting intimate knowledge about local context by conducting CBPAR that entails profound engagement with people in local communities. Therefore, the CBPAR approach was the main moving force of this study.

A community-based research study provides both researchers and participants with an opportunity to communicate with one another in a local setting. Similarly, a participatory action research approach allows them to deeply engage with their community and create a positive change through their actions (Stringer, 2014). Stringer (2008) maintains that research is “a process for looking again at an existing situation and seeing it in a different way” (p. 4). Throughout research involvement, participants communicate with one another, actively engage in the community, and become more aware of their lives in the cultural and social contexts of their local setting. This
collaborative engagement process in a particular context supports participants to be a part of “construction of knowledge” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 49), while interacting with other community members.

Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) helps young people deeply and extensively understand their lives (Stringer, 2008). The youth who are often considered as passive receivers/consumers of knowledge could actively contribute to generation/construction of knowledge (Heron & Reason, 2001; Irizarry, 2011; Stringer, 2008) in CBPAR. Therefore, this study utilized CBPAR as a main approach to support a Korean/Korean-American community including student participants to be agents of an investigation of what was happening in their community.

Narrative inquiry and an art-based research approach also played pivotal roles as methodological and pedagogical foundations in this study. This CBPAR study was motivated and maintained by sharing narratives and creating artworks with other participants. This process was conceptualized as Visual Storying in this study, and it embraced the processes of both making and sharing visual art with others. In Visual Storying, visual language and cultural expression were intertwined to promote meaningful conversations. As a methodological approach, it delivered diverse ideas and lived experiences of the participants, which traditional academic research could not embrace in written language.
Overview of the Study

This community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) study was a form of community engagement while sharing ownership of research with the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members. One of the main aspects of this CBPAR study was to respect the community’s settings including social and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the Korean-American students’ community issues and local contexts were the centers of this study. The study was designed and modified through co-construction and negotiation processes between the participants’ and my interests and needs. This study explored the process of how Korean-American students learned and understood their heritage language and culture, and illustrated their ideas through stories and visual images. This CBPAR study is comprised of the processes of teaching, observation, audio recording, interviewing, and collection/analysis of students’ verbal, written, and visual image outcomes.

The study was conducted at KACSCO in Columbus, Ohio for two years. During the period, data was continually collected in multiple ways. In particular, I was invited to KACSCO to conduct this research while teaching classes. During Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016, I was assigned as a teacher/researcher in two classes with an average of 3 hours teaching and observation every Sunday during 28 weeks: (1) Advanced class, Korean language, history and culture class; and (2) Art & Craft class, one of the extra curricula activities classes. Therefore, there were two different target populations among participants of this study.
Based on the school’s curriculum, the first group was gathered based on the students’ proficiency level in Korean. A large number of KACSCO’s students came to the community school to learn Korean language, history, and culture. Most of their parents are temporary residents from Korea, Korean immigrants, or first generation Korean-Americans. There were a limited number of other community members who are non-Korean parents but married to a Korean. Among KACSCO’s community members, except for a few non-Korean adults who had interest in learning Korean language, most parents have Korean ethnicity, at least on one side. Therefore, the parents wanted their children to learn Korean language and culture to have a better communication with them, their grandparents, and/or relatives in Korea. To do so, students and I practiced reading, speaking, and writing Korean as well as discussions about Korean tradition, history, and culture. For this group, storytelling was the significant component of the participation and learning process, and it was supplemented by a visual narrative approach as well.

On the other hand, the second group was gathered by their interest in learning arts and crafts. KACSCO’s students were supposed to pick one of the classes among Taekwondo, a Korean traditional martial art, Music, and Art & Craft. Therefore, the main research components for this group was Visual Storying. The collaborative process of artmaking, and discussions about the visual outcomes played the key role in this group. In this process, storytelling also played a pivotal role in sharing experiences, understanding each other, and creating a collaborative story among the participants.

The combination of two learning approaches, storytelling and visual artmaking/narratives, was dedicated to KACSCO’s students’ understanding of Korean
culture, history, and art in addition to their identities in a multicultural setting. Students had opportunities to think and talk about fundamental notions of what Korean and American cultures are through sharing their everyday lives, personal background, important family events, and their relationship with family members, friends, and other people. By doing so, students verbalized and/or visualized their ideas, concepts, and experiences while sharing their stories. The visual images that were created through art class or extra class activities also helped the students understand the value and importance of storytelling and visual narrative.

Part I: Setting of Study

*Asian-American and Korean-American Communities in Columbus, Ohio*

In order to understand the social context of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community, I need to describe two general backgrounds of the Asian population in Ohio, especially in the Columbus area. First of all, one of the local contexts of the Korean-American community was the influence of The Ohio State University (OSU). The other important aspect of the community was their recent migration to the United States, which was also linked to the first aspect of the community’s social context.

There are many reasons why Asian people have moved to Ohio. One of the main reasons is Asians’ immigration for their study and work. The Asian population in Ohio drastically increased during recent decades (Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council, 2010). The *State of Ohio Analysis of Impediments* report (May 2015) announced
that “Nearly 40 percent of Ohio’s foreign-born population is from Asia.” According to the report, the percentage of Asians grew 66 percent since 2000, and increased fourfold compared to 1980 (Ohio Development Services Agency, 2015). One of the key factors of the growth is international migration (ibid) for their study and work.

A large number of Asian people live in the city of Columbus because of the influence of OSU (Ohio Development Services Agency, 2015). The State of Ohio Analysis of Impediments report (2015) pointed out that it is exceptional that more Asian people dwell in the city than other suburb areas. Whereas the majority of Asians in Ohio live in metropolitan suburban cities, more than 44,500 of Asian population in Ohio are living in Columbus, and an additional 35,000 Asian American people live in the Columbus metropolitan area\(^5\) due to the university (See Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Asian-American population map in the State of Ohio](image)

\(^5\) There are 60,991 Asian people in Franklin County where The Ohio State University is located, which is the highest number of Asian population among all the counties in Ohio (Ohio Development Services Agency, 2015).
The history of the Asian population’s migration in the United States is not long compared to other immigrant groups. Most Asian immigrants moved to the country during recent decades. Therefore, there are many temporary residents in the Columbus area. Ohio Development Services Agency (2015) reveals that “a very high proportion” of the Asian population in Ohio is between the ages of 25 and 44, which is the major age group of teachers, parents, and administrators at KACSCO. Many Korean non-immigrants such as international students, temporary workers, or visitors, changed their legal status to become permanent residents during recent decades (Min, 2014). For example, the majority of the KACSCO’s parents, teachers, and administrators’ cases correspond to this situation. They came to the United States as international students within decades, and settled down in Columbus as permanent residents or American citizens.

Recent Asian immigrants are a middle-class population who are generally highly educated (Min, 2013; Kim, 2014). Similarly, the Asian population in the Columbus area has a higher educational background than other groups (Ohio Development Services Agency, 2015). The Ohio Development Services Agency (2015) reveals that thirty three percent of the Asian people in Ohio possess graduate degrees and another twenty eight percent of the population obtained bachelor’s degrees. On the contrary, only ten percent of non-Asian Ohioans received graduate degrees and sixteen percent obtained undergraduate degrees. Correspondingly, most KACSCO community members received higher education by obtaining bachelor, master, and/or doctoral degrees.
Nevertheless, there is a severe gap between “being highly educated” and “being sufficient linguistically” in this setting due to the population’s cultural backgrounds. The Asian population’s English fluency varies depending on ethnic groups (Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council, 2010). In *A Report on the Status of Ohio’s Asian American Pacific Islander Community*, the Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council (2010) argued that the English level of the people who were born in Eastern Asian countries, including Korea and China, is lower than other Asian groups’ language fluency. KACSCO members from an Eastern Asian country also show difficulty in English fluency due to their linguistic backgrounds. According to the Ohio Development Services Agency’s report (2015), about three quarters of the Asian population in Ohio speak a language other than English in their home settings. Likewise, most KACSCO members speak Korean in their home setting, resulting in limited exposure to English. These unique educational and linguistic backgrounds of the Asian/Korean populations in Ohio need to be stated before examining the social and situational contexts of this study.

*Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio*

Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) is a Sunday school where any community member can learn Korean culture and language. KACSCO welcomes Korean-American students or people who are interested in learning Korean language, history, and culture through the school’s networks, public advertisements, and e-mail recruitments. Each semester, an average from forty to fifty students are enrolled in one of the seven different levels of classes of the school in addition to an extra curricula activities class.
KACSCO is supported by the Ministry of Education in Korea, Overseas Korean Foundation, The National Association for Korean Schools, and Korean Education Center in Chicago. Among the seventeen Korean schools in Ohio, there are three Korean schools in Columbus, Ohio⁶ (Chicago Korean Education Center, n.d.). KACSCO is the only Korean school which is not affiliated with a church. Originally, KACSCO was established in 1977 as a part of a Korean church to support students’ Korean bible study (Shim & Koo, 2015). In 1981, the school became separated from the church and modified their goal from focusing on understanding Christianity in Korean to promoting Korean language and culture to community members in Columbus, Ohio (ibid.). The other two Korean schools in Columbus are still affiliated with Korean churches that play a central role in their recruitment. In particular, based on the statistics from the Chicago Korean Education Center in 2016, one of the two church affiliated schools has over one hundred students and twenty seven teachers in their Korean language school in contrast to forty-three students and ten teachers at KACSCO.

As a community school, KACSCO welcomes any community members who are interested in learning Korean language, history, and culture. There are two class categories. One is Korean Education class focused on Korean language, history, and culture; the other is extra curricula activity class. For the 2015-2016 school year, KACSCO had about forty students and ten teachers per semester. Students came to school at 2:30 pm on Sunday, and took a two hour class of Korean language, history, and culture.

⁶ Over one thousand Korean schools, categorized as fourteen regional chapters, are registered in the National Association for Korean Schools in the United States (NAKS, www.naks.org). The State of Ohio belongs to the Midsouth Chapter with the States of Indiana and Kentucky.
culture class in addition to a one hour class of an extra curricula activity. Korean language, history, and culture class had six or seven different levels, from *Kindergarten* to *Advanced* class, in addition to one *Adults* class. Except for the kindergarten and adult level classes, students were assigned to a class not based on their age level, but based on their Korean language familiarity and proficiency. For the extra curricula activities, students selected one class among three or four options including *Art & Craft*, *Taekwondo*, and *Origami* classes. Students from all different Korean level classes participated in the extra curricula activities together.

Each semester, there were several major events: *Open House*, special events related to Korean and American holidays, and *Ending Ceremony*. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and community members joined the events to celebrate both Korean and American cultures together. For example, during Spring 2016 semester, KACSCO held an Open House, a Lunar new year’s event, a Mother’s day event, and an Ending Ceremony. In general, at the Open House, students, parents and/or community members were provided with opportunities to experience Korean traditional activities whereas students performed their speeches, presentations, play, and music performances at the Ending Ceremony.

All staff members of KACSCO are volunteers. There were two administrators, principal and vice principal, five board members, six main teachers, and two assistant teachers. Each semester, formal meetings were held twice or three times between the administrators and teachers, and at least once between administrators and parents.
The Korean-American community school rented a school space near The Ohio State University during the 2014-2016 school years. Since KACSCO did not possess their own building, they had to move the school’s location several times based on their circumstances including financial situations. For example, KACSCO moved four times since 2011. Before moving to the current location, the school had been renting a space on Bethel Road in Columbus, Ohio, where more people preferred the school to stay. However, due to financial reasons, KACSCO had to move to a different building which had not been well maintained after forty years of its existence. This issue was one of the major concerns among the KACSCO’s members. In addition, as KACSCO was renting the school on Sundays only, the KACSCO’s teachers had been facing numerous challenges about utilizing the space temporarily. The teachers repeatedly revealed that they could not build a positive learning environment, because they could not install, display, and store educational materials in the hosting school’s classrooms. KACSCO’s teachers needed to set up their materials before their class began and were required to remove them after the class ended.

The demographic of the KACSCO’s students was included ages from three to twelve during the period of this research study. Most of the Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students are in the two Kindergarten classes, and the students in Elementary and Middle schools, up to K-6, were divided into three or four different classes. During 2016 Spring semester, the gender ratio of the students was almost fifty-fifty, and there

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7 The information is based on a review report written on May 21, 2015 by Auditor of State of Ohio. However, the reference will not be publicized for the school’s privacy, since the school’s physical condition was negatively mentioned by the KACACO’s community members throughout this study.
were about a quarter of students with multi-ethnic backgrounds in addition to one
Korean-American adoptee, and a non-Korean ethnic community member. Since the
students were young, they came to the school with their parents. Some parents were
waiting for their children for three hours outside of their classroom while the children
were attending the classes whereas other parents picked them up when the students were
done with the classes.

Part II: Research Foundations

Community-Based Art

Community-based art holds multifold values. It helps people to engage in their
community, while developing a better understanding and relationship among people.
Boiten and Stimson (2003) describe that a shared meaning of community is a “place
where we exist for one another and for the well-being of the whole place where we
belong” (as cited in Koo, 2013, p. 3). Similarly, Pipher (2003) states that communities are
about accountability among people, which centers on “what we can and should do for
each other” (as cited in Koo, 2013, p. 3). Community-based art contributes to community
empowerment (Taylor, 2004) by providing an opportunity to learn from one another.

Community-based art reflects on current social issues and needs of local
communities (Madden, 2000). Community’s common interests, such as “shared concerns,
cultural heritage, traditions, and language patterns” often become foundations of
community-based art (Adejumo, 2000, as cited in Koo, 2013, p. 4). Diverse stakeholders
including students, educators, artist, administrators, and researchers can discuss and
explore local concerns, changes, and/or visions in community-based art. Thus, they highlight contexts of local settings, and bring positive change of community.

*Participatory Action Research*

Participatory Action Research (PAR) builds a “relationship between theory and practice” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 59). PAR does not start from a preexisting theory, and does not accept preconceptions or traditional lenses without having concrete data or real experiences from the participants of the research. Unlike a research that starts from a hypothesis, PAR approaches a research setting with an open-minded attitude while searching for real experiences and practices (Springer, 2008). The purpose of PAR is not to apply a previous theory to a research setting. Rather, PAR creates other new/fresh theories or implications through finding real data from the research itself. Making connections between existing knowledge and real practices, PAR highlights evolving learning experiences among participants.

Building a relationship with the community is a pivotal part of PAR (Stringer, 2014; McIntyre, 2008). It requires a time for building a close rapport between researchers and participants before conducting a research project (Stringer, 2008 & 2014), especially when researchers are from outside of the research setting. After sharing experiences and building trust between each other (McIntyre, 2008), researchers and participants conduct a study together in an iterative way (Clandinin, 2013).

PAR allows researchers and participants to build a research direction together. PAR empowers all participants “to take control of their own learning” (Stringer, 2008). In PAR, both researchers and participants co-explore a situation or a problem of research
as co-researchers (Stringer, 2008; Heron & Reason, 2001). PAR values each individual’s unique voice providing him/her with the feeling of being a full person (Irizarry & Brown, 2014, p. 78). Especially, PAR sees students’ perspective as a distinctive standpoint to challenge preexisting theories and social concepts (Irizarry, 2011). As students recognize causes of problems, they look forward to seeking a way to transform the situation (Freire, 2000). Because PAR offers an opportunity for students to access diverse resources, students become active investigators of their environment (McIntyre, 2008; Heron & Reason, 2001). These open approaches can create humanized space for participants such as students, teachers, or administrators to make a change or voice their experiences as significant members of their community.

PAR is directly relevant to participants’ lives enhancing their learning (Stringer, 2008). PAR emerges from a need of a new movement including taking an action or constructing a theory (Stringer, 2014). Although researchers might set up a basic outline of a PAR study at the beginning stage of research design, the main pathway is continuously changing based on participants’ lived experiences to contribute to participants’ or community’s needs. Even further, participants challenge conventional research approaches taking an active role in PAR (Heron & Reason, 2001). Therefore, PAR starts with limited objectives which are initial inquiries of the study (Stringer, 2008). Both participants and researchers begin with investigating a tangible problem of the researched setting to gain better understanding of the local context. Then, researchers and participants reconsider causes of the problem or situation. These practices bring
emerging understanding of their context resulting in constructing new practices (Stringer, 2008).

Furthermore, PAR is not a rigid framework but an adjustable way to explore intimate relationships and ordinary daily life in particular situations, which allows stakeholders to voice their desires and opinions, which both represent their experiences (Stringer, 2014). Stringer (2014) recognizes “the complexities of human interactions” (p. 40). He states that “More relevant and effective theories emerge from the hermeneutic dialectic-meaning-making dialogues between stakeholders, using concepts, terminologies, and formulations that make sense to them” (p. 39). McIntyre (2008) describes this iterative method as which “this process of questioning, reflecting, dialoguing, and decision making resists linearity” (p. 6). Rather, these practices are “fluidly braided within one another in a spiral of reflection, investigation, and action” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 6). Additionally, its flexibility allows other community members to get involved in the process. Therefore, PAR study follows an inductive approach.

PAR includes a negotiation process for marginalized people (Stringer, 2008; Stringer, 2014). Gutierrez et al. (1999) claims that “this negotiation opens up the possibilities for alternative voices to become part of [an] official curriculum” (p. 294). Cole (1998) also adds that “diversity are not problematic but rather are viewed as important cultural resources in children's development” (retrieved from Gutierrez et al., 1999, p. 287). However, there are many stereotypes in existing research that students of color are problematic because they could not fit into a standard of the mainstream (Gay, 2000; Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014). Therefore, the people of color or students who might be
considered as a problematic group can show their ability as co-constructers of knowledge in PAR (Irizarry, 2011).

Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) point out that “Participatory action research is valuable because it brings in populations that are often alienated within the traditional research paradigm, but it is also important because these populations often have the best vantage point and the greatest vested interest in the work itself” (p. 108, retrieved from Irizarry & Brown, 2014, p. 78). PAR empowers students who have been discriminated against and marginalized by giving them the knowledge and tools needed to evaluate their inequitable academic experiences and impact their future academic careers. Irizarry and Brown (2014) say that “PAR provides a means for disenfranchised people to better understand and address the social, structural, and cultural forces that shape their lives” (p. 65). Giving students the opportunity to take part in the research process gives them a new perspective on their environment and the way things are organized and run within their schools or communities.

Freire (1970) argues, “Who better than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who can better understand the need for liberation?” (Retrieved from Irizarry & Brown, 2014, p. 64). The members of a group in a research setting could find out the problems of their own situations and voice them out rather than any other people. Therefore, researchers should only play a role in supporting participants to “look-think-act” their own problems (Stringer, 2014).
Implications for the Community-based Participatory Action Research Study

This is a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) study in which practices and theories are interwoven to make changes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; McIntyre, 2008; Irizarry & Brown, 2014; Stringer, 2008; Stringer, 2014) in a certain community. The fundamental notion of this study is that people interpret social phenomena based on their own perspectives in particular conditions, so the way of approaching the phenomena should be flexible and adjustable for different situations (Stringer, 2014; Stewart & Walker, 2005).

This CBPAR study with a Korean-American community applied research into a social setting. Since PAR accepts the participants' perspective as “a distinctive standpoint in terms of the social relations of social research” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), this CBPAR study extended the boundary of academic research, carefully listening to the community members’ voices. Additionally, this CBPAR investigated both the local community’s interests or concerns and its social contexts and structure. This study highlighted the needs of community members but at the same time explored the Korean-American community’s situation.

PAR creates multiple ways of learning for both researchers and participants. In this CBPAR, we blurred a stereotypical view of who can be a researcher (Heron & Reason, 2001; Rowan, 2001). I was a part of the researching/researched group as one of the participants of the community. On one hand, I taught the KACSCO’s students Korean language, culture, and art as a teacher. As a researcher, I provided them with chances to observe, think, realize, and experience what they could not be aware of through
participating in this study. On the other hand, I learned how the Korean-American students think, experience, and behave in the local context. I might have influenced the community as a teacher and/or researcher, but have been influenced by them as well. Parents, teachers, and administrators also exchanged their own interpretations of the context with me and we learned from one another. While challenging preexisting stereotypes of the Korean-American community (Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014), we constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed historical and cultural understandings of a contemporary Korean/Korean-American community.

The KACSCO students and I investigated our needs and the background contexts of the needs of participants as insiders and outsiders. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) highlight that participants frequently shift from one way of seeing something to another, not only to see it from their own points of view and from the points of view of relevant others, but also to see it both from the perspective of individuals and from a “big-picture” perspective on the setting. The students and I initiated this CBPAR process as community members who belong to the context (insiders) and a researcher who approached them with a big-picture (outsider) respectively. However, progressively, we switched our point of view frequently based on cultural, social, and situational contexts. Eventually, we observed the local setting connected to both each individual’s diversity and a wider social and historical condition via a CBPAR. In this process, many components of PAR played pivotal roles of provoking meaningful connections between this research and the KACSCO community.
Part III: Research Design

Becoming an Insider

There was a fundamental question about what could be researcher’s roles in a community setting where research was conducted. McIntyre (2000) criticizes that there is a recurring question in Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR), “whether a researcher needs to be requested as a resource by a community group, or whether a researcher can approach a particular group inviting them to explore a particular issue” (retrieved from McIntyre, 2008, p. 8). Although I entered the KACSCO’s community as an invited teacher and researcher to teach the KACSCO’s student Korean language, history, and culture as well as to learn their background respectively, I needed to negotiate my roles in-between the two roles. One of the fundamental goals of KACSCO was dedicated to educating Korean-American students and keep their Korean heritage. The students came to the Korean-American community school to learn Korean language, history, and culture, so I needed to fully respect their goals focusing on the role as a teacher.

Building trust and respectful relationships was another significant part (McIntyre, 2008) of this CBPAR study. Unlike other qualitative methods where researchers distance themselves from participants (Heron & Reason, 2001), CBPAR requires researchers to develop meaningful relationship with the community members with whom they work. The KACSCO’s community members had a sense of belonging to the community of Korean heritage. They created this Korean-American community where they can build a stronger connection to their historical and cultural legacy. As Stringer (2014) highlights,
establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with them enhanced the quality of this research study. I could not expect a trustworthy research process and outcome without developing this solid relationship with the students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. As a part of the school community but joining from outside of the community, the essential step of this study for me was to become a real member of the KACSCO group physically and emotionally.

Stringers (2014) criticizes that “People from outside the research context who impose their own theories without having a deep understanding of the nature of events and the dynamics of the context are likely to either misrepresent or misinterpret the situation” (p. 39). As a person who has Korean ethnicity but was not raised in the United States, my knowledge of the Korean-American population was limited. However, thinking about familiar/unfamiliar issues with the Korean-American students considering their goals, needs, and interests in the community, I continuously negotiated to be an insider of the group.

Negotiating the Journey Collaboratively

The classes I was assigned for Fall 2015 & Spring 2016 were Advanced class, the highest level of Korean language, history, and culture class, as well as Art & Craft class, an extracurricular activities class. In Advanced class, student learned Korean heritage culture through the school textbook, Korean 6, which was developed by the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. See Appendix D for the full class curriculum. In addition, students were encouraged to express their critical way of thinking in verbal, written, and visual languages. Student deepened their cultural
understandings through completing several assignments including book reports and reflection papers about multicultural issues.

The research aimed at creating synergies between all participants in the community by creating or promoting the development of latent connections and deconstructing virtual barriers between entities. Through the process of working together, all KACSCO’s community members including me shared our stories, ideas, and experiences, which built the fundamental frame of this study. However, the journey itself was not always easy and smooth. Due to multiple unexpected situations in the community, the direction of this CBPAR study needed to be restructured whenever an issue came up. Therefore, the study was not conducted in a linear way. Lincoln and Goulet (1998) state that “sometimes we are not certain that we are doing the work right” (p. 229). Proceeding with this study, I was often faced with these questions whether I/we were doing the “right” things. However, we learned as we proceeded with this study (McIntyre, 2008), moving back and forth or right and left (Heron & Reason, 2001).

Obviously, we could not remove all of our stereotypes or other individuals’ biases toward the community; however, by continuously reflecting on others’ different perspectives and learning how to respect the differences as well as listening to them, we became a community through the shared experiences, “humanizing process” (Paris & Winn, 2014; Kinloch & San Pedro, 2013; Irizarry & Brown, 2014; Bartolome, 1994; McIntyre, 2008).

**Description of the Procedure of Participatory Action Research**

My two-year journey with the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) members began with my interest in the community. On Friday, June 20,
2014, I contacted the previous principal of KACSCO to discuss my possible contributions to the community. As a previous art teacher and community volunteer in diverse settings for over a decade, I thought there would be some things I could contribute to the community. On October 9, 2014, the principal asked for my help to lead art classes at the 2014 annual camp of Korica, a group of Korean adoptive families, to introduce Korean culture to Korean adopted children in the Central Ohio region. My participation in the 2014 Camp Korica was the starting point of my involvement in the Korean-American community (See Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Research Procedure](image-url)

**Fall 2014 - Spring 2015 Semesters**
- Taught *Kindergarten, Beginner, Intermediate*, and *Art* classes as a substitute teacher
- Documented the school events, developed KACSCO’s news letters and posters, and created the first year book, *Noori*, as an art specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten:</th>
<th>JS, MS, YS, and HR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginner:</td>
<td>AR and HY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate:</td>
<td>YG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art:</td>
<td>JS, MS, YS, HR, HE, YN, HN, BAS, JW, YR, YL, HY, SE, and SH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fall 2015 Semester**
- Taught *Advanced* and *Art* classes as a regular teacher
- Documented the school events

| Advanced: | YG, HL, SE, HR, and SH |
| Art:      | JS, MS, YS, HR, HE, YN, HN, BAS, JW, YR, YL, HY, SE, and SH |

**Spring 2016 Semester (IRB approval, 14 weeks)**
- Taught *Advanced* and *Art & Craft* classes as a regular teacher
- Documented the school events

| Advanced: | YG, HL, SE, HR, and SH |
| Art & Craft: | JHJ, JH, and HJ |

**Fall 2015 Semester (IRB approval, 14 weeks)**
- Taught *Advanced* and *Art* classes as a regular teacher
- Documented the school events

| Advanced: | YG, HL, SE, HR, and SH |
| Art:      | JS, MS, YS, HR, HE, YN, HN, BAS, JW, YR, YL, HY, SE, and SH |

**Spring 2016 Semester (IRB approval, 14 weeks)**
- Taught *Advanced* and *Art & Craft* classes as a regular teacher
- Documented the school events

| Advanced: | YG, HL, SE, HR, and SH |
| Art & Craft: | JHJ, JH, and HJ |
On October 10, 2014, I was invited to the community as an art specialist, an assistant teacher, an art educator, and a substitute teacher. As an art specialist, I worked closely with the previous principal to gather the Korean-American students’ journals, diaries, book reports, and artworks to create a yearbook. I also documented the students’ class activities and school events as a photographer and led Korean painting classes at their Open House ceremonies. As an assistant teacher, I taught four preschoolers with varied ethnic backgrounds: MS has Chinese-American father and Korean mother while HR has Korean father and Chinese mother; YS has Italian-American father and Korean mother, and JSC has German-American father and Korean mother. All the four multi-ethnic students barely understood Korean, so they could not join a regular class and were assigned to my class. As an art teacher, I had thirteen kindergarten students, whose age ranged from three to six. The students’ Korean comprehension levels were varied based on their social and situational factors. Lastly, I taught all levels of the Korean-American students as a substitute teacher whenever teachers could not come to the school.

These diverse roles and engagements in the community allowed me to observe the dynamics of the KACSCO community. Through working with the students, teachers, administrators, and parents for the first two semesters, I found interesting social and cultural contexts of the community, which led to design this participatory action research study. Among the community members, there were disparate perceptions and understandings about Korean-American students’ cultural identities as well as various levels of expectations for KACSCO.

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8 The initials provided here are pseudonyms to preserve their identity and privacy.
During the Fall 2015 semester, I worked for KACSCO as a full time teacher and researcher. However, due to the school’s administrative changes, I faced an unexpected difficulty. The original plan of this participatory action research study was supposed to begin in the Fall 2015 semester. However, the principal, who allowed me to conduct my research, left the school, and I didn’t have any contact with the prospective principal. This situation shifted my original research plan in many ways. Most of all, I had developed a curriculum focusing on multicultural issues by utilizing visual components as the main tool of this study. See Appendix C for the original curriculum. Although the curriculum was different from the KACSCO’s general curricula, it was accepted under the previous principal’s leadership. Once the new principal took over the school, I needed to modify the research direction under the new leadership by focusing more on the role as a teacher, not as a researcher by following the suggested curriculum of the school. See Appendix D for the revised curriculum.

The main expectation for the school teachers was to improve Korean-American students’ Korean language skills, which was not what I originally intended to investigate through this research study. Moreover, I could not embed aspects of Korean-American students’ cultural identity as a main part of my curriculum. Based on administrators’ understanding, KACSCO’s parents and board members were very sensitive about possible disclosure of the community’s experiences in a research study. Instead, the administrators expected me to use specific textbooks provided by Korean government, which other teachers had to use for their curriculum.
Additionally, many students dropped the school due to several reasons including lack of interests in learning Korean language, dissatisfaction of their learning development, and/or poor conditions and the location of the community school. This resulted in a lower number of KACSCO students, which caused a decreasing number of participants in my research study. Specifically, students’ fewer enrollments in Music class, one of the extra activity classes, resulted in cancellation of the class. Consequently, we needed to divide my Art class into Art & Craft and Origami classes, so the music teacher could teach students origami. That downsized the number of students of my Art & Craft class from eleven to five students.

As stated earlier, all administrators and teachers of the community school were volunteers, which caused other dynamics and unpredicted situations. Before starting Fall 2015 semester, three teachers who had taught at the Korean-American community school for years decided to leave along with the previous principal, and new teachers and the new principal joined the KACSCO community. Therefore, the roles of the teachers of the community school had to change. My role as a teacher who had worked with the community for two semesters became an important part of the community. I needed to and was ready to play a leadership role in the school, since the new administrative team and teachers didn’t know how the previous principal had structured the school curricula and events. Having an ownership role encouraged me to actively participate in all school events in contrast to the situation when I still felt I was an outsider. In my third year in the United States, I was not confident to work with American communities due to my language barrier, so I approached this Korean-American community in 2014. However, I
felt that I was still an outsider at the Korean-American community where I thought I could easily fit in. After building a relationship with the community members (Hutzel, 2007) and having a better understanding of the community’s perspectives and their daily experiences, I became more comfortable with working in/with the community. Besides, the situational factor of becoming a regular teacher, instead of being a substitute teacher, provided me with a sense of both confidence, responsibility, and influence.

As a teacher of the *Advanced* and *Art & Craft* classes, I was assigned seven distinct students during the Fall 2015 semester. Five students enrolled in my *Advanced* class based on their proficiency levels of Korean language, and the three of them also joined my *Art & Craft* class. Additionally, two other students who were five and six years old chose the *Art & Craft* class for their extra curricula activity, which stretched my participants’ age range from five to eleven year old, which I didn’t expect, since I had older students in the previous semesters.

Although I and all my students had met several times through classes or school activities in previous semesters, getting to know one another was not an easy step. All five students in my *Advanced* class, three boys and two girls, whose age ranged from seven to eleven, were very quiet and looked like introverted persons. Similarly, most of the students in my *Art & Craft* class had never met each other, which created an awkward atmosphere.

However, while spending time and sharing stories together throughout the Fall 2015 semester, we became open-minded to one another. We started to voice our own struggles, shared private stories and previous experiences, and came up with findings in
our common interests, similarities, and differences based on our own cultural and social backgrounds. This situation soon resulted in a conflict of my roles as a researcher and teacher. I needed to maintain the balance between the two roles, which required continuous negotiations between promoting students to share their stories and experiences and teaching them the textbook. As a teacher, I was expected to teach a certain amount of the textbook every week, which was considered as the amount of the students’ learning, whereas voicing and sharing the students’ daily experiences was considered a problematic situation in the school context.

Due to the unexpected events and negotiations in the Fall 2015 semester, the official research study began on January 31, 2016. Despite the particular nature and procedure of participatory action research study (Rowan, 2001), the IRB study could only cover the fourteen weeks of Spring 2016 semester. For that semester, there were five students in my Advanced level of Korean language, history and culture class, and three students in my Art & Craft class. The total student number of Art & Craft class fluctuated several times throughout the semester due to two factors. Sometimes, students lost or gain their interests in the Art & Craft class; and other times, students needed to join my class due to the community school’s circumstances. The highest number of the participants in the Art & Craft class was seven and the lowest number was one.

Part IV: Data Collection and Analysis

Research Journals: Observation, Field Notes and Reflection, Audio Recording, and Photo Documentation
There are three main components in my research journals: weekly journal, audio recording, and photo documentation. Initially, I wrote weekly journals based on class observation, field notes, and reflections. This helped me document strong impressions during the classes and reflect the events of each day. Another significant part of the research journals was audio recordings. All class conversations and main school events were audio recorded, and reviewed and analyzed multiple times throughout the research process. Indeed, listening to the recordings several times allowed me to uncover fine details and stories that I missed at the research site and in the weekly journals, where I was only able to focus on the main events. Lastly, photo documentation covered visual dynamics of the research setting and evoked the vividness of the memories.

Visual Outcomes: Students’ Artworks

All students’ visual artworks were gathered, scanned, and/or photographed; then further reviewed and analyzed for this research study. During both the Advanced and Art & Craft classes, students utilized a wide range of visual expression and communication. For example, many students drew doodles on their textbooks and workbooks, completed their own drawing/story books, and created visual arts including drawings, paintings, crafts, and origamis on a weekly basis. Over a thousand images were collected and sorted based on the categories of specific activities and emerging themes that I will report in the later part of this Chapter.

Interviews with Teachers and Parents

In addition to ongoing informal interviews with students, teachers, parents, and administrators throughout the Spring 2016 semester, six formal interviews were
conducted at the end of the semester. Four teachers and two parents participated in the interviews from April 3 to May 11, 2016. The original plan for the interviews was a minimum of thirty minutes and maximum of one hour interview. However, the interviews were carried out intensively beyond the expected time frame. In particular, several interviews with the teachers lasted up to three hours. Since the interviews were done voluntarily, the teachers and parents who felt comfortable with sharing stories with me participated in this stage. Some of the teachers and parents had worked with me for about three years, while the others began to work with me through the 2015-2016 school year.

The interview questions were provided to all interviewees either before the scheduled meetings or at the beginning of each interview. See Appendix G for the interview questions. Originally, thirty eight and thirty seven questions were prepared for the interviews with teachers and parents respectively, but only twelve to twenty questions were selected based on the interviewees and their conversation topics. During the interviews, I took notes, organized by topics, and highlighted important concepts. See Appendix H as an example of the interview notes. All the conversations were recorded, reviewed, and analyzed through an audio transcribing process.

Summary

Teaching at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) was involved in: 1) reading and writing Korean language, history, and culture; and 2) creating visual images during art class that students and their parents wanted to be taught through participations. Key school events and classroom activities were documented
through participant observation with audio recording, field notes, and photo documentation. Formal interviews were held with KACSCO’s parents and teachers, and informal interviews were held with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Students’ written and visual work were collected and copied on site; in particular, students’ extended texts and completed visual images.

To better understand the process, I used a modified version of Stringer’s approach of “Emerging Accounts” (2008, p. 84), gathering data through narratives, interviews, observations, and visual artmakings. Students were informally interviewed throughout the semesters including the two key interviews: at the beginning of each semester and the end of the semester. As a requirement, students wrote weekly diaries and bi-weekly journals and/or visual stories. I also documented the learning process through photo documentation, visual diaries (diaries with images), observation, field notes, and audio recording.

Storytellings and discussions proceeded as an open inquiry (Lykes, 2001). This was another crucial part of this study to extend meaningful dialogues about Korean-American’s cultural identity outside of the KACSCO community setting. In addition, students’ journals, artworks, informal interviews, and teachers’ and administrators’ discussions and feedback about the topics in Korean-American culture and multiculturalism were analyzed based on Stringer’s “Data Sets” (2008, p. 100). Particularly, the students’ visual images were interpreted in relationship with “non-visual contexts” (Grbich, 2007, p. 155) including the students’ narrative and their local context such as cultural and social settings. The data from students’, teachers’ and administrators’
groups were separately analyzed at the beginning, but were categorized together based on emerging themes. The three groups’ shared experiences and visual elements related to the Korean traditional ceremonies, American holidays, and/or special family events were identified as meaningful impacts on the participants’ cultural identity.

Since KACSCO’s students, teachers and administrators had different roles, experiences, and backgrounds within the context of this study, their understandings, voices, and ways of delivering cultural identities varied. Experiences of the students who were born in the United States led to different perceptions about identity of Korean-Americans than the students who were born in Korea and moved to the United States. Furthermore, students with multi-ethnic backgrounds felt differently than mono-ethnic Korean-American students. Family, ethnicity, race, religion, age, and gender differences emerged during the study.

Furthermore, meaningful interactions with the participants became research data in this study. As Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) perspectives locates “the phenomena of human experiences within the world of social interaction” (Grbich, 2007), shared experiences and personal interactions with KACSCO’s students, parents, and/or administrators changed and constructed the direction of this CBPAR study. These interactions developed certain themes and emerging data which was investigated further through this study. In other words, emerging local contexts such as common interests or needs of community actions led the next step of this CBPAR study.

There were numerous variables in this study. For instance, people who were involved in the KACSCO community are Korean-American students, their parents,
teachers, administrators, and other community members within the same category, Korean-American community. Moreover, there was a wide range of different backgrounds and situational contexts including parents’ race or ethnicity, family history, location of birth, school influence, peer pressure, and economic condition more than I could imagine. I, as a researcher, was receptive to all those variables and embraced multiple changes that happened throughout this journey. All participants were the owners of this study, sometimes as leaders and other times as collaborators. I respected each individuals’ influences on this study and we proceeded to each stage together.

In this sense, McIntyre’s (2008) concept of “learning to listen and listening to learn” was another significant factor (p. 8). We learned how to listen to others’ stories through shared experiences in class and we learned from one another. “[S]eeing things intersubjectively, from one’s own point of view and from the point of view of others (from the inside and the outside)” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) is an important way of learning with/abou仟from others. Moreover, profound observation and interpretation of the social context reflecting on the KACSCO’s practices enabled us to see our situation more clearly. Each individual’s practices brought the KACSCO’s members together to learn from each other’s different viewpoints and backgrounds within a boundary of Korean-American community. This collaborative reflecting process from one another formulated our mutual learning in a positive way.

As I described, there were a number of variables emerging from the community site working with administrators, teachers, and students. The original plan had been continuously shifted and changed as building our learning process and sharing the space
together as a community. At the beginning, there was neither enough information about the community setting, the interaction among community members, nor strong relationship among students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Some of them were returning students, parents, teachers, and administrators, but many others were new to the community.

Administrative changes affected the research plan and schedule. Because several teachers stopped coming to the school and new ones joined without enough knowledge about how the school was managed recently, teachers needed to reorganize based on the varying numbers of students who might enroll in classes. For instance, teachers did not know the definitive number of enrolled students until the second week of the semester. In my case, only two students were initially assigned to my Advanced class whereas seven students were assigned to my Art & Craft class. However, the number had changed due to several reasons including students’ cancellation of their registrations. The decrease in students’ enrollment rate also changed the research target population size.

Another shift emerged as I realized and embraced students’ and parents’ interests and needs. I hoped to actively use visual method not only for the students in Art & Craft class but also for the students in my Advanced class. However, I understood that the main desire of the parents was that their children could read, speak, and write Korean language fluently. This understanding led the original curriculum to change toward emphasizing more on storytelling in Advanced class whereas visual narrative components were mainly used for the students in Art & Craft class.
Each week, whenever I interacted with the students, there were always unexpected situations and following negotiations. I continually found new dynamics among students, parents, teachers, other community members, and myself. For instance some students did not seem to find interest in learning the Korean language, history, and culture that the community school seeks to deliver, while others were reluctant to share their stories due to wariness or just shyness of talking in front of classmates.

In fact, those uncertainties impacting the direction of this research could be seen as a limitation in the planning stage of a research project. When beginner researchers enter a community without a solid direction of their research, it can be scary-chaotic-messy. On the contrary, it could be considered as unlimited possibility of improvement of further direction. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) point out that through an on-going learning process with community members, we can make familiar unfamiliar or the unfamiliar familiar. Exploring questions such as what KACSCO’s members daily do, which events, experiences, or actions are usual or unusual or when and why they do these things could make us see everyday experiences with a different angle. These processes enabled us to build a relationship and co-construction of knowledge sharing ownership between me and my students.

Those changes, shifts, and developments were gathered as data via observations, field notes, photo documentation, audio recording, and artifacts such as memos, individual idea cards, etc. As a CBPAR study emphasizing process of the study, the traces of our shared experiences were all meaningful data in this study. I analyzed initial data to create main themes and categories, and applied to the next activities. This led to
new data which was generated during the process of going back and forth. Therefore, collecting these new data and modifying my temporary/previous assumptions was a way of constructing legitimate findings and implications.
Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

Introduction

In Chapters Two and Three, the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this study were explained. In Chapter Two, critical multiculturalism, narrative inquiry, and arts-based research were reviewed as theoretical backgrounds. Critical multiculturalism supported the approach of this study by highlighting the importance of understanding social and cultural contexts of the research setting. Narrative inquiry and arts-based research utilizing stories and visual images encouraged the participants to voice and share individuals’ experiences with other people. In Chapter Three, community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) was presented as a main methodological framework of this study. Working with participants, we constantly negotiated and co-constructed this research study based on different interests and needs. Stories and visual images became fundamental means of the non-linear process of developing this CBPAR study and were also collected and analyzed as the primary source of data in this research study.

Chapter Four is dedicated to data presentation. First, I provide my positionality in Part I. Part II restates the overview of the community and research setting to clarify the angle of the research frame and the social, cultural, political, and situational contexts of the research participants. Finally, Part III presents the data as emerging themes,
synthesized into three main topics: students’ stories, visual images, and the formal interviews with teachers and parents. The first topic, Section I: Stories, covers stories of the Korean-American students at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio. While learning Korean language, history, and culture, students shared their thoughts and experiences through stories. The second topic, Section II: Visual Images, focuses on the visual components of the study, which includes both the artmaking process and the visual images shared with other students. Lastly, Section III deals with formal interviews with the school’s teachers and parents, which portray a better understanding of the community.

Part I: Point of View of the Researcher

My standpoint in this participatory action research study is based on my personal background as a Korean who advocates critical multiculturalism. I see myself as both an insider and outsider of the Korean-American community. As an insider, I shared their multicultural backgrounds, living in the United States with the community members. As an outsider, I had different experiences compared to the Korean-American students. For example, growing up in Korea, I was barely exposed to cultural multiplicity that the Korean-American students had experienced in the United States. In other words, I did not experience cultural differences in and outside of my home setting. Additionally, Korean-American students were more familiar with American culture and English language while I was more familiar with Korean culture and language. Therefore, the students used English with each other, but they spoke Korean to me. As a result, I found that sometimes there were limited communication and understandings due to both cultural and language
differences. Regardless of these limitations, our dissimilarities brought up interesting comparisons between the two cultures, languages, and situational contexts. Sometimes, the students and I had different perspectives toward the same cultures, which evoked meaningful conversations about facets of the cultures.

During the study, I felt a sense of connectedness to the Korean-American community. Both the students and I were exposed to Korean and American cultures directly and indirectly. While spending two years working at the community school, the Korean-American students and I were able to build trust, rapport, and personal ties which help develop an intimate space where we could share personal stories. Our interactions accumulated, which made us feel comfortable with one another. Moreover, the students and I felt empathy in terms of language struggles in opposite situations: the students’ struggles in expressing their ideas via Korean resonated with my English limitation.

Aligned with my ongoing experiences in diverse and cultural settings, I strongly value the significance of understanding other people’s backgrounds and cultures in a multicultural society. This viewpoint toward cultural perceptions is also reflected in my positionality in this study.

Part II: A Picture of the Setting

*Members with Diverse Cultural and Social backgrounds*

The cultural and social background of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community members comprises several aspects of the recent Asian immigrants in Columbus, Ohio. Most of all, in order to examine the cultural
and societal contexts of KACSCO’s students, I needed to understand their parents’ background. Most of KACSCO’s parents were post-1965 migrants/immigrants (Min, 2013), the majority of which are 1st generation Koreans/Korean-Americans in addition to a few 1.5 and 2nd generation parents. Most of KACSCO’s parents moved to the United States during recent decades. As the Ohio Development Services Agency (2015) reveals, “a very high proportion” of the Asian population in Ohio is between the ages of 25 and 44. In accordance with this statistic, the majority of the KACSCO’s parents, teachers, and administrators were from their late 20s to early 40s, and many of them moved to the United States as young adults. Therefore, the KACSCO community embraced both recent immigrants and a large number of temporary residents of Korean citizenships.

Furthermore, the parents’ socioeconomic status was mixed but they were mostly middle class based on their educational levels and occupations. As stated in Chapter Three, a large number of the Asian/Korean population in Columbus, Ohio, moved to the United States for their study or work. KACSCO’s parents also came to the United States in their later career for similar reasons. Therefore, most of them had received their primary, secondary, and/or higher educations in Korea, which led them to be more familiar with Korean ways of thinking, education, and culture than American ones.

Due to the parents’ migration, most Korean-American students were born in the United States or moved to the country in their early age. For example, except one student who was born in Korea, all five students in my Advanced and Art & Craft classes were born in the United States. Moreover, there was an increasing number of students with multi-ethnic backgrounds in KACSCO, all of whom were also born and raised in
America. During the Spring 2016 semester, there were eight students who had a multi-ethnic background among the total number of 28 students in the school. In fact, there were six additional students of multi-ethnic backgrounds in 2015, but they dropped the school due to several reasons that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Among KACSCO’s six main teachers including myself, all of us were born in Korea and moved to the United States for our studies. Whereas one teacher moved to the United States about twenty years ago and became an American citizen, the other five teachers came to the United States within the past five years. Most teachers were in the late 20s or early/middle 30s and their legal status was temporary residents. Among all, I was assigned to the Advanced class since I had teaching experiences in K-12 schools. Two teachers who had teaching experiences in early childhood education in Korea taught Kindergarten classes, and one teacher who had previous teaching experiences in another Korean-American community school in Columbus, OH, taught an Adult class. The other two teachers had no teaching experiences but were assigned to the Beginner and Intermediate classes.

Starting point: Sharing relationship

To begin with presenting the data of this research study, general backgrounds of the main student participants should be recapped. As mentioned, there were five students in Advanced class and three students in Art & Craft class. The age range of the students in Advanced class was eight to eleven years old. Unlike the previous semesters, only one student was female, and the rest of the students were males. Two of them took the Art & Craft class as well, along with a five years old male student from the Beginner class. See
Appendix F for the general demographic information about the participants of this study.

**Advanced Class: Learning Korean Language, History, and Culture**

The *Advanced* class is the highest level of Korean language, history, and culture class at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO). The students spent two hours from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm every Sunday to learn Korean language, history, and culture. I set up the main goal of this class to encourage students to express their critical way of thinking through Korean language. The students practiced more advanced level of Korean through reading, writing, speaking and listening, and they were encouraged to write reflection papers about their daily experiences or to present short book reports about multicultural contents. The demographic of the students in *Advanced* class is presented below in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Birth</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Biracial</td>
<td>Costa Rican/Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Demographic of the students in *Advanced* class

1. YG: YG had a multiethnic background. He was the first student I taught at KACSCO in Fall 2014. My impression of him had changed over the years. As a substitute teacher, I taught him Korean language in addition to extra observations via
several school events. He was a very smart student who easily understood my explanations and learned Korean language very fast. He was also a gifted student in his elementary school. Nevertheless, YG had higher resistance in attending the Korean-American community school and learning Korean language compared to the other students.

2. JH: JH moved up to the Advanced class during Spring 2016 semester. At the beginning of the semester, he was very quiet and did not express his opinions in front of me or other classmates. However, as the semester passed by, all of us realized that he was a very active and outgoing student who liked playing around. His Korean pronunciation was very accurate in contrast to most of his classmates. JH always asked me not to assign any Korean homework. He also wanted to stop coming to the Korean-American school and learning Korean language as YG did. He claimed that the only reason he came to the community school was his parents’ strong request and input.

3. HJ: HJ also joined the Advanced class during the Spring 2016 semester. Unlike YG and JH, HJ and his parents seemed to highly appreciate the Korean-American community school. In fact, his Korean ability was one of the highest levels among all the students at KACSCO, but he had stayed at lower level classes for several semesters. HJ’s father explained to me that he thought HJ would need to graduate after attending the Advanced class. Therefore, HJ’s parents asked the school administrators to assign him in the lower level classes, so that HJ could attend the Korean-American school longer. Similar to HJ’s parents who were very interested in HJ’s learning and language
development, HJ seemed to value learning Korean language, history, and culture. He stated that he liked coming to KACSCO because he could learn Korean culture.

4. HL: HL was the only female student in the Advanced class. She had taken my Advanced class for two semesters, so appeared to feel comfortable with talking to me. During the Fall 2015 semester, she seldom talked about her personal stories in class. However, she changed her attitude and often led our class conversations by sharing her experiences throughout the Spring 2016 semester. HL’s opinions about the Korean school shifted several times. Sometimes she said that she didn’t want to come to the school, but very often she revealed that learning Korean language was very valuable for both personal and social reasons. At the ending ceremony of the Spring 2016 semester, she gave a presentation about her interpretations of KACSCO, which evoked meaningful conversations among the community members. Besides, she changed her decision several times about which extra curricula activities she would attend during the Spring 2016 semester. At the beginning of the semester, she originally enrolled in the Origami class, then moved to the Art & Craft class. However, due to a reason that I will discuss later in this Chapter, she finally went back to the Origami class.

5. HR: HR was the oldest and only middle school student in the Advanced class. His mother was an administrator at KACSCO, and his two younger brothers attended the Korean-American community school as well. He was very knowledgeable in diverse topics, and I observed that he enjoyed reading books and learning about history. Although he answered that he got bored of the Korean-American school, he agreed with
several values of learning another language. His choice for the extra curricula activity was Taekwondo, Korean martial art, and he actively participated in the related events.

**Art & Craft Class: Learning through Artmaking**

The *Art & Craft* class is one of the extracurricular activities in the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio, which was held for one hour from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm after two hours of the Korean language, history and culture class.

Different extracurricular activity classes had been offered each semester based on students’ interests and teachers’ capabilities. For the Spring 2016 semester, three classes, *Art & Craft, Music, Taekwondo*, had been initially offered as extra curricula activities classes. However, *Music* class was canceled due to the lack of enrollment. Therefore, *Art & Craft* class was divided into two courses, *Art & Craft* and *Origami* classes. It impacted the total number of students in my *Art & Craft* class. The enrollment number of eight became four, two male and two female students. However, in the middle of the semester, two students moved to and one student moved from *Origami* class, which led me to have three students at the end of the semester. The demographic of the students in *Art & Craft* class is presented below in Table 2.

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
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Table 2. Demographic of the students in *Art & Craft* class
1. JHJ: JHJ, five year old male student of Korean nationality, was the youngest student among all my student participants. He came to the United States when he was three years old for his mothers’ study, and attended a kindergarten in Columbus, Ohio. His social situation and legal status were somewhat different from other Korean-American students who were born in the United States. Coming to the United States, he couldn’t speak English at all; however, he improved his English dramatically while forgetting Korean. His mother stated that his first language became English recently. I could notice his language capacity shift through three years of observation and close interactions during the two semesters in my Art & Craft class. JHJ was a very creative and enthusiastic student who freely expressed his ideas through visual images. One of the interesting aspects was that JHJ frequently wrote English words in his drawings.

2. JH: JH enrolled in both of my Advanced and Art & Craft classes during the Spring 2016. Contrary to the little interest in learning Korean language, history, and culture, JH actively participated in the Art & Craft class. Particularly, he became very excited when he utilized technologies to create artworks or worked with craft materials. He stated that the best thing in KACSCO was to get the chances to create artworks.

3. HJ: I was aware of HJ’s artistic capability via his doodles that I could observe in my Advanced class. However, working with him in the Art & Craft class provided me with a better idea of his unique approach to visual creation. HJ created stories along with his own characters, and developed the intertwined relationships between the stories and visual images. After creating characters, he named them and set up social circumstances
of each character, and developed stories. He often used the same main characters in his
different stories and images, and the characters reflected on social classes.

*Shared Time and Experiences*

For two years, the students and I had contact directly and indirectly through
classes and/or school activities. Each moment we shared became a fundamental step for
consolidating our relationship. I had documented the process of our interactions and key
school events, and these moments were shared with parents, administrators, and other
community members through open exhibitions, a yearbook, and the school’s website (See
Figure 4).

Figure 4. Pictures of weekly activities during the Spring 2015 and Fall 2015 semesters
Most student participants of this study have attended the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) for more than two years but in varied levels of classes with different teachers. YG, HL, HR, and JHJ were in my Advanced and/or Art & Craft classes during the Fall 2015 semester and continued participating in my classes in Spring 2016. HJ and JH joined my classes in the Spring 2016 semester for the first time. At the beginning of the semester, they were relatively quiet and conservative in terms of revealing their personalities or sharing their backgrounds and daily experiences. In particular, JH barely disclosed his active character at the beginning, but at the end of the semester, all classmates realized that he is a very outgoing student. In HJ’s case, he didn’t easily express his ideas in verbal languages, but as we built a relationship, he excessively translated his daily experiences and imaginations through visual images, and shared them with other classmates and me.

On the fifth week, HJ came to school earlier than others, so I asked about where he was born and in which cities he grew up. However, he answered only the first question by confirming that he was born in the United States, and stopped answering other questions. Instead, he kept quiet and drew doodles in his textbook. Since the Spring 2016 semester was our first semester to learn Korean language and culture together, I thought he was not ready to share his background with me. On the other hand, HL, who spent more time with me through previous semesters, approached me without hesitation. HL asked me several questions, such as whether I was doing okay, since I missed the class on the previous week. Sharing our stories and experiences related to being sick, HL and I shared empathy and relationship.
In the same manner, YG, HL and HR, who had worked with me for a while, were very open to sharing their opinions with me. They did not hesitate to express their ideas, including complaints about the school or negative feedback about the class contents. Moreover, they often told me their personal backgrounds or school experiences that they did not mention during the previous semesters. Spending three hours together every Sunday for more than two semesters, we built a closer tie to one another. Sharing our personal stories including daily achievements and struggles became a part of our weekly meetings, and we got more deeply involved with one another.

Moreover, some of the students seemed to be more intimate to one another compared to the other students. For example, YG, HL, and HR were close to each other since their parents also closely worked with one another. Sometimes, they hung out together even outside of the community school. They said that they often visited one another’s homes, watched videos, or played games together. Similarly, JH, YG, and HR attended the same Taekwondo school, Korean martial arts institution, so they were familiar with each other. In contrast, HJ could not easily get along with the other classmates at the beginning of the semester, since he had no external or previous relationship established with the peers. However, after six weeks passed, all students began to share their snacks with their classmates, and had conversations about their daily experiences altogether.
Part III: Emerging Themes

Emerging themes will be introduced based on three sections: Stories, visual images, and interviews. Each section implies various themes which overlap in a multiple dimension. The first section, Section I: Stories, primarily focuses on the Korean-American students’ stories that the students and I shared during the Spring 2016 semester in the Advanced class while learning Korean language, history, and culture. The second section, Section II: Visual Images, emphasizes both the students’ individual visual expressions and the aspect of how artmaking provided the students with opportunities to communicate and work with other community members through collaborative classes and the final exhibition. Lastly, in the final section, Section III: Interview, the formal interviews with the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s teachers and parents highlight the social and cultural contexts of the community.

Section I: Stories: Snapshots of the Community’s Experiences and Interactions

In this section, I will introduce important themes that emerged from the stories of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community members via two sub-sections: perspectives about Korean-American culture and identity, and learning processes of Korean language, history, and culture. Both sub-sections present KACSCO’ diverse aspects via exploring their cultural and social contexts, and situational contexts respectively.

Sub-Section I: Korean-American Culture and Identity

The first sub-section will include two categories. The first category, Category I: Cultural and Social Contexts, focuses on the broad social contexts of KACSCO
community’s cultural experiences and identity establishments. This category will be discussed through four different angles, perspectives from outside, perspectives from inside, comparison between the two cultural contexts, and contemporary aspects of their cultural and social contexts. The second category, Category II: Situational Contexts, will mainly investigate KACSCO’s multidimensional circumstances. This category explores KACSCO’ physical, financial, systematic, and emotional environments in addition to their negotiation process in the setting.

**Category I: Cultural and Social Contexts**

In order to understand the Korean-American culture and identity, this category encompasses four perspectives. One is the outside perspective consisting of my own observations and thoughts about the Korean-American community. By entering the community as an outsider, I found interesting contexts of the community, and highlighted them via my personal interpretations/snapshots of the community. The second perspective takes into consideration multiple voices of the community from inside. KACSCO students’ stories, thoughts, and experiences are gathered under this subject. In addition, my evolving experiences in the process of becoming an insider of the community were compared with the students’ counterparts. The third perspective mainly contains comparisons between the two cultural and social aspects. Lastly, several characteristics of contemporary generation influenced by media and technology will be underlined in the fourth perspective. Considering multiple angles toward the community will expand the understanding of the contemporary Korean-American community’s cultural and social contexts.
1. An Angle from Outside: Coexistence/Intersectionality of Korean-American Culture

Coexistence of Korean and American Cultures

Defining a cultural and social boundary of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community was very complicated, in which Korean and American cultures were entangled. Nevertheless, it was evident that the school celebrates the two cultures respectfully. We could easily find the school’s vision/mission in the school’s setting such as the banner of the school (See Figure 5). One of the most vivid examples of the coexistence of Korean and American cultures in the community could be observed at KACSCO’s community events. In general, the school held two ceremonies, an Open house at the beginning of each semester, and an Ending ceremony at the end. On February 7, 2016, the first day of the Spring 2016 semester, KACSCO held an Open house and Lunar New Year event. The ceremony began with singing the two national anthems, Korean and U.S., with all attendees. Although many people could sing both anthems, people who did not know one of them were also respectful for the other part of the culture in the KACSCO community. The community members with their different backgrounds participated in these ceremonies every semester.
There was another snapshot in which I could observe the coexistence of the two cultures in the Korean-American community. After the ceremony, refreshments were provided for all attendees, students, parents, and community members. Since the ceremony was also for the Lunar New Year event, the KACSCO’s administrators and teachers prepared Korean rice cakes and Yakgwa, a Korean traditional cookie. Korean people usually eat the two kinds of Korean snacks, rice cake and Yakgwa, during Korean traditional holidays including Lunar New Year’s day. However, in addition to the Korean traditional snacks which parents, teachers, and administrators preferred to eat, American chocolate and candy were prepared for the younger generation (See Figures 6 & 7).

Moreover, the traditional beverages that are commonly served with Korean snacks are Sikhye, sweet rice drink, and Sujeonggwa, persimmon punch. Nevertheless, Korean people became used to drinking coffee or tea in modern times due to Western influences, which settled as a part of Korean contemporary culture. These fusion style refreshments, eating Korean traditional snacks with coffee and tea along with American candies and...
chocolates, directly reflected on the Korean-American community’s social context of mixed influences of two different cultures in contemporary society.

Figure 6. Korean snacks at the Spring 2016 Open house

Figure 7. American snacks at the Spring 2016 Open house
During the open house, five different activities proceeded in the school auditorium. Four games, *Tuho, Jegi, Pangi* and *Bisuk*, are Korean traditional games, whereas the other game, *three-legged race*, is a Western style game to promote the students’ collaboration. The Korean-American students never had a chance to play those Korean traditional games except at the Korean-American community school, so they were very excited about them. The school’s main purpose of providing the Korean-American students with these traditional activities was for the students to be exposed to the Korean traditional culture. Through having those opportunities, the Korean-American students could feel familiar with their cultural heritage. On the other hand, the three-legged race was an activity the Korean-American students were already familiar with due to their previous experiences in their American public schools. Both Korean and American style activities encouraged the students to work and learn with their peers, and enjoy the process of participation.

Similarly, on May 15, 2016, at the last day of the 2016 Spring semester, people with diverse backgrounds, including age, gender, class, race, and ethnicity, gathered together to celebrate the KACSCO students’ learning outcomes via an Ending ceremony (See Figure 8). Students in the six different classes prepared a play, a song, or a presentation based on their own interests or language levels, and performed them in front of their parents and community members. Some students and parents were proud of their learning improvement, while others were still embarrassed by their performances in Korean language in front of the community members. Many audience members at the
ceremony were from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, reflecting on the community’s diverse and complex cultural combination.

Figure 8. The community members at the Spring 2016 ending ceremony

At the event, I could observe another interesting aspect of learning Korean language, culture, and history in the context of a Korean-American community in the United States. Since the members of the community included people with varied racial or ethnic backgrounds, there were many people who could not speak or understand Korean. Therefore, some speakers and teachers spoke both Korean and English to deliver the themes of the ceremony and general backgrounds of the students’ performances. However, the other speakers utilized only Korean language, as they did not feel
comfortable speaking English in front of many people. While everybody is expected to speak English outside of the community school, speaking Korean was privileged in the community setting.

Furthermore, there were both Korean and American flags displayed in many locations, such as on the KACSCO’s banner in the back of the stage, and on a student’s Taekwondo, Korean martial art, uniform (See Figure 9). Like this, the coexistence of the two cultures is one of the key aspects of the Korean-American community.

Figure 9. 6th grade student performing Taekwondo at the Spring 2016 ending ceremony
2. An Angle from Inside: Multimodality/Complexity of Korean-American Identity

Students’ Viewpoints toward the Korean-American Identity

The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members’ perceptions toward the Korean-American cultural and social boundary and the Korean-Americans’ cultural identity were also varied. The parents’ and teachers’ viewpoints of the Korean and Korean-American identities were totally different from the Korean-American students’ perceptions. Certainly, I could observe parents’ strong influences on the Korean-American students’ perspectives, which will be discussed in a separate section.

The students and I had several conversations about our understandings and connotations of Koreans, Korean-Americans, and the Korean-American community. It was very interesting to learn the Korean-American students’ appreciations of aspects of Korean people, definitions of Korean-American, Korean-American community, and the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio. Contrasting to the parents’ or teachers’ viewpoints of Korean-American identity, which often begins with Korean identity, the Korean-American students revealed different perceptions of nationality, citizenship, and the notion of foreigner in relation to their Korean-American identities.

Different from their parents who were born and lived in Korea, the Korean-American students’ comprehensions of Koreans were very limited. The KACSCO students’ perceptions of Korea were based on their parents’ experiences in Korea several years or decades ago, or indirect experiences that they heard about from other people. Although the information did not reflect on the situations of contemporary Korean
society, the students expressed their strong beliefs that what happened in their parents’
generation are still happening in current Korean society. Otherwise, other people’s
limited experiences in Korea shaped the KACSCO’s students’ perspectives toward
Korean society. For example, on the second week, we talked about the rules that we
should keep in the classroom. This topic provoked our conversation about Korean
teachers. Three students among five agreed with HR’s opinions that Korean teachers are
“mean.” I asked them why they have this impression even though they never attended
Korean schools in Korea. HR explained that his mother’s piano teacher in Korea
punished his mother when she couldn’t play piano well in her childhood. Although HR’s
mother’s experience was more than twenty years ago, HR believed that this may still
happen, but this was understood as a generality of stereotype by the kid.

On the fifth week, students talked about Korean teachers’ punishment again. HR
said that “They do [punish]. They do it in some Korean schools,” JH also agreed with
HR’s idea, saying that “They do.” HL added that “Korea is scary,” and HJ pointed out
that “they do whack anybody that doesn’t…” while JH was also asserting that “they are
AGGRESSIVE.” YG repeated the story about his mother’s experience with her piano
teacher in Korea. He said that his mother’s “old piano teacher” hit his mother’s back of
the hands with the edge of a ruler. HL repeated that “Korean people are SCARY” while
YG pointed me out while saying that “You are Korean.” HL defended me by stating that
“No” “Not, not like you, but like, but like [Korean] people… people whack people, they
whack people.” Again, JH agreed with HL’s opinion, stating that “they do.” Ironically,
JH revealed that he used to go to a Korean school in Korea, and never experienced any
punishment there. However, he still agreed with the others classmates’ perspectives about Korea based on other people’s stories. In HL’s case, she stated that she heard about these experiences through her friend whose older sister was in Korea and might have those experiences. Although I disagreed with their opinions and provided them with my first-hand experiences as a high school teacher in Korea, they were doubtful about my perceptions about Korea and Koreans.

Moreover, there were varied perceptions in terms of who Korean-Americans are. Although parents’ and teachers’ concepts of Korean-American commonly started from the Korean heritage, the students’ definitions of Korean-American are as follows:

- People who are born in Korea who live in [A]merica (HR)
- People who were born in the U.S. but their parents are 100% Korean (HL)
- [People who are] born in America [but their] parents [are] Korean (JH)
- People who are Korean and American (YG)
- People who speak Korean and English (HJ)

One of the most interesting answers was their characterizations of Korean-American. Since both parents of HL and JH are Koreans, they said that Korean-Americans are the “people who were born in the U.S. but their parents are 100% Korean.” On the other hand, the perception of HR, whose parents have different race and ethnic backgrounds, was different from the opinion of HL and JH. HR said that Korean-Americans are “People who are born in Korea who live in [A]merica.” For HR, parents’ birthplace does not define the category of Korean-American as HL and JH identified. Rather, individuals’ cultural exposure to the two cultures describes the definition of who Korean-Americans
are. Another unique perception that HJ insisted was “Korean-Americans are people who speak Korean and English.” For HJ, speaking both languages plays an important role in this categorization. In fact, as mentioned, HJ is one of the few students who spoke the two languages fluently and valued them equally. Also, he was the only student who said that he likes to come to the Korean-American community school. To sum up, the students perceived the notions of Korean-American in various ways, based on their cultural, social, and educational backgrounds.

The Korean-American students understood that the main goal of Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) was to encourage students to learn Korean language and culture. However, the students’ perceptions of the Korean-American Community were manifold. On week thirteen, I encouraged the students to reflect on their concepts of the community framed as a Korean-American community. I asked students, “who are the members of the Korean-American community school,” “why do we call the school name Korean-American community school,” and “who belongs to this Korean-American community?” Whereas most students answered their classmates’ names, HL pointed out that “teachers and students” are the main members of the school. I also asked the students how they perceive Korean-American community, and the reason of why we call the school name as “Korean-American community school.” The students’ answers about their understandings of the Korean-American community school were:

- Because we are in [A]merica learning Korean (HR)
- Because anyone is welcome to learn (HL)
There are American people in the community school (JH)

Because American people go to learn Korean (YG)

Because Korean-Americans are allowed (HJ)

HR said that we call the school’s name as Korean-American community school “[b]ecause we are in America learning Korean,” while YG stated that “because American people go to learn Korean.” For the two students, the aspect of learning Korean in the community school was one of the main facets of the school. At the same time, their perceptions of the community members as Americans or people in America were highlighted in those answers. Similar to JH’s response, “there [are] American people,” those opinions emphasize their perspectives of their identity strongly rooted in America. Unlike the three students, HJ’s conveyed this thought by stating that “because Korean-Americans are allowed” in the community school. Similarly, HL described her opinion, saying that “because anyone is welcome to learn.” The two students extended the boundary of a Korean-American community by including “Korean-Americans” and “anyone” are also “allowed” and “welcome” in the community. HL added that “you don’t have to be Korean to learn at this school,” and she claims her definition of the community as “all of us.” Based on the students’ perceptions about themselves and other community members at KACSCO had shaped their responses differently.

Since diverse individuals with different cultural, social, political, racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds composed the Korean-American community, the Korean-American students’ perceptions about Korean-American identity were very complicated. In particular, the students’ standpoints of multi-ethnic students often became an issue. On
the third week, while talking about all the countries around the United States including Jamaica and Puerto Rico, HL asked HR and YG, “would you guys [be] half Jamaican?” YG answered that “No. We’re Puerto Ricans.” HR reconfirmed YG’s answer by stating that “me and YG, we’re half Puerto Ricans.” HL explained to the other classmates and me that “because their [father] is Puerto Rican and [mother] is Korean.”

On the fifth week, the students talked about appearance issues between different groups of people, which led to a conversation about the boundary of Asian ethnicity among the students. While YG stated that Asians look younger than other ethnic people, JH was about to identify all his classmates as Asians by claiming that “basically everybody in this classroom is…” However, JH suddenly stopped his speech and asked HR and YG whether “Are you Asian?” HR answered that “Yes… half Asian,” but he seemed to be uncomfortable with this question. YG also said “half Asian” while HL explained “he’s half….” HR indicated that “we (HR and YG) are both half Asians.” All of a sudden, JH pointed out YG and HR, and asserted that “You are half jalapeno!” and “You are half bacon!” At the same time, HL was guessing if they are “… half Jamaican….” YG denied JH’s statement by saying that “No. we are not!” HR also said that “I don’t like bacon… oh wait, I do like bacon. I LIKE bacon. I LIKE bacon…” These reoccurring dialogues about their clarification/identification of their peers’ cultural identity, especially students with multiracial/multiethnic backgrounds, began with uncomfortable reactions. However, the opportunities to think, respond, and develop their ideas exposed them to the sensitive conversation about their identity perceptions.
Students became at ease with responding to these topics as our shared conversation and space developed.

On the eighth week, when JH questioned her mother’s perception of him as Korean, HR voiced that the “same thing what my dad told me when I asked why do I have to learn Spanish….” YG responded to HR, stating that “Because you are Spanish.” HR agreed and continued saying that “Because I look like I’m Spanish, and I’m half Spanish.” I became curious about how HR perceived his father’s perspective. He said that “not as bad right now…” HR shared his developing sentiment and awareness of his cultural background as not bad as when he was younger.

On week ten, I asked students about their own definitions of the word, foreigner, while learning the vocabulary in our textbook. I explained that I was often confused by using the term, since I had used the word to indicate non-Korean people in Korea, in which I am in the opposite situation in the United States. HL maintained that “Wait, wait, wait... I was born in the United States. I was born in the U.S., so am I not a foreigner, but my mom is. Because she was born in Korea.” I was surprised by her opinion of perceiving her mother as a foreigner, thus asked HJ and JH about what they thought about HL’s viewpoint. They both agreed with HL’s assertion, and said, “YES, (HL’s mother is a foreigner).” HL further explained that “my mom is foreigner but I’m not. Because… even though my mom is foreigner, she gave birth to me, I was born here…” I asked if both HJ and JH also thought that their parents are foreigners. JH was hesitating and said “uh-huh” while HJ said “They ARE FOREIGNERS.”
I further questioned them about whether a person who was born in Korea but came to the United States a long time ago and got an American citizenship would be a foreigner. HL replied that “I think nationally you ARE not a foreigner, but like, inside you technically ARE. Because you were from a different country. Because… if they’re nationally citizens, they STILL from a different country. So it’s kinda like, it’s still… just because you are nationally a citizen, doesn’t mean you’re… you do not come from a different country.”

HL also raised an issue about the students with multi-ethnic backgrounds by stating that “Wait! But what if, like, your father is American and mother is Korean? … And then like, you moved to one place. It’s like you’re half… it’s WEIRD….” She was pondering and continued stating that “maybe you can do a DNA test over has more blood percentage… I guess you are a foreigner….”

I asked HL whether she perceived herself as an American or a Korean. She answered, “American.” I also asked whether her mother sees HL as an American or a Korean. She seemed to feel awkward, but smiled and replied to me “… Korean?” Nonetheless, she explained that “but the thing is, when you think about my mom had to take a test to become a citizen, but I don’t HAVE TO. I don’t have to take all these like, ID test and like, things to become a national citizen, because I was born in the United States… Because… become a citizen, you have to do it, so I think I am an American, but my mother thinks that since my father’s and… [she] are both Koreans, I am Korean, but like…” Her tone was quite calm. She also seemed to assure of her identity as an
American. Nevertheless, when I asked her if she had these kinds of conversation with her mother or other people, she said “no.”

We also talked about HR and YG who have a multi-ethnic background. Their father is American with a Puerto Rican ethnicity and their mother is Korean who was born in Korea. HL maintained that “Yah, but then both of their parents aren’t even Americans, because their dad is from Puerto Rico… I guess only the kids ARE [Americans] and then none of their parents aren’t…” I said that it is a very complicated and confusing concept that we could not easily define. However, she claimed that “but it’s kind of makes sense. If you kind of think about it… But you can go each way… different perspective you can go BOTH ways…”

In addition, I told her “people can perceive the same person as a Korean or an American,” and she added “I guess like, when you first look at someone, oh… like, she is from, like Asia, she is not a US citizen, but then I was born here…so…” She expressed her firsthand experiences by stating that “sometimes I kept asked where are you from, and I say, I’m from America… and they say like, but you’re like a Korean, like, aren’t you from Asia? No, my parents are, but I was born HERE. And then like… I don’t know, they get confused, but you know….” HL revealed that she had been often misperceived as a foreigner by other people due to her appearance.

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9 During the conversation, I did not know that Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, which indicates that Puerto Rican-born people are American citizens. I did not follow up with HL regarding her awareness of this, so her perspective about Puerto Ricans as non-Americans might vary.
3. Differences between the Two Cultures: Intersections and Cross-sections

I observed numerous dissimilarities between Korean and American cultures. I myself, Korean, and the students, Korean-Americans, who were born and raised in the United States, revealed dissimilar systems, rules, and perceptions in the different cultural backgrounds. While experiencing both Korean and American cultures, I wanted the students to think about small variances that we were rarely aware of, such as different ways of writing dates in different countries. For example, Korean people write the order of the dates followed by year, month, and date, unlike people in the United States. I was often confused by the order after I came to the United States. Therefore, I provided the students with a worksheet that students could think about the different contexts of the two countries, Korea and America (Appendix J).

The two main questions of the worksheet were: 1) Find the Republic of Korea from the two maps, circle it, and talk about three neighboring countries around Korea; and 2) Find the country where we live now, circle it, and talk about three neighboring countries. In the first map, the country in the middle of the map was Korea. HR asked me if the first map “is a Korean map” and the second one “is an American.” He claimed that “it also makes sense because Korea is the right in the middle [of the first map].” One of the very interesting results while discussing the contents in the worksheet was all the students in the Advanced class chose Cuba as one of the main countries around the United States. In fact, I never thought the significance of the country as one of the major countries, since I barely heard about and was rarely exposed to the country when I was in Korea.
We also had a conversation about the different ways of using language in Korean and English. While HJ was reading a sentence about grandmother’s birthday, YG asked me “what is Sangsin\textsuperscript{10}?” As Korean people use different manners and words for elderly people, HR questioned why “Spanish and Korean” have honorific while English does not. He wondered and asked “I don’t understand. Why does English not have it?” YG answered HR’s question by stating that “Because English does not [have] manners.” HL disagreed with YG’s opinion by stating that “I would say English does… if you say… like… like… you should use like… May I… or like something like…” HR didn’t agree with HL’s opinion and reputed it by saying that “that’s just normal manners,” and “nope, nothing formal.”

I also asked the students why there are these differences. HL replied that “I don’t know… I don’t really know… why or… I don’t have any idea for.…” I further asked if they felt like there are more gaps between younger and elderly people in Korea. HR pondered and answered, “Yes.” I questioned them if they felt differently between when they used Korean honorific and English. HL said “Yes,” and continued stating her understanding, “American don’t…have….” HR interfered “[do not] have manners” while HL continued “Yah… like… they don’t see differently to elder people, elderly people. They just say the same thing they might say to [friend]… they just say like hi…."

On the fifth week, we had another conversation about different perspectives in Korea and America. I compared my previous belief and value of maintaining perfect attendance in Korea with the disparate perspective that I had experienced in the United

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Sangsin} is a respectful way of indicating elderly people’s birthday in Korean.
States. In Korean, I never missed a class even though I was very sick in my school years. In my generation, attending schools without missing a single day was a very important goal for many Korean students including me. Therefore, I believed that I had to go to school even though I was sick. Additionally, I considered patience as one of the virtues I should pursue, so I wanted to be responsible for my role as a student. Therefore, even after coming to the United States, I still kept the attitude and perspective that missing a class should not be acceptable even when I was sick. However, I needed to think differently if I might be contagious. As HL said, being sick and coming to school with a contagious disease was not a common behavior that I could observe in schools in the United States.

4. The Current Generation: Involving with Media and Technology

Technology influence was a common trait among the Korean-American students. As a contemporary generation, the students were fully exposed to internet media and technology in their daily lives. For them, it was another way of learning cultural aspects in both Korean and American cultures. The students often mentioned their understandings of Korean popular culture after watching Korean animations, dramas, and/or music videos. Some students were aware of K-pop\textsuperscript{11} due to their exposure to social media or global websites such as YouTube. However, the exposure included several drawbacks of providing the students with limited information compared to experiencing diverse aspects of Korean culture in the country. Additionally, the students

\textsuperscript{11} An abbreviation of Korean pop, which indicates a popular music genre originated in South Korea.
might have been restricted by their parents in terms of what contents the students needed to consume.

Most students knew many Korean animation characters, not only the ones imported to the United States but also the old characters like *Dooly* created in 1983 in Korea. One day, HJ talked about the Korean animation characters, Dooly and *Pororo*. I wondered how they knew these characters which were created even before they were born. JH said that “Because I used to watch Pororo when I was…,” while HL said that she watched Dooly a long time ago. In fact, Dooly is an old animation character that I used to watch when I was a kid. Therefore, it was a surprising moment for me to be able to talk about these animation characters with them who are at least twenty years younger than me. HL agreed with me, stating that “it is weird,” and JH also stated that “Well, they still put it on TV.” HR clarified that some of the animations were translated into English whereas other students revealed that they watched those animations through YouTube, Netflix, and Warner Bros. TV.

Beyond cultural exposure, the Korean-American students obtained knowledge through media, and extensively relied on those understandings. The students often referred to the information they gained from websites or media to support their ideas. For example, HR asked me, “Do you know that New Zealand has the best schooling system… it has top… school… it’s the best education in the whole world.” In fact, I never heard that New Zealand offers such a high quality education, so asked him how he learned about it. HR affirmed his argument by stating that “I found it online in three different [web]sites.” For HR, the information on the websites was trustworthy and they
were perceived as a very effective tool in expanding his general knowledge. Similarly, HJ denied the existence of a certain social issue because he never learned it through websites. He questioned, “how, why is the kid crying over there? I’ve never seen a kid crying in *PebbleGo*… I’ve never seen a kid crying in PebbleGo. There is no such… there is no picture, there was no pictures of an Indian kid crying in PebbleGo.” At that time, I did not know what PebbleGo meant. I thought that it could be an encyclopedia that he used to read, a way of obtaining knowledge in my generation. After searching for the term, I learned that it was an internet database through which students can learn various topics.

Additionally, the Korean-American students often mentioned their virtual experiences through technology, which became a big part of the students’ lives. The computer-generated practices or knowledge that the students had received impacted their learning outcomes. For example, HR explained his virtual experimentation of a frog dissection through a computer application as if it was a real experience. When he claimed that he “learned how to dissect a frog,” I thought he had the experience at his school. However, HR explained that “No, there is an app on the laptop where you are allowed to do it. We [would] need to do it (a frog dissection) [in person] in seventh grade.” Since he was still in sixth grade, the experience he was referring to was through an indirect experience through a computer application. However, the virtual experience was counted

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12 Based on an internet resource (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capstone_Publishers), *PebbleGo* was launched by Capstone Publishers which develops educational materials including digital contents.
as a real experience for him, and it supported his argument of having an experience of dissecting.

On the other hand, some of the students realized that there was irrelevant or distorted information on websites. For example, JH wanted to show weird pictures that he found when his mother searched for a “nun.” He pointed out that sometimes we could get unrelated images when we searched for information via internet. He showed an irrelevant example of the search results of Mother Teresa, and asserted that “I’m pretty sure this is CLEARLY not Mother Teresa, CLEARLY not, CLEARLY NOT!” JH also searched Bruce Lee and shared numerous inappropriate results with other classmates.

Furthermore, all students were exceptionally interested in electronic devices or high-technology products such as a computer, laptop, camera, or a laser pointer. Most of them, if not all, revealed that they preferred to utilize high-technology tools compared to conventional devices. Whenever I put out my latest model laptop to show them some visual images, or took pictures with my DSLR camera, they were excited to play with them. On the sixth week, while I was taking pictures of the students’ doodles during snack time, YG asked me “how do you take a picture with this thing…. the cam… how do you take a picture?” HL explained that “you press the GIANT button… I think.” She also asked me saying that “wait…wait… I wanna see through it… I wanna see through it.” After teaching them how to take a picture, YG finally took a picture of me and said “I took a picture of the TEACHER” and smiled. YG had played with the camera for a while without eating snacks, and asked me to see his picture of me. Everybody wanted to see the picture and wanted to explore the device. At the same time, JH asked me, “can I see
the laser pointer for a second?” and he said that “I am gonna try to burn some paper [with the laser pointer].” JH wanted me to learn how to use the laser pointer instead of learning Korean language and culture.

In fact many students showed their preference and ease of utilizing technologies. During the Art & Craft class, JH wanted to use my computer and the stylus pen to draw his Nike shoes which he took a picture of (See Figure 10). HJ was excited to see the diverse functions of my computer, and shouted that “THIS IS SO COOL! THIS IS SO COOL!!” While JH was experimenting with the functions of a drawing application on my computer, he found out how to use an eraser that I couldn’t remember how to use. Unlike the other times when JH never showed any keen interest in drawing, he fully focused on the process of creating a visual image using the computer. He insisted that using the computer is much more convenient than using a pencil and paper. Again, HJ shouted, “This is SO COOL!” and asked me which application JH was using. I explained that the application was developed by my friend and given to me. JH was surprised and asked me “Does your FRIEND make this whole application?” “How do you like make applications and these stuff?” Both of them were extremely interested in using and developing technologies.
Figure 10. JH drawing his shoes, using a stylus pen and a computer

Category II: Situational Contexts

1. The Physical Environment: Limited Condition of the School

The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) physical circumstances was one of the significant concerns among students, teachers, and parents. The Korean-American students often complained about the school facilities and their cleanliness. Likewise, the school administrators and teachers frequently criticized about the situation that they needed to share their classrooms and storage spaces with the host school’s teachers. Moreover, for the parents, the most important issue regarding the
school’s qualification was the location of the school. In this section, I will mainly focus on the students’ opinions about the school building while teachers’ and parents’ opinions will be presented in section III later in this chapter.

All student participants revealed that they do not like the school’s “poor” circumstance. On the sixth week, I asked the students why they do not like to come to school. HR asked me back, “Why don’t we like the school? It’s messy….” I questioned HR, “what do you mean by messy?” and he replied that “uh… we don’t like the school, not the teachers.” He elevated his voice and said that “the paints falling on and…” while YG also stated that “that’s why it’s very cheap.” JH also repeated HR’s opinion by pointing out that “the paint [on the wall and ceiling] is coming off.”

HR asked me if I knew why KACSO is renting the ABC school building. I knew the reason, but wanted to listen to his responses, so asked him about his opinions. HR explained that “it’s five thousand dollars cheaper than other schools… this school, the rent… it’s the other school was $OOO14 for rent, but this was $OOO15.” YG replied to HR, saying that “makes sense.” YG also insisted that the school is “very dirty.” HL also said that “it’s like… it, at first, it looked like to$ really haunt too.” Both YG and HR were agreeing with HL’s opinion, by saying that “Yeah,” and JH also said, “me too.” HR added that this ABC school space is too “dirty” and old, built in “1902,” which is “older than [his] grandparents.” He reported that he also heard a music “like the old music… like 1960s music” in this building, which created an awkward environment.

13 Instead of the school’s real name, I use the name, ABC school, in order to protect the school’s privacy.
14 With a privacy concern for the both schools, the actual prices that YG mentioned are not stated here.
15 Ibid.
The students started to compare this school to other schools including the schools where the Korean-American community school had rented previously. In addition, they continued comparing the school building with their own public schools which are “a lot cleaner…” HR said that “[Even though] [my] school was built in 1932, and it’s still very clean.” HL also pointed out that her school was “built in 2000 and it’s so… like… really clean.” All the students asserted that they got a negative impression of the school, being dirty, when they entered the school for the first time. Furthermore, YG, JH, and HJ talked about the bad smell and poor condition of the toilets. YG stressed that “especially… boys’ restroom is REALLY dirty.” HL made a sound “EWW…” and continued saying that “yah, girls’ bathroom… it’s… DIRTY, it’s OLD and creepy looking.” HR maintained that they would study better if the school was clean.

Again, on the eleventh week, students declared that they do not want to come to this school due to the physical condition of the school building. In particular, JH expressed his frustration and asked me “Can… next time… the Korean-American school… Can we like… principal and the vice principal make, go a different school than this place? This place is HORRIBLE.”

2. The Financial and Systematic Environment: Temporality/Ambiguity of the School System

The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) had several financial and systematic issues such as limited budget, low student enrollment, and staff recruitment issues. As a nonprofit organization, the school had a limited budget partially supported by the Korean government and related institutions such as The
National Association for Korean School, Korean Education Center in Chicago, and Oversea Korean Foundation. The insufficient financial aspect limited the school’s rental options, which led severely impacted the students’ dissatisfaction of KACSCO. Since the KACSCO didn’t have its own building, administrators needed to seek a rental place within the school budget, which excluded most possible options. As stated earlier, there were many ongoing complaints about the current school circumstances in terms of school facilities and existing tensions between the KACSCO’s and the host school’s teachers regarding the school spaces. Therefore, KACSCO had tried to move another location, but the school budget didn’t allow them to do it.

Additionally, the school’s teachers expressed that they did not have enough budget to purchase educational materials for their classes. During the 2016 Spring semester, the school administrators cut budgets for class materials from $20 per week, about $300 per semester, to $10 per week and a maximum of $120 per semester, based on students’ number in each teacher’s Korean language, history, and culture class. In my case, I had 5 students in my Advanced class, one of the Korean language, history, and culture classes, and 3 students in my Art & Craft class, so needed to prepare 14 weeks of materials for both classes with a budget of $50 for the semester.

Students’ low enrollment was another severe issue. During the teachers’ meeting held before the Spring 2016 semester began, the school teachers and administrators talked about students’ low registration rate. One of the reasons we came up with was the location of the school. Due to the school location, which was not located in the communities where most Korean people live, many previous students stopped coming to
the Korean-American school. The most favorable location of the school was where many Korean people live and gather, such as on Bethel or Henderson road, in Columbus, Ohio. Many teachers and administrators stated that KACSCO would attract more students if the school were to be located near a Korean church, since many Korean people attend a Korean church on Sundays.

One teacher suggested that her Korean church might be a possible option for KACSCO to move in. She explained that the church owns their own building and has many classrooms that could be offered for the KACSCO teachers to use both as classrooms and storage spaces. In addition, she added that there are many students and children who could join the school. On the other hand, another teacher talked about another Korean church on Bethel road, which could be the “optimized” location for many Korean people. However, the principal explained that although the church wanted to provide us with their space, they have a full schedule with their own church programs.

Another reason that several parents brought up as their reason for leaving the school was the lack of KACSCO’s class levels. A wide range of students were often assigned in the same class level due to the lack of student numbers. Furthermore, many students had different language comprehension levels even if they were the same age. Compared to another Korean-American community school, which was affiliated with a church and had more than 100 students with about 20 different levels, the KACSCO had about 30 students with five levels. Therefore, the students often learned content that was too difficult or easy for their individual levels. Besides, the population’s mobility caused the lack of students. Since the temporary residents of Korean population often moved to
another state or went back to Korea for their study or jobs, there were many floating populations among the Korean-American community members.

Limited publicity was another issue. The school’s existence was barely known. One of the main advertising options was to display the school’s poster in Korean stores before each semester started. However, the new administration decided to stop doing it. Since the student recruitment heavily relied on individuals’ Korean networks, another approach was required. The suggestion that we discussed during the teachers’ meeting was to advertise the school through varied ways. Several teachers mentioned that there were many people who wanted to learn Korean language regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, the teachers stated that the school needed to let them know about the school’s schedule and other extra information. In that context, however, some teachers pointed out that KACSCO’s target population should be the Korean-American students who need to learn Korean language, culture, and heritage. Besides, promoting the school’s information through KACSCO’s website was also suggested. However, the address of the school’s website had been changed several times and the website has not been updated often since there was nobody who could spend time on it, which was another part of the school’s limitation.

Due to the circumstance as a community school, numerous variables emerged throughout the school year. In addition to the financial issue, unstable staff structure was another problem. All of KACSCO’s administrators and teachers were volunteers, and many of them were temporary residents or permanent residents who often move to another city, state or country. Therefore, the need for securing extra staff members has
always been an important matter. For example, the *Kindergarten* classes needed extra teachers, while an adult class might need to be opened, causing the school to secure an extra teacher pool. One of the parents of KACSCO’s students was nominated as a possible candidate during the teachers’ meeting, but the school could not execute the idea.

Moreover, change in administrator personnel occurred frequently. The teaching position in this school was not a stable or permanent job, which created discontinuity in the school environment. For example, the previous principal and six teachers left the Korean American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSO) last year, so the school had to find another principal and teacher volunteers through Korean networks. In fact, the new and current principal was also an interim principal and the school has been looking for a new principal for almost a year. During the 35 years of the school’s history, most of the principals, among the total number of 28, held the position for one year only in contrast to a handful of people who stayed for two or three years. There was a lack of stability in the school system and staff, which affected various situational contexts of the school.

Furthermore, the staff members’ low motivation or responsibility was noticeable. As most of the teachers and administrators had separate jobs during weekdays, it was not easy for them to do extra work or be fully responsible for the teaching jobs at KACSCO. Teachers often missed their classes, which impacted on the other classes or the school’s structure. Originally, the Spring 2016 semester was supposed to start on January 31, 2016. However, it was postponed to February 7, due to several internal matters including
the staff members’ responsibility issue. In addition, in the middle of the semester, the vice principal asked teachers not to miss their classes, since the school had no extra staff to cover their absences. However, as most teachers had their own private schedule, unexpected situations frequently happened throughout the semester. For example, on the second week, the Origami class teacher couldn’t come to the school due to her own schedule, so four students from the class joined my Art & Craft class. Since what they wanted to learn at the Korean-American school was making origami, I needed to change my original plan for the activities in Art & Craft class to folding origamis in order to meet the majority students’ expectations and interests. Similarly, on the sixth week, I prepared art materials for the student of my Art & Craft class only, but extra students joined my class due to the same situation where their teacher couldn’t come to school.

The lack of existing developed curriculum was one of the difficulties that many teachers expressed as a significant limitation of the Korean-American community school. Very often the school teachers did not have teaching backgrounds, so they did not know how to approach or manage the young students, organize their teaching contents, or develop a curriculum. Even if there were well established curricula from previous years, KACSCO rarely corrected, accumulated, or shared them with new teachers. Similarly, many teachers revealed that the school seemed not to have a big picture, shared goals, or future plans. The frequent absence of the school’s staff members in addition to the lack of leadership and disorganization of the administration highly impacted the school structure.
3. The Emotional Environment: Close Relationships among the Community Members

The Korean/Korean-American community was relatively small in comparison with other Asian groups such as Indian or Chinese communities in Columbus, Ohio. A large number of Korean/Korean-American people were connected to one another through Korean networks. In particular, Korean churches and Korean networks through The Ohio State University (OSU) played a pivotal role in these connections. Many of KACSCO’s parents went to the same church or they knew each other through the Korean OSU networks. Moreover, the Korean-American school’s parents, teachers, administrators, and board members were often students or professors at OSU. Therefore, KACSCO’s parents or OSU students and professors were frequently invited as teachers or administrators of the school. In fact, four of the staff members among eight full-time volunteers were currently both the KACSCO’s teachers or administrators, and KACSCO’s students’ parents. The small scale of the Korean community and its strong connectedness resulted in the tendency of welcoming the parents’ input and contribution.

4. Ongoing Negotiations

Throughout the semester, there have been continuous conflicts of interests, beliefs, expectations, and preferences. In addition to the external tensions between KACSCO and the hosting school that KACSCO rented, there were numerous tensions inside of the community. Between the school’s administrators, teachers, parents, and students, countless challenges came up. One of the issues between teachers and administrators was the age restriction for school enrollment. Many parents wanted their children who were younger than 48 months to join the Korean-American school. One
kindergarten teacher insisted that it would not be efficient to teach those young children. However, administrators finally accepted to lower the minimum age for enrollment down to 36 month years old.

In addition, on the second week, after the classes ended, one parent wanted to talk to me about two things. One request was the possibility to assign more homework for her children, which was the exact opposite idea of the student’s desire. She explained that students could not improve their Korean ability by studying at the Korean-American school only once a week. Her opinion was to force the students to study Korean in their home settings by providing more assignments. To meet the parent’s needs, I purchased *Gitan Korean*, a Korean workbook, which was the one that the parent suggested I use for the students’ homework. As predicted, this decision received the student’s strong resistance.

The other concern was whether it would be possible for the students not to talk about LGBTQ issues in my class. She said that her husband got upset by knowing that the students in my class dealt with a topic related to that issue during the last Fall 2015 semester. She added that her husband would not let his children attend my class if I would bring up the topic again. The parent stated that in fact, his children had to talk about those issues in their elementary school. However, he did not want his children to be exposed to those subjects at the KACSCO since this school is a “Korean-American community school.”

Furthermore, I needed to balance the two different roles, researcher and teacher, as students and I became close to one another. It was great that students were more
familiar with and open to one another, and shared their stories with me. However, as a teacher, it was very difficult for me to manage them to complete a certain amount of the textbook each week rather than talking about their daily experiences. Furthermore, the students finally became so comfortable with the classmates and me, so that they were singing, eating snacks, and wandered around the classroom even after their break. On the sixth week, JH suddenly called me “Hey, teacher!” and showed a “finger butt,” “the butt made out of fingers.” I found I needed to make them focus more on the textbook that they were supposed to complete in the class.

Even in Art & Craft class, there were role conflicts as a researcher and an educator. I planned certain activities through a curriculum which focused on investigation of multicultural aspects of the students. However, some of the students didn’t want to do those activities and wanted to do something else. For example, JHJ came and was excited to draw a clover that he wanted to draw during the Art & Craft class. I was hesitating whether I should let him draw whatever he wanted regardless of my original plan. Initially, I made a decision to keep my original plan to examine the students’ cultural backgrounds via drawing a portrait. However, JH was also not interested in the activity, and asked me if he could draw “something else.” I finally said yes, and let them do what they were interested in. Therefore, their final outcomes of the drawing activity that the students were not interested in became irrelevant to the original objectives of the curriculum.

In contrast, sometimes students wanted to do the same activities that they did in the previous week regardless of the plan for that week. For example, JHJ wanted to keep
doing printmaking that we did last week. JHJ repeated that, “I want to make something as like the last one. Can we make the last, few days one? I want to make the last few days one. Remember, like the… stamp? I want to make stamps… Aw… I need a STAMP, NOW!” JHJ was not a native English speaker, so he used English words based on his language comprehensions and limited vocabulary. However, he expressed his opinions without hesitation in English. He added that “I hate this day… I HATE THIS DAY! I thought I would do it again… I thought about it.” JHJ seemed very unhappy that I didn’t bring the same materials so that he could create another printmaking piece.

Sometimes, tension among students also existed. Each student’s personal expression or freedom often conflicted with one another. My main goal for the Art & Craft class was to create a space where students shared their experiences while collaborating altogether. However, it was not an easy goal to achieve with the unknown variables. At the beginning of the Art & Craft class on the third week, students seemed to be excited about various options that they could select one among predesigned backgrounds drawings. Yet, the students’ excitement ended very quickly, and new tensions arose when JHJ wanted to pick the one that JH had already chosen. JHJ finally took it away and the mood of the class became very tense.

JHJ caused other students to feel uncomfortable by splashing water on the table. When JHJ asked if anyone had brown color paint, SR replied “there is NO brown” with annoyance. JHJ responded that “Yes. There IS brown. I can MAKE brown. I can make even brown with orange and blue.” Again, the atmosphere became strange, and the other students didn’t want to work with JHJ anymore. When one student asked others if anyone
had blue color paint, JHJ replied to her “he do,” and HL corrected him, saying that “he DOES.” JHJ kept insisting that he needed brown color and he could make the color. JH said to JHJ to “just use the one you have,” whereas SR argued that “everybody can make brown.” The other peers agreed with SR’s opinion. JH finally got annoyed and blamed JHJ, shouting that “Oh my god!” “Don’t put it on the table” “What are you?” “Someone grown adult that’s bossing around third graders?” “Wow. I don’t think you are even in a kindergarten.” JHJ contradicted him by claiming that “I AM in a kindergarten… ugh….”

The space where students could play and experiment with art materials became a messy and irritating place. After this situation, HL got annoyed by JHJ, and wanted to change her extracurricular activity class to the Origami class. Later, I also heard that SR changed her extracurricular class to Origami class due to the same reason.

Sub-Section II: Learning Korean Language, History, and Culture

In this sub-section, I will mainly emphasize the local contexts of KACSCO community regarding their on-going process of learning language, history, and culture via three categories. The first one highlights the community members’ attitudes toward KACSCO, and their learning process. In the second one, the students’ behaviors will be further explored in their situational contexts and individual differences among the students. Language limitation, confusion, and coexistence along with their variables in terms of their cultural, social, and educational backgrounds will be explored. Lastly, the third category emphasizes the process of learning as a collaborative effort, not without struggles.
Category I: Social and Cultural Contexts

1. Multiplicity/Complexity: Attitudes toward the Community School and Learning Korean Language, History, and Culture

Although encouraging the Korean-American students to learn Korean language, history, and culture was a common goal of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community, each group and individual had different perspectives toward the objective. These similarities and differences were one of the traits of the community, which highlights the social and cultural context of the community. In this part, I will compare the attitudes of administrators and teachers, parents, and students toward KACSCO and learning Korean language, history, and culture in order to reveal the community’s social and cultural contexts.

Administrators’ and Teachers’ Attitudes

The KACSCO’s administrators and teachers showed different viewpoints and attitudes toward the school’s roles and their responsibilities. The current school principal accepted the role as an interim principal after the previous principal left in 2015. She did her doctoral study at The Ohio State University (OSU). After graduation, she decided to stay in the United States, and has been working at OSU as a faculty member. Her children attended KACSCO when they were young, so she was very familiar with KACSCO’s system, the administrators, and board members. As a previous parent of KACSCO’s students, and a current administrator of the school, she has had a moderate attitude toward the roles of the school. She revealed that her children did not learn Korean a lot at KACSCO, but attending the school helped them maintain their habit and
the sense of the necessities of learning Korean language and culture. In contrast, the vice principal showed different perspectives. Her three children have been attending KACSCO for several years. She began her involvement in the school as a parent, and became a vice principal two years ago. Her enthusiastic attitude toward the roles and purposes of the school caused many teachers to reconsider their duties to positively impact the school community.

On the other hand, the school teachers disclosed diverse attitudes. Among the six full-time teachers, two of them were parents of some KACSCO’s students while four of them were current and prospective OSU doctoral students. As discussed earlier, they all volunteered to teach at the Korean-American school on Sundays only. Therefore, there were frequent conflicts between their perspectives toward the teaching positions and roles as the school teachers. Besides, three of them had previous experiences as school teachers, but the other three had no experiences of teaching young students at a school setting. Many teachers expressed that teaching at KACSCO took a lot of effort and in fact was time consuming. They thought their position went beyond the volunteering role. Although most of them acknowledged the importance of the education and their responsibilities, they couldn’t simply prioritize the positions. In particular, the inexperienced teachers had a hard time managing their classes, which will be restated in the interview section.

Parents’ Attitudes

The Korean American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO)’s parents presented different levels of beliefs and values about learning Korean language and
culture. Based on their backgrounds, some parents put great significance on learning Korean language and culture, and others wondered whether they should keep having their children learn them. For most cases when both parents were Koreans, it was common to observe the parents’ strong desire to maintain their children’s familiarity with their cultural heritage. Therefore, they highlighted Koreanness as an important part of their children’s identity, which encouraged them to support their children to attend KACSCO. In contrast, multiethnic families with one Korean parent often struggled with whether they should continue coming to the school with their children. Because most of these families use English as their home language, the time at KACSCO was the only chance for their children to use Korean and learn about the culture. This tendency was most common when the father was Korean and the mother was not. Moreover, the parents’ expectations about the roles of KACSCO were varied. Some parents held a high expectation of their children’s improvement of understanding Korean language and culture through the school. Although most Korean parents or first generation Korean-Americans use Korean as their main language in their home settings, their children, 1.5 or 2nd generation Korean-American students who were raised in the United States, were more familiar with English and American culture. Therefore, those parents expected KACSCO to play a key role in improving their children’s understanding of Korean language and culture.

On the other hand, other parents showed low or medium expectation about the school. The parents did not expect their children to significantly improve their knowledge about the Korean language and culture. Nevertheless, they valued KACSCO as a space
where their children could meet other Korean-American students. As pointed out earlier, there is a limited number of Korean-American population in Columbus, Ohio, in comparison with other larger cities such as New York City or Los Angeles. Therefore, Korean-American students have barely the chance to meet other Korean-American peers in the same classroom in their public schools. Consequently, KACSCO played an important role in offering a space where Korean-American students could hang out with other Korean-American students. Those parents believed that these opportunities would help their children to maintain their heritage culture. Meanwhile, some parents stated that they asked their children to attend KACSCO so that they could get three hours for themselves.

Students’ Mixed Attitudes and Constantly Changing Behaviors

The Korean-American students conveyed mixed attitudes toward learning Korean language and culture. Moreover, their opinions about the value of learning Korean language, history and culture continuously changed throughout the semester. Sometimes, the students expressed that they valued learning Korean language, history, and culture, whereas some other times, they did not want to come to KACSCO. Besides, based on age groups, they showed disparate tendencies. For example, two teachers of the kindergarten levels revealed that their students presented positive attitudes toward attending KACSCO. Many of them were more familiar with Korean language\textsuperscript{16}, but could not find

\textsuperscript{16} Among 12 students, whose age ranged from four to six years, six students revealed that their home language is Korean.
Korean speaking peers at their schools or in their neighborhood. Therefore, the young students looked forward to meeting and playing with Korean peers at KACSCO.

In contrast, older students showed more complicated viewpoints. They often indicated that they did not like coming to KACSCO. From the beginning of the semester, the students insisted that they did not want to do any extra study or homework beyond their schools’ assignments. For example, on the first day of the 2016 Spring semester, I explained the differences between the previous semesters and the 2016 Spring semester which was a part of my research study. I distributed the student assent forms and provided time for them to read it and ask me questions. The students immediately reacted that they did not want to participate in this study if they would be required to do more Korean “homework.” I was very embarrassed about the situation since I believed that this study was co-developed by the community members including the students. Yet, I soon realized that the disagreement originated from the possible extra work due to being research participants. After I explained the purpose and procedure of the study, students agreed with their participation. However, HL still wanted to confirm that she did not “need to come here (KACSCO)” for extra days if she were to be involved in the research study.

The older students often stated that their parents forced them to go to the Korean school and do Korean homework. On the second week, when I checked the students’ homework, HR said that he did the homework not because he wanted to, but because “My mom forced me to do the homework.” Similarly, on the eleventh week, YG insisted that he did his homework “because my mom told me [to do it].” JH also agreed with YG,
stating that “Oh, that’s what my mom told me.” YG continued saying that “because she wants me to learn Korean, which is the torture.” Similarly, on the fifth week, when I distributed an extra textbook for the students to complete, YG was screaming and HL was pretending crying. The students expressed a long sigh due to the additional task. JH was continuously saying that “I don’t wanna have a homework today… Can we not have homework today… please, PLEASE...! I don’t want homework.” Everybody was grumbling for a while due to the extra assignment.

On the eighth week, I wanted to talk more in details about the reason why the students were not interested in learning Korean even though they came to the school every week. Particularly, I was curious about the reason why JH joined the school, since he strongly argued that he did not want to come to KACSCO. JH stressed that “on Sunday, I used to sit back on the couch and watch movies” before joining the school. While JH was about to say, “My mom…,” HR said “forcing,” and JH replied “Yah, you are right.” I asked JH why his parents wanted him to come to the school, and he said “They say I am Korean…,” but his answer slurred at the end of the sentence. It sounded to me that he was doubtful about his parents’ opinion. Most students stated that they could not take a rest during Sundays, since they go to church in the morning and come to the Korean-American school during afternoon.

Additionally, some students claimed that Korean language, which is based on a different alphabet, was too difficult was too difficult to learn compared to other Latin-based Western languages. HR asserted that “[learning Spanish] is easy because it’s like English… not as… Asian cultural thing that has entirely different alphabet.” He added
that “if I was born in Korea… that would be entirely different story but….,” and smiled. HR pointed out that “and most of the kids here are probably going to live in America for the rest of their lives, ninety percent.” HR also stated that he disliked learning Korean because it was “uncomfortable” to learn other languages. He explained that sixth graders are supposed to learn three languages, Spanish, French, and German, in his middle school, and learning another language was not comfortable. Those were some of the reasons why the older students revealed their negative attitudes toward learning Korean language and culture.

Another perspective many students asserted was learning Korean language is “boring,” which resulted in their reluctance to attend KACSCO. The students pointed out that the Korean language itself is not useful in comparison with another second language such as Spanish or French. The students often disclosed their skeptical perspective of learning Korean. On the fifth week, HJ raised his hand and expressed his favor of learning Korean language and culture, by stating that “we get to learn new things every day.” JH immediately criticized HJ’s opinion by questioning that “EVERYDAY?” YG also disagreed, asserting “not EVERYDAY… not every day.” The students repeated that the only reason they attended this community school was their parents’ pressure.

On the other hand, two other students disagreed with their peers, by insisting that learning Korean language was valuable because they could learn Korean culture and history. By doing so, the students explained that they could understand and meet more Korean friends and communicate with their relatives in Korea. HL also gave details about her positive attitude toward learning Korean language, explaining that she could still talk
to her mother when her mother gets older and may not be able to speak English fluently anymore. HR added that obtaining an extra language skill could be also helpful for their college admission or future job markets. Some of the older students were aware of the situation that some Korean companies both in Korea and the United States look for the Korean and English bilinguals, which opens other opportunities for Korean-American students. Moreover, most students agreed that learning Korean history or culture was more stimulating than learning Korean language.

Throughout the semester, we had these kinds of ongoing conversations about meanings and possible values of learning Korean language and culture. This process enabled the students to think and talk about their attitudes toward Korean language, history, and culture, which resulted in HL’s valuable suggestion regarding our final presentation. On week ten, HL suggested that it would be great if they talked about the Korean-American School of Central Ohio for the presentation at the ending ceremony, which HR agreed with. HL highlighted her own resistance, struggles, and rewards in front of the KACSCO’s students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other community members. She stated that

…

I do not like coming to the Korean-American community school a little bit.

[This is] because [I] learn too many things during weekdays, and I should come to school on Sundays without taking any rest.

Why do [I/we] need to learn Korean?

It is not easy to learn Korean.

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[However,] while writing and reading Korean, and learning [Korean] culture every Sunday [at KACSCO], [I] learn about Korea little by little, and it helps me understand where I am from.

HL’s final full text presentation written in Korean is located in Appendix L.

Category II: Situational Context

1. Language limitation, Confusion, and Coexistence

Teaching and learning Korean language, history, and culture between the second generation Korean-American students and myself, a Korean teacher, in the United States created several interesting situations. First of all, the students and I had different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, we often asked each other about what certain words or situations meant in Korea or the United States settings. On the seventh week, HJ asked me what to call cabbage in Korean, which led our conversation about using different terms for certain objects in Korea and America. HL asked me “what is different between lettuce and cabbage?” Since the Korean lettuce and cabbage indicate different vegetables due to their origins of the species, I needed to distinguish the two different concepts in the two countries. For example, Korean people differentiate Yang-Sangchu, Western lettuce, from Sangchu, Korean lettuce, and use them differently. The syllable “Yang” designates the concept of foreign, and often indicates Western for Korean people. Therefore, Yang-Sangchu is often used in Western style salads while Korean people eat Sangchu for Korean style dish. Likewise, Korean people call Western cabbage as Yang-Baechu, which is different from Korean Baechu, Napa cabbage or Asian
cabbage, which Korean people mainly use for making *Kimchi*, a Korean side dish often made of Napa cabbage. Both HJ and HL were not familiar with these concepts, so they became curious about when they could use the terms, *Sangchu* and *Baechu*.

On the contrary, the students explained to me some of the words that Korean does not have. On week nine, HJ asked me a question about the animal he was pointing to, “is that an alligator or a crocodile?” In fact, there is only one word for both animals in Korean language, so I did not know about their differences. Therefore, HJ explained the difference to me in English. He said that “there are some differences. When an alligator’s mouth is closed, you can see its’ claw teeth, and when a crocodile’s mouth is closed, you can only see all of its teeth… EVEN the BOTTOM… top and bottom teeth! … So, that’s probably a crocodile! ....”

Another interesting aspect of our language differences was confirmed through the students’ final test. The Korean-American students revealed a common confusion of different usages of reading numbers in Korean and English. Although the mistake that all four students made could be normal for the students who are familiar with American way of reading and writing number, it was very unique for me to observe that they made the same mistake. One of the questions that I asked the students was to write the number, 42900, in Korean. Since Korean has a monetary unit for ten thousand, which is called *Man*, they needed to read and write the number as *Sa* (four)-*Man-Yi* (two)-*Chun* (thousand)-*Gu* (nine)-*Baek* (hundred). However, all the students wrote the number as *Sa-Sip* (forty)-*Yi* (two)-*Chun* (thousand)-*Gu* (nine)-*Baek* (hundred) as how American people read the numbers.
Along with learning different aspects of the two cultures from one another, the students and I also talked about a common knowledge about Korean culture. On the seventh week, we discussed different body languages in different countries described in the textbook. We all agreed that one of the hand gestures is a very unique aspect of Korean culture. Whenever taking pictures, many Korean people are making the “V” shape with two fingers. HL said “Yah! I like… Every… Asian… I feel like… [in] Asian picture everybody is doing this…” and made the hand gesture.

Additionally, HJ insisted that the other hand gesture indicated that it “is an American signal for calling. But in…,” and could not continue his sentence to explain other meanings in other countries. I added that I used to make that gesture when I needed to make a promise with somebody, which is a common body language in Korea. HL agreed with me and talked about her experiences of confusion regarding the gesture. Although she was born in the United States, HL became familiar with the hand gesture as a way of promise after staying several months in Korea when she was two years old. However, she explained that after coming back to the United States, she had difficulties due to different gestures of keeping promises since they are different from one another. She pointed out “I was too used to [promise] like this… but Americans used to do like this… I was like this… they were asking what I [was] doing… and I was keep promising like… and used thumb like this… yeah…that’s the how like… people use thumb… Americans they just do this… I don’t like…”

The coexistence of two languages brought misunderstandings and confusions. Among us, the students and I, there were often language limitations due to the different
language backgrounds. Although speaking Korean was encouraged at KACSCO, the Korean-American students in my class talked to one another in English whenever I did not ask them to use Korean. On the second week, JH’s English name was reported differently in the school system, so I wanted to fix the error. I asked JH if he could tell me the correct spelling of his name. After hearing his name, I spoke out the spelling of his English name loudly to confirm whether I understood correctly. Even though my spelling was correct, he said “No,” and repeated the same spelling. Although HL pointed out that “she just said that,” I needed to repeat the alphabet one by one to make sure not to have any further misunderstanding.

On that same day, I asked JH the reason why he missed the last week class on the previous week. JH explained that he couldn’t come to class due to his sickness. While he was explaining the name of the disease, the *hand, foot, and mouth* disease in Korean, I misunderstood the word. His pronunciation of the name of the disease, *Sujokgu*, sounded like *Sujokwan*, aquarium in Korean. Therefore, I got confused that he went to the aquarium last week, hence he could not attend class.

Due to the different application range of vocabulary and word understanding between the students and me, we had another interesting experience using the two languages, Korean and English, mixed together. I asked the students to open their textbook and check Lesson Four. The Korean word pronunciation of lesson four is “Sa-Gua,” the same pronunciation as apple in Korean, so many students couldn’t immediately understand the word. Particularly, YG was playing with the word, repeating “apple” for more than five minutes. Another confusion about the different linguistic backgrounds
happened at the beginning of the class on the sixth week. JH said that he couldn’t eat lunch, so he was very hungry. He stated that “me hungry… my grammar not corrected.” And YG and HR responded to JH by saying that “how about ME grammar not correct?” Although I knew they were playing with words, I was a bit confused about the situation whether their English was perfect like other native speakers. JH kept repeating “I hungry” for a while. On the other hand, JH also mixed the two languages in one sentence. Since he said he was hungry, I asked him if he ate Jumsim, lunch in Korean. JH replied to me saying that “I didn’t eat Jumsim” utilizing both languages in the same sentence.

The students in my advanced class revealed that their Korean was much better when they were young. Since most Korean-American students grew up speaking Korean with their parents, they were more exposed to hearing and speaking Korean in their earlier age. After attending schools, the students got more familiar with English while losing opportunities of utilizing Korean, resulting in their decreased aptitude in the Korean language. For example, HR explained that he could translate most of the Korean sentences and vocabulary when he was young while visiting Korea with his father who could not speak Korean. I wondered how it would be if they went to Korea again, and HR said that it would be different, because his Korean became less fluent. He added that he only went to Korea twice so far.

Another interesting aspect of the students was their attitude change. They became very quiet when they needed to speak Korean, whereas they were very energetic and outgoing during the break when they could speak English. In particular, HL, YG, and HR’s tone of voice went down dramatically, since they were not confident in speaking
Korean. When HR couldn’t read a sentence in Korean, he was frustrated, making the sound “uh-oh.” HL also got discouraged with deep sighs whenever she struggled from reading Korean sentences.

On the contrary, HJ was consistently confident in terms of speaking both languages since his Korean ability was much better than the others. On the ninth week, HJ explained to me the stories of the book, *The Magic Bed*, translated in Korean, which I had assigned him to read during the previous week. HJ was excited to explain what the main character, *Georgie*, experienced in his dreams. HJ’s explanation was very vivid, specific, and perfectly organized in logical sequence, and it seemed that HJ gained an incredible empathy for the main character. During the three minutes, HJ was eager to describe what happened with Georgie, and HJ’s attitude was exceptionally enthusiastic.

In fact, I encouraged all of my students to read several books written in Korean, but most of the students gave up reading them because it was too difficult for them to understand. However, HJ explained that in his case, reading a Korean book was easier than reading an English book.

2. *Individual Differences on Cultural, Social, or Educational Aspects*

Each student’s social perception, understanding, and exposure to Korean cultural facets differed. The students and I had a conversation about Korean food after HJ mentioned *Gochujang*, Korean red-pepper paste, explained in the textbook. HJ asserted that he cannot eat Gochujang because “it is too spicy.” In fact, Gochujang is a main paste for Korean food, so I was surprised about the fact that he could not eat Gochujang. I asked him if he could eat *Kimchi*, one of the signature spicy side dishes of Korea. He said
that he doesn’t eat those kinds of “too spicy things” including Kimchi. Most Korean people are used to spicy food, and Kimchi is one the main side dishes that we can see almost everywhere with a Korean meal. Therefore, HJ’s response was unexpected. I also asked whether he could eat Tteokbokki, one of the casual Korean food made with rice cake and Gochujang, which is very popular among children. HL interjected by saying that she loves Tteokbokki and Rappoki, similar Korean food as Tteokbokki but with Ramen noodle. While HL and I were excited about thinking and talking about Tteokbokki and Rappoki, HJ claimed that he could eat “Jolppokki,” which seemed to be a derived term from the word, Rappoki, but both HL and I never heard about it.

The conversation moved on to the food we enjoyed eating. HL said “I hate like hamburger. That’s GROSS… like, like…the oil… just…” I was surprised by her opinion and became curious about whether her peers enjoy eating hamburgers. She said that although her friends like eating hamburgers and hotdogs, she doesn’t really like them. HL added that even though she goes to a fast-food restaurant, she only drinks, and does not eat those foods.

Nevertheless, both HL and HJ said that they love French fries. HL said that “if I could eat one thing in the world, that would be French fries.” HJ also agree with it, saying “Yeah, me too. Even when they’re sick.” On the other hand, while HL said “or maybe Bibimbap, that’s like what I would eat Bibimbap,” HJ said “I don’t like that one.” In fact, Bibimbap is a common Korean food mixed rice with vegetables that both many Korean and non-Korean people easily enjoy. However, HJ said that “NO! I just ate that on[c]e” in his whole life.
On week five, HL told us that she went to church but didn’t eat the lunch prepared at the church because it was “super gross.” HJ replied to her by adding that “stinky tofu” is “oh, GROSS” and “it tastes STINKY.” I became curious about his reaction and asked if he had a stinky tofu. HJ said that he didn’t try it, but “it must be … it must be very gross.” It was the first time to find out HJ’s unique attitude of affirming and persisting his pre-perceptions about certain objects, and negative reactions to the things that he never experienced. We were continuously talking about stinky food. I mentioned Cheonggukjang, fermented soybean paste or soup with the paste that stinks, which many non-Korean people think that the smell is disgusting. However, I explained to the students that several of my American friends who were not familiar with Cheonggukjang’s smell finally fell in love with this dish after they tasted it. I suggested that he should at least try before judging the stinky tofu, but he said that “I don’t think I will wanna eat THAT THING.”

Similarly, observing the students’ diverse perspectives toward other social aspects revealed their perceptions of others or unfamiliar cultures. On the sixth week, when I was explaining about a Korean vocabulary “to fight” with an example of YG and HR, they said that their friends fight and argue more often than themselves because they are “Irish.” HR said that “their temper level is a lot higher because they are a lot more Irish than us.” I was surprised by HR’s perception, so asked him “Irish than you?” HR replied to me, saying that “Irish have a very high temper.” I asked him about who had said that, and HR stated that “studies proved it.” JH agreed with HR’s opinion by adding that “they (Irish) are crazy.” However, HL disagreed with them and asserted that “I have an Irish
person in my class… she never gets angry.” I also tried to question about whether it might not be due to their ethnic background but because of individual’s differences. YG and HR supported their argument by stating that “their descendants were Vikings.” While we talked about cultural perceptions about schooling in other countries, HR said that “check Saudi Arabia,” so I asked “why?” but he answered “nothing.” YG also asked “why Saudi Arabia?” and HR said that “African countries don’t… there… if… even if they have schools, they are not really good schools.” In contrast, when I asked about Korean education, YG said that “Korea should be really high… Korea should be really.”

On week ten, HJ stated that he nevery saw any Indian kids crying on a street. I wondered if HJ ever visited India, and he said “No, but I’ve never seen any pictures of them.” I asked him if he wanted to see them, so I could search it online. HJ said “YES! YES! PLEASE! PLEASE!” Therefore, I checked and shared some pictures that I found on internet. HJ seemed to be shocked by the images. He made a strange sound while pulling his hair. He said “Aww… SO desperate… This is so desperate… isn’t it?” HL also added that “sometimes when we looked at a picture like that, or see people like that, makes me feel better… I… like… I always say, oh I want more when those kids can even get like… one of things that I have….” Additionally, on the seventh week, we talked about healthier food, and HJ mentioned dairy products. HL said that “dairy products, milk, make me sick.” HJ surprised and questioned that “that makes you SICK?” and asserted that “THAT SHOULDN’T BE POSSIBLE!” I also gave him an example of someone who has lactose intolerance, so cannot drink milk. HJ repeated that “THAT SHOULDN’T BE POSSIBLE!” with surprise.
On week ten, one of the students’ conservative perception toward gender roles became an issue during the advanced class when we had a role playing conversation. To lead the conversation, we needed two characters, a clerk and a customer, named Seulki. When I asked HJ if he wanted to play Seulki’s character, he refused it and insisted that female should play the role of Seulki, since the name is woman’s name. He added that “because I… because I… because I’m a male. No male should be talking like Seulki.” HJ asserted that males should play only male characters and females should play only female characters. Besides, he claimed that man should not marry another man, and gay marriage is not acceptable.

Another interesting aspect among the Korean-American students was their parental influences. In particular, I could observe that based on their parents’ educational approaches, some students’ attitudes were more similar to Korean students in Korea than the other students who possessed more liberal perspectives toward social issues. For example, HJ was deeply influenced by his Korean parents’ educational attitude. HJ’s father revealed that he educated HJ to use Korean only until he became five years old. Therefore, HJ showed stronger traits of a Korean student rather than the other Korean-American students. On the second week, I assigned a worksheet that made the students think about the neighboring countries of Korea and the United States. Unlike other students who selected Russia as a main neighboring country of Korea, HJ chose North Korea as one of the countries, which may show the stronger influence of Korean culture on HJ.
In addition, on the ninth week, when other students talked about medication, HJ wanted to use honey instead of regular medicine to cure animals. He asserted that “I think I said get honey! HONEY MEDICINE! Mom said that that was really good for your health.” HJ added that “I need to get some honey. The medicine isn’t good at all.” While HJ and I had the conversation about honey, JH came to HJ and teased him, “I need to tell you something very important… I’m your mom!” HJ responded to JH, stating that “You are a just a MALE!” However, JH repeated that “but I’m your MOM!” and HJ said “Don’t tell us all… Don’t tell ALL.”

The students’ dynamic reactions were greatly influenced by their individual circumstances and situational factors. Through learning about the students’ backgrounds, I observed their unique attitudes and developmental perceptions in diverse cases, in addition to the parents’ influences.

**Category III: Process of Learning**

Collaborative learning was another goal of this study. One kindergarten teacher agreed with and supported this idea, so the teacher and I planned to combine our classes. We had discussed enhancing the Korean-American students’ learning outcomes by collaborating between the two classes, and week nine was the day when we could experiment it. However, my students were not pleased about this idea. HR said “Oh, no. I did this before. At school… In fifth grade, we needed to help a second grade class.” JH also said that “OH, YAH! I DID THIS! When I was in second grade, I had to help preschoolers read…. No! It’s a kindergarten grade…kindergarten.” HR explained that “I had to help them with a math test…. Ah… no. Actually, no, not math. I don’t remember
exactly. No way, I needed to help them twice. One was for poetry, and another time, we needed… one was third grade, one for second. For the second graders, we needed to do poetry with them.”

Since the kindergarten teacher was enthusiastic about dramatic inquiry while my research focuses were in narrative inquiry and visual storytelling, we set up a situation where the students could act a role, develop stories, and create visual images. The students from both levels of the classes played a role of animal doctor who treated an alligator, a polar bear, or a snake. Unlike their initial negative reactions, my students became easily interested in the activity. They played with toys such as a stethoscope, a thermometer, a hematomanometer, or an injector to treat an alligator, a snake, or a polar bear (See Figure 11).

Figure 11. Students of two classes participating in a role-playing situation


**Learning with Others through Process**

Developing stories was an interactive process among the participants who had different ages and knowledge levels. All teachers and students were sitting on the carpet together and explaining their ideas to other people who had different capacities of understanding Korean language including vocabulary. Each student created unique stories based on their own imaginations, and further developed the stories through the sharing process (See Figure 12). While talking about their ideas to other peers, they could combine varied perspectives into their stories. Sometimes, the feedback from another student provoked another new idea, and other times, new ideas were emerged while describing their own ideas to other people. These collaborative and multi-way interactions promoted their learning process in an enjoyable way.

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Figure 12. Students sharing and co-developing stories
Section II: Visual Images: Art as Literacy and Experience

Openness and Embracement of Visual Space

Space of Openness

I believe visual space could embrace a broader realm of narratives. By creating visual images and talking about them, I wanted to provide the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students with an open space to convey their daily experiences. Although there were pre-defined curricula both for the Advanced and Art & Craft classes, I intended to offer the students as much freedom as they needed so they could explore their own stories. The students were also aware of their freedom of expression via visual languages.

On the sixth week, HJ pointed out his understanding of artmaking, obtaining freedom of expression and equal opportunities to express his ideas. During the Art & Craft class, I asked HJ the reason why he changed his extracurricular activity class from the Origami class to the Art & Craft class. He stated that it was not fun and “it’s not fair anyway. It’s because… it’s because NOT all origamis were… allowed. And [we] should have had the same RIGHTS!” He added that “if anybody was trying to… When I was trying to want a FLOWER in there, the man wouldn’t… the man wouldn’t want it, because it’s just a PLANT. And there was only ANIMALS were allowed. JUST!!! Only ANILIMALS! ONLY! NO others were allowed… zip! ZERO!!... Now I have to work for the SAME RIGHTS!!” In HJ’s case, the restriction that he had in the Origami class was not appropriate in the space of artmaking, and it discouraged his interests of art. In fact, I prepared some paper craft materials for JH who wanted to do some craft activities in my
class, so I asked HJ whether he dislikes folding papers itself. HJ said that folding origami itself would be okay.

Obviously, some students did not feel comfortable expressing their emotion or imagination in a white blank space. JH was one of those students. I asked JH to take pictures of what he wanted to draw since he didn’t want to draw what I hoped he would draw. On the ninth week, he brought twenty eight pictures, so I asked him which pictures were taken by him. JH stated that he took only five pictures among the twenty eight, and rest of them were taken by his mother (See Figure 13). JH explained that he took pictures of the objects in his surroundings including his Nike shoes. One of the pictures he took is a McDonald figure when he went to a restaurant with his mother. He explained that “my mom told me to take a picture of that.” He showed a picture he took based on his own interest (See Figure 14). However, I couldn’t identify what was in the picture. JH explained that he “tried to take a picture of the ant” on the street. In his visual space, any element would be addressed regardless of others’ judgement of its’ symbolic or trivial values. The person who was going to create an image would decide the value of the element.

Figure 13. Pictures taken by JH and his mother
Moreover, the students had chances to experiment their ideas with diverse materials and technics through the Art & Craft class. Based on their preference, the students selected materials and tools to create their artworks (See Figures 15 & 16). This openness caused unanticipated situations of when the students wanted to use certain materials, even though I had prepared something else. However, we could come up with an alternative approach and experimented with it.
Figure 15. JHJ working on a craft activity

Figure 16. HJ working on a drawing book
Personal Expression

For some students, creating artworks was a very easy process. I didn’t expect for the students to be so immersed in the processes of artmaking. However, some students fully focused on their own space of creation. They didn’t need any subjects, guidelines, or instructions, but papers and a pen. They freely expressed their thoughts, experiences, and imagination through visual language. In particular, two students, HJ and JHJ, drew unlimited images when they worked on their individual drawing books. The images in the drawings books are located in Appendix M and Appendix N.

Similarly, the students in my Advanced class appreciated creating stories through visual narrations. In particular, among the five students, four of them enjoyed doodling. They often doodled on their textbooks while they were supposed to study Korean language. At the beginning, I thought it was just a way of expression of being bored of learning Korean. However, I realized that there are numerous stories behind the images when I looked into the details. In HJ’s case, he always created characters interacting with one another (See Figures 17, 18, & 19). I asked HJ why he draws doodles, and he said he likes doodling. YG said that he also likes doodling and he “taught [HJ] how to do it.” HJ agreed with YG’s opinion, by saying that “actually [YG] is a pretty good teacher.”
Figure 17. HJ’s characters 1

Figure 18. HJ’s characters 2

Figure 19. HJ’s characters 3
On the other hand, HR’s interactions with visual components was a bit different from HJ. HR drew doodles based on preexisting images or stories in the textbook. Most of the time, HR added stories based on his own interpretations or imagination of the existing images (See Figures 20 & 21). I also asked HR why he likes to doodle. He stated that he wants to doodle when he sees images, and he feels good after doodling.

![Figure 20. HR’s doodle/drawing 1](image-url)
Furthermore, a visual space often played a role as a safe and personal space that students could uncover their personal stories and experiences, which can be a very private or sensitive part of their lives. For example, when I asked my students in the *Art & Craft* class to represent their most valuable memory, HL created an image with a grave yard. Among the seven tombs in HL’s image, there was one with her father’s name. I was afraid for her to reveal the story of her father’s death with other classmates, but she disclosed the story without any hesitation. In contrast, a few weeks later, we had a similar situation during the *Advanced* class. One student asked HL about her father’s background. Unlike her active and voluntary exposure in the *Art & Craft* class, she was reluctant to talk about her father’s death in the *Advanced* class.
Visual Language as another Representation of Personal Experiences and Perceptions

Visual images signified the students’ individual experiences, perceptions and social and cultural backgrounds. The students in my Art & Craft class often referred to their previous experiences through visual images. During the Art & Craft class during the ninth week, HJ drew a situation where a crocodile character became a main figure, interacting with other animals (See Figure 22). In fact, HJ never mentioned or drew a crocodile character before playing a role of veterinarian who cured a crocodile and a snake during the Advanced class. The same day of the role playing game, however, HJ created the new character and named the crocodile as “con” who took care of the other characters. The role playing experience provoked HJ to think about his own illustration of the experience through stories and visual images.

![Figure 22. HJ’s drawing of a crocodile](image)

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The students disclosed their cultural and social backgrounds through visual images and their back stories. HJ often gave nick names to all the characters he created (See Figure 23) and explained the backgrounds of each character to me. One of the characters, which revealed HJ’s Korean/Asian cultural exposure, was “a picked radish” which called Danmuzi (Muzi in his image). In Korea, Danmuzi or Danmuji, yellow pickled radish, is consumed as an important ingredient for certain dishes, whereas it is not considered as a common ingredient in Western cultures. However, I realized that the figure did not look like Danmuzi, so asked HJ the reason. HJ explained to me that Danmuzi is “disguised” with “rabbit ears.” He repeated that “I drew a Danmuzi disguised as a rabbit.” In addition to Danmuzi, I could find a character of peach (Appeach in the image), and a character of crocodile, “Con,” a crocodile scientist, which were inspired by the previous activity. Additionally, HJ got inspirations from his own daily circumstances. HJ revealed that sometimes he was inspired by preexisting characters from a web such as Line, a Korean communication application.

Figure 23. HJ’s drawing with main characters

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In JHJ’s cases, creating a visual image is to deliver his learning outcomes in his transnational background (See Figures 24 & 25). As a non-native student from Korea, his main language was Korean when he came to the US. JHJ never spoke English and was fluent speaking Korean since he grew up in Korea. However, after spending three years in the United States, he started to draw figures and wrote the English words of the images in his drawings. Additionally, I recently observed that he was speaking English most of the time and try to “pretend” he could not understand my Korean.

Figure 24. JHJ’s drawing of lava

Figure 25. JHJ’s drawing of bubble
One of the interesting aspects of JHJ’s visual practices was he had drawn his mother the biggest during the last 2015 Fall semester, but he drew his two American friends bigger than his mother in this 2016 Spring semester (See Figure 26). I asked him why his mother was the third biggest figure among them, and he answered that the two friends whose figures were bigger than JHJ’s parents were his best friends. JHJ added that “my mom… love her… she make[s] me good food.” I also asked if JHJ talked to his father in Korea, who was the smallest figure among all. JHJ said yes, but there was not any related stories about his father.

Figure 26. JHJ’s drawing of bubble
The students often conveyed their own perspectives through certain characters, stories or visual symbols. In HJ’s case, he created several characters and classified them in different social categories. On the ninth week, the students played with paper folding activities. After completing his work, HJ named his characters as “Neo,” a cat with a “wig,” and “Frodo,” a “wealthy dog,” which “came from a wealthy family who lives in the city” (See Figures 27 & 28). I asked him why we designated the dog as a wealthy dog, and HJ responded that “it’s because he has a lot of money.”

Figure 27. HJ’s two characters, Neo and Frodo

Figure 28. Description about Neo
Those characters appeared in his drawings and stories repeatedly (See Figures 29 & 30). On the week ten, HJ brought up his characters, Frodo and Neo, again to create a visual story. He described Frodo’s richness through his stories, repeating his concepts that “Frodo is a rich dog who lives in the city. He has a lot-a thousand of money. He’s currently dating Neo, the cat. Neo is a cat yet wild cat….” HJ frequently distinguished his characters with different social classes.

Figure 29. Image of Neo and Frodo in the HJ’s drawing book
Developing Stories, Experiences and Interactions

The students’ visual images evolved based on their daily experiences, interactions with other people and their own and collaborative imagination. The evolving relationship could be observed throughout the semester while students talked about their daily experiences through stories and/or visual images. Sometimes, the students shared their stories, and created visual images from the stories. Other times, their visual images provoked other stories that they developed through the interactions with others or their own imagination. For example, HJ’s stories and visual images were motivated by his dairy experiences. HJ said that he likes eating ice cream, so he often goes to a local ice
cream store in Columbus, Ohio. Therefore, he created a story and illustrated himself as a tongue who “loves ice cream” and “goes to the Jeni’s ice cream store” (See Figure 31).

![Figure 31. HJ’s drawing based on his daily experience](image)

After creating the first story and image, HJ got an inspiration to create another story and image. Reflecting on his craving of ice cream and the consequences of eating too much ice cream led him to talk about tooth decay through a story of teeth “smelling bad.” He encouraged viewers to join the tooth character, asking “Does your child don’t even brush their teeth?” via a visual images with the behind stories (See Figures 32 & 33). He concluded that “this story is teaching a lesson” that “brush your teeth and they’ll be there for you.” The process of developing story with visual images demonstrated his
mundane experiences in his daily life, and understanding of common knowledge as a nine year old boy.

Figure 32. HJ’s drawing based on his daily experience

Figure 33. HJ’s drawing based on his daily experience
In JHJ’s case, he drew some bad and good germs while developing stories based on the images as he continuously created them (See Figures 34 & 35). He drew various shapes of germs and put them on every part of the body including the brain. JHJ said that “I know how germs looks like… this is a bacteria. This is DOUBLE bacteria. And THIS… it looks… this is a BUTT” and laughed and continued saying that “a butt has hundreds of germs.” He also wanted to color the butt and germs with green color.

Figure 34. JHJ’s drawings of cell

Figure 35. JHJ’s drawings of cell
JHJ continued drawing a person in a big hardboard to create further stories (See Figure 36). He said he needed to draw nerves, nose and buggers. I couldn’t understand what bugger means, so asked him “what is bugger?” JHJ explained that “it’s like a green thing. That’s sometimes somebody eats.” Although his explanation, I couldn’t understand that word until I searched an English dictionary. After he drew mouth, tongue and teeth, JHJ said that “I’m gonna make some cavity there… I have cavities.”
After creating germs and drawing a person who represents JHJ himself, he wanted to draw bone, heart, stomach, “other digestions,” ear, hands, feet, hair and an X-ray machine. I asked him why he wanted to draw an X-ray, and he answered that “because I want to see my body.” In addition, JHJ asked me how to call certain parts of the body, and tried to write down all the names of each body part. While I was about to correct his misspelling, he asked me if “can I just do it my way?” and wrote the word. JHJ stated that he developed numerous stories and situations spontaneously but continuously while drawing an image. He revealed that all the stories came into his head when he draws images. Furthermore, he always wanted to tell the stories and shared his artworks with his mother.

On the ninth week, HR and HJ reflected on their previous experiences, developed another story based on what we learned through the veterinarian role playing activity, and drew visual images that represent their emerging stories. In particular, HJ started to develop his story about a crocodile which had “and then he had no fish to eat… and so his stomach was hurt, because he didn’t have anything to eat.” HJ also talked about a snake. He said that “I found a snake. I’m trying to rescue the snake… I rescued the snake because it was fallen… it was… it wasn’t a rock, and it was trying to get hunted by… a… and it was… and it was… fleeing from a hungry swan. So that’s why I rescued the snake! We SAVE BOTH OF THEM!” Moreover, he wanted to save other animals, a jaguar and a duck, which we never mentioned through any activity.

HJ started to illustrate his stories in the report form (See Figure 37). The form led him to specify the details of the situation that HJ had in his mind. HJ selected an alligator
and a snake and wrote their nicknames, *Lark* and *Berry*, in addition to their species’ names. Furthermore, HJ set up the alligator’s age as twenty years old and snake as eleven years old. He explained that the snake got injured in his tail and “the baby alligator have hurt his… spikes there… because his spikes stopped working.”

Figure 37. HJ’s report form
On the other hand, HR described his idea based on his previous experiences (See Figure 38). He had experienced a frog dissection through a computer application, so he had a general idea of how to proceed with the surgery for the bear, the animal he selected. He described the process of anesthesia and abdominal operation with a visual representation.

Figure 38. HR’s drawing based on his report form

Sharing and Creating Experiences

Communicating and working through stories and visual images with the students provided the students and me with opportunities to open our boundaries to one another.
In fact, JHJ is a very independent student with strong opinions, so he never wanted other people to interfere or help him. However, for the first time, he asked me to draw a line on his drawing and he also helped me to cut a part of his cardboard.

During the *Art & Craft* class, students often had chances to talk about their own images and stories with other peers, which brought various dialogues related to the topics. On the twelfth week, HJ started to explain his organ characters to the classmates and me (See Figure 39). While HJ was describing the first character, tongue, with his perception that “all tongues are red,” JHJ argued that it can be “sometimes pink.” HJ agreed with JHJ’s opinion, “Yah… sometimes pink. You are RIGHT.” JHJ added that “you know… zombie has green tongue I think… and zombie has a green brain… sometimes are green.” HJ reacted to JHJ’s idea, screaming that “OH MY GOD! This is so scary!” HJ continued explaining the next character, “and… eyes are blue, because Jayden’s eyes are blue.” I did not know who Jaden is, and HJ clarified that “a boy in Japan” who has blue eyes. He added that “tonsils are yellow, because they were born that way to be yellow.” The next character HJ explained was “esophagus” and “trachea,” “a water fighter.” He explained that “because esophagus always try to drink trachea, because trachea never drinks water… because she was born in the desert… and there are no water in the desert” while JH reputed HJ’s account and claimed that there is water in the desert but just difficult to find it. HJ became fully excited about telling his story. He continued saying that “so… so… esophagus brought trachea to Japan, and then… she drank a lot of water and then she SPAT the water back out. That’s what the picture is all about.” While

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17 Jaden Yuki is one of the main characters of the Japanese anime series, *Yu-Gi-Oh! GX.*
talking about HJ’s characters, JH and JHJ were developing HJ’s story with him, which generated an interesting narrative about the organ characters.

Figure 39. HJ’s character list

In addition, interactions among the students provoked their stories’ and visual images’ transition and development. On week nine, when JH illustrated his Nike shoes, his creation didn’t stop after finishing drawing the shoes. JH continued drawing the other objects, a claw machine and a grave (See Figure 40). JH’s object, the claw machine, was
inspired by the conversation about HJ’s drawing with him (See Figure 41). Although, both drawings included the same subject, JH created his image in his own way. On the other hand, the grave yard image came from JH’s own imagination after drawing the both shoes and claw machine.

Figure 40. JH’s drawing of a claw machine

Figure 41. HJ’s drawing of a claw machine
On the twelfth week, I organized another combined class with kindergarten students. Both *Kindergarten* and *Advanced* classes’ students were encouraged to vote for their favorite visual arts that their colleagues created in the *Art & Craft* class. Students were excited to see various artworks and wanted to put many stickers (See Figures 42 & 43).

Figure 42. Students putting stickers on their favorite artworks

Figure 43. Artworks with stickers
During the process, students communicated with each other, talking about the visual images created by themselves or other students (See Figure 44). Sometimes, students wondered unstated meanings below or shared their own interpretations of the images.

Figure 44. Students talking with one another

After putting on the stickers, I asked the students why they put them on certain visual works. Students shared their various stories related to the images (See Figure 45). The first and a most common comment they provided me with was that the images they
selected are “cute.” However, there were different perspectives about the same artwork. For example, unlike JY and BS who chose the owl image because it was very cute, HL asserted that “it’s kind of creepy.”

On the other hand, JA said that he put his sticker on the dragon image because “it looked scary.” SL also pointed out that he put a sticker on the owl and explained his story related to the two images, owl and dragon (See Figure 46). He said that he was scared that the owl would be poked by the dragon’s “stiff throne,” so he wanted to stand with the owl to support him. Students started to talk about the situation that SL set up in his story.
HR said that the dragon would “slug” the owl, JY said that he could use “fire,” and JH said that he could catch and eat the owl.

![Figure 46. Owl and dragon figures](image)

Similarly, when I asked SMD why she put her sticker on a heart image, YG explained that SMD “might like the heart” while HJ said “YES! Because it pumps blood
really fast” (See Figure 47). HR asked that “do you know like… you see red that your, that your heart bits faster?” SH also created a story that the “love heart” came from “the owl,” began “pounding,” and the small hearts appeared from the big heart. The students’ imagination was continuously emerging through looking at the images and listening to other students’ stories.

Figure 47. Drawing of heart

SH, a kindergarten student, suddenly asked why “the owl’s eyes are so ROUND, and the mouse is so SMALL? Can the owl eat ONLY small things?” The three elementary students, HR, HL and JH responded to him. HR described that the owl can eat big things after “slicing” them as “smaller pieces.” HL added that “owl has bigger eyes at
night because they can see better when they want to eat during the night.” HJ explained that “and… owl sleeps during daytime.”

At that time, another kindergarten student, HA, pointed out that “Korea is at night while America is in the morning, and if America is at night while Korea is in the morning.” Other kindergarten students claimed that they knew it too. However, elementary students in Advanced class clarified that the time difference is not exactly opposite but “Yes, kind of… because it’s eight hours behind.” MS, another kindergarten student, asserted that “but I, I know… when, when, when…when…a… when…a… Ohio… when… when… when Ohio gets dark, Korea gets sunny.” Another student asserted that “like migrating, I mean like… they kind of like… they kind of like…” The different understandings and levels of knowledge of students shared their ideas and opinions provoked by talking about the visual images. This conversation encouraged them to share their experiences in Korea and in the United States. Since most students had been to Korea, they tried to tell their stories in Korea, while other students told their stories in Chicago in the United States.

At the ending ceremony, the Art & Craft class held an exhibition. Students, parents and community members were invited to interact with the students’ works. Amazingly, students appreciated the exhibition very seriously, put stickers on their favorite art piece, explained their artworks to their parents, and communicated with other people through the artworks (See Figures 48 & 49). Students who never talked to each other got a chance to talk about the visual images together, and parents had a chance to listen to the students’ stories and imagination.
Figure 48. Five year old student looking at the artworks created by other students

Figure 49. Parent and student talking about the artworks
Section III: Interview: Pictures in a Bigger Frame

This is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study focusing on the social, cultural, and political contexts of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community. As discussed in the earlier sections, the boundary of the community must include not only the second-generation Korean-American students but also their parents, teachers, and administrators who might not belong to the general definition of Korean-Americans. Unlike other studies that solely highlighted the experiences of Korean-Americans, this study paid more attention to their surroundings, including the impacts and perspectives of other members of the KACSCO’s community.

This section puts an emphasis on the bigger boundary of the community. Informal interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents, and formal interviews with four teachers and two parents were conducted from April to May, 2016. Although the general backgrounds of the interviewees were varied, the common facets were: they came to the United States as temporary residents within the past three years. The main reason for their migration was due to their or their spouse’s study or their work at The Ohio State University (OSU). Some were doctoral students at OSU, and the others were spouses of OSU’s employees. Three of them were teaching Education or Korean language at OSU as Graduate Teaching Associates or an instructor respectively. Some had previous teaching experiences in schools or community settings, and all of them already obtained graduate degrees in Korea. The full interview questionnaire is located in Appendix G.
Teachers’ and Parents’ Purposes and Goals in US

Most parents, teachers, and administrators at the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community were recent immigrants who moved to USA after 1965. In particular, many of them came to the United States as temporary residents for their study or work. As discussed, Korean-American communities in Columbus, Ohio, have different aspects from those in New York City or Los Angeles where diverse Korean/Korean-American populations are mixed together. Additionally, the immigration history of Korean-American populations in Columbus has not been long compared to the two other counterparts, and the size of the population in Columbus is much smaller than the ones in the other two cities. Therefore, there were disparate social contexts in addition to the similar cultural contexts, which will be described through this section.

Collaborators

Although there were many collaborators in this research study, I mainly focused on the following five people’s feedback and perspectives to recognize the bigger structure of the social, cultural, and political contexts of the KACSCO’s community.

1. MJ: MJ is a kindergarten teacher at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) and PhD student at The Ohio State University (OSU). She earned her master’s degree in early child education and taught kindergarten students in Korea. MJ came to the United States for her doctoral study three years ago.
2. HNC: HNC is also a kindergarten teacher at KACSCO and a parent of a kindergarten student. She obtained a PhD degree in early child education and taught kindergarten students in Korea. She came to the United States on February, 2014 for her husband’s work and study as a postdoctoral researcher.

3. EJ: EJ taught both Beginner and Adult classes at KACSCO, and undergraduate students in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at OSU. She came to the United States about three years ago to study and work, and has been teaching Korean language to K-12, undergraduate and adult students in Los Angeles, CA, and Columbus, Ohio.

4. HNK: HNK is a teacher of the beginner level class at KACSCO, who joined the community school in the Spring 2016 semester. She came to the United States about a year ago for her study. HNK also obtained her master’s degree in Korea and is planning to apply for a PhD program at The Ohio State University this year. Her spouse is currently a doctoral student at OSU.

5. EJP: EJP is a parent of the student in my class at KACSCO, and a PhD student at OSU. She came to the United States in August, 2013, with a son for her study whereas the husband stays in Korea.
Teachers’ and Parents’ Acknowledgment and Perceptions about KACSCO

Different School Settings

Close connections with The Ohio States University (OSU)’s alumni and not being affiliated with a church brought unique aspects of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community. Many teachers and parents pointed out the impact of KACSCO’s relationships with both OSU and Korean church communities, comparing with other Korean/Korean-American schools affiliated with churches in Columbus, Ohio.

Before joining KACSCO, EJ taught Korean in another Korean school, named XYZ School in this study, affiliated with a Korean church in Columbus, Ohio. She explained that the XYZ School of the Korean church is one of the oldest Korean schools in Columbus, with about sixty students and twenty teachers\(^{18}\). In fact, KACSCO has a longer history than the XYZ School, but few people were aware of KACSCO’s over 35 years of history due to its visibility. EJ asserted that most parents at XYZ are immigrants who have green cards or citizenships while most students were born in the United States. Unlike KACSCO’s population, EJ pointed out that there are only few students who are temporary residents or plan to go back to Korea. Nevertheless, there was a commonality that most of the XYZ School’s community members are OSU alumni or second or third generation Korean-Americans, whose parents or grandparents attended or are related to

\(^{18}\) It is described as one hundred and twenty students with twenty seven teachers on the school/church website.
the OSU community. Similar to KACSCO’s cases, many people came to Columbus for
their study and found work after graduation, and decided to stay in Columbus, Ohio.

Additionally, EJ pointed out that the differences between KACSCO and XYZ
School regarding their teachers’ attitudes. EJ claimed that teachers of the XYZ School are
“really dedicated to teaching” and passionate about their jobs, as they are the parents of
the students who learn Korean language in the school. She highlighted that “students are
not just students… umm… they are part of the church, so their mind is more….,” She
highlighted that many new immigrants or recent comers as temporary residents most
likely join a church in the United States. The church community plays a pivotal role in
their settlement and offers an ethnic comfort zone. Therefore, EJ’s understanding of the
XYZ School’s community was beyond a school community as opposed to the atmosphere
of KACSCO. The XYZ school community’s religious and strong personal bonds
strengthen the students’ learning purposes and processes and the teachers’ enthusiasm
and dedication. In contrast to KACSCO’s severe staff related issues, XYZ School seems
to have better motivated teachers in a stable situation.

In terms of XYZ school’s curriculum, EJ explained that “there are more classes
and levels, and… there is an exact curriculum, so they have to follow,” which is an
optimal situation that all KACSCO’ teachers and parents anticipated. She added that the
XYZ School is better organized than KACSCO, and has actively participated in National
Association for Korean Schools, Mid-South chapter (Indiana, Ohio Kentucky) and other
related organizations and events. She explained that “because [the] teachers are parents,
so they are very interested in involving other activities and events, and that activities,
certificates or honors, are helpful for the students for university admissions.” Both KACSCO’s and XYZ school’s Korean/Korean-American communities realized that the Korean networks could be valuable for their children/students’ future career. However, due to their different organizational structures, the degrees of participation and dedication were varied.

Nevertheless, HNK pointed out positive characteristics of KACSCO. She stressed that KACSCO\(^\text{19}\) is the only school which is not affiliated with a church, so students who have no religion but want to learn Korean can also attend this school without being affiliated with a church. HNK also revealed that it would be uncomfortable if she needs to go to church to teach her children, and other Christians may feel awkward with her since she has no certain religion. Nevertheless, she admitted that many students in her class are affiliated with a church.

Moreover, HNC compared KACSCO with other schools’ settings, serving any ethnic group students. She revealed that her son, JY, has experienced three different schools in the United States. The first school JY attended for six months was a preschool affiliated to a university where she took an ESL class. Moving from Korea, JY could have had a difficult time in adjusting to a new school circumstance. However, HNC stated that JY was well adapted to the school’s environment. She explained that this might be the multicultural circumstance of the school with many Korean children and non-American classmates whose mothers attended the ESL. In other words, HNC’s

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\(^{19}\) Korean-American School of Central Ohio was a part of a Korean Church since 1975, but became an independent community school in 1981.
understanding of JY’s transition could be possible due to his feeling of being a non-minority in the minority community. She added her assumption that JY’s teacher was the only American in the school, and therefore, JY must have used Korean with other Korean peers, which played a key role in his cultural transition.

The second school JY attended as a full-time student for one year was a regular American preschool. She explained that the school’s members were all Americans and JY was the only Asian in the school. At the beginning, JY had cried for a week after realizing that he couldn’t communicate with anybody at the school. Later on, HNC explained that JY’s teacher took care of him well, so he could somewhat adjust to the community. However, HNC highlighted that JY was very excited about joining KACSCO whereas he disliked going to the public American school. HNC explained that JY could meet friends and teachers with Korean ethnicity, and he could speak Korean with them at KACSCO. Additionally, she stressed that it is very difficult for him to find a Korean friend of the similar age in Columbus, so KACSCO is the place for him to meet the need. She revealed that JY had been asking everyday if it was the day he could go to KACSCO until recently.

Affiliation with KACSCO

The teachers disclosed their motivations and purposes of joining the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO). Many of them revealed that their English proficiency limited their possibilities of joining other communities. This lack of options to be involved in American communities made them feel bored as well. HNC expressed her motivation to volunteer to teach students at KACSCO because she
wanted to work but there were not many things she could do. Even though she has a doctoral degree and previous experiences in early child education, it was difficult for her to find a job due to her limited English proficiency. Therefore, her colleague who worked at KACSCO in the past suggested that she could start to work at the Korean-American school.

Similarly, in HNK’s case, she seemed to be ashamed to answer this question about her motivation. She hesitated a little bit and stated that she volunteered to teach the Korean-American students because she had “nothing to do here, because [she is] not a student at OSU… so [she] spent a lot of time home but [doing] nothing… so wanted to find some work.” Although she has a master’s degree from Korea, there are limitations for her to find a work in the United States due to several reasons including language difference and legal status. Therefore, volunteering at KACSCO was a good option for her to work and meet other people.

On the other hand, the other two teachers showed different viewpoints. For MJ, working at KACSCO is a good way to keep her career as a teacher. She described that “I had a teaching experience before, in Korea, before I came here, and what I am study is education, so… the teaching experience is really important for connect to my research… so I didn’t want to lose my sense of teaching….” Since she is in the education field, continuous teaching experiences seem to play an important role in her career. In contrast, EJ revealed that “I was interested in volunteering and teaching Korean… so I had [been] volunteering in other Korean schools…..” Observing and helping the Korean-American students’ identity “recovery” had a significant value for her.
Many Korean/Korean immigrants in most big cities in USA deeply rely on the information through Korean networks. Certainly, KACSCO’s teachers and parents pointed out the importance of those networks to get certain information in the United States. For example, HNK revealed that she didn’t have “any ideas about this [KACSCO] school” but “heard about these kinds of schools” through her friend who taught in a Korean school in another state. Therefore, she searched the information about Korean schools in Columbus, Ohio, but couldn’t find KACSCO. However, she got to know about this community school through another KACSCO’s teacher in a Korean network. She heard that the teachers of KACSCO are good to mingle with, so she decided to join it.

HNC also shared her experiences of getting benefits from Korean networks. She revealed that thanks to Korean networks in Columbus, she could get a lot of information about schools, housing, and general circumstances in Columbus, Ohio. Particularly, she could contact a Korean scholar who was about to go back to Korea when her family was about to move to Columbus from another city. HNC stated that she moved in the house where the Korean scholar’s family lived and took over all their furniture as well, which helped their easier transition.

EJP also shared her experiences of getting information through a Korean network. She stated that she got to know KACSCO through her Korean babysitter. She added that “my babysitter is a quite good educator, of course, I mean, she is mother, but she is really good at some information about the schooling or education… so I trusted her….” Like EJP, most Korean temporary residents or new immigrants seek for information related to
schooling or housing via Korean networks, including Korean websites specified in their cities (Kim & Oh, 2014).

Challenging Conditions of KACSCO

All the interviewees agreed with several problems of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) financial, physical and organizational circumstances. First of all, KACSCO’s financial concern was recurrently mentioned through teachers’ meetings, school’s email notifications, and the formal interviews with the school’s teachers. Corresponding to the Korean-American students’ acknowledgment of the financial difficulty of KACSCO, the lack of budget for the rental space was often discussed among many groups. For example, MJ compared KACSCO’s financial condition to another Korean school in another state. She emphasized that “they have their own building, and they have a kind of foundation, so they have more structured program.” Additionally, HNC asserted that although KACSCO did not have enough educational resources, she could not purchase extra teaching materials due to the lack of the school’s budget.

Moreover, referring to another Korean school “involved in another church,” EJP pointed out that KACSCO’s location as one of the negative factors of the school. EJP clarified her babysitter’s cases, stating that the “babysitter also has two children and they used to come to the [KACSCO] school” when the school “was located in different areas. Actually, it was close to our church.” She added that “when we came first, I didn’t know there are other schools, or Korean schools, of course I was busy with my work, and I didn’t know anything…” and “the [previous] location [of KACSCO] was really good.
Again, closed to our church, so after church, I can just go to the Korean school. It was very convenient for me….”

However, EJP repeated that “again, at that time (when KACSCO was located in near the church) the good thing was the location, it was very convenient, and here (the current location) is also convenient to me. But there were other parents also there (at the previous location), a year or two years ago, but they usually live the other places like Dublin or Upper Arlington. That’s why they came to the school on the Bethel Road, and now when the school moved to here, some parents didn’t come because of the location….” She added that “you know, like on Sunday…you know, it takes a lot of time, right? And also we cannot just wait for our children for three hours or four hours…coming and picking up… I don’t think it is really easy for every parents.”

Correspondingly, KACSCO’s principal disclosed that four parents told her at the ending ceremony that they will stop coming to KACSCO if the school would stay in the current location for the next semester. Since the main reason of staying at the current location is its cheaper rental cost, moving to another location will challenge the school’s financial condition.

Furthermore, the school’s organizational and structural situation was another issue to solve. When I asked about their understanding of KACSCO’s goals, many teachers revealed their uncertainty or skepticism of whether the school has a common goal. HNK’s perception of the visions and goals of KACSCO is to teach Korean culture through extra classes such as Taekwondo, Korean martial art. In addition, she added that KACSCO might provide students with opportunities to explore a part of the culture while
making Korean food through the school events. Compared to regular Korean schools, HNK understood that the aim of KACSCO is to encourage Korean-American students to feel familiar with Korean language. In EJ’s case, she couldn’t clarify KACSCO’s goals even though she checked the school’s website. She stated that “based on the class, special activities, and special events for ceremonies, I feel that…umm… certain Korean identity, or experience Korean culture and language is [an] important goal in that school… I think….”

Moreover, HNC also argued that KACSCO needs to establish and share the common goals and directions of the school. Currently, she felt like there is no agreement about the school’s direction. MJ further maintained that the goal of KACSCO is “to meet the parents’ needs.” MJ concluded that “hmm… for me, umm… I wonder if my school has a goal…. I mean, the common goal… I have never heard about that we have a goal, or specific goal… none of the teachers have mentioned about like a… our Korean school goal is helping them to learn about Korean culture or Korean language… so I’m so sad about that…. HONESTLY, I don’t think they don’t have a… kind of… they don’t pursue something about the education program.” MJ continuously criticized multiple facets of KACSCO’s structure through the following answer.

There are a lot of circumstances around this [KACSCO] school, financially but also like physical conditions, for example, we are renting the school only for the weekend, so it’s totally different from other systems, so I think like a, our curriculum didn’t accumulate from the previous years… so I don’t know… I know there is a lot of… the teachers
are volunteers… so it was really sad, so I couldn’t track what kinds of education my students got before… umm… HONESTLY, I feel like it’s more like just satisfying the parents… just like a… REALLY superficial… yah like a… parents are satisfied with their children… like thinking that… my children are participating in Korean language learning or Korean cultural learning… that is why… I don’t know.

MJ’s statement includes KACSCO’s financial, physical and organization issues. As mentioned several times, the school’s financial issue resulted in the conflicts of interests such as the school’s location between the administrators and parents. This situation also created a vicious circle of decreasing students’ enrollment. Besides, the financial condition caused both KACSCO’s and the host school’s tensions of sharing the space, and inefficiency of utilizing the class environments for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the problematic situation of KACSCO’s undefined curricula was presented through other interviews. MJ pointed out that “comparing to other regional Korean schools, my Korean school (KACSCO) is not developed, they didn’t develop their curriculum, compared to their history. We have a thirty years old history, but it’s TOTALLY different from the Korean school which is located in New Jersey or New York.” She stated that “there is more diversity and there are some people who are experts in early child education… so they have been developed their programs more structurally, and which is really fit to the age group.” HNC’s opinion also resonated with MJ’s argument. HNC asserted that KACSCO’s class curricula currently solely relied on
individual teachers’ judgments and capacities. However, HNC stated that although she felt the needs and advantages of setting up overall aims or a big picture of the school’s education direction, HNC hesitated to whom or whether she should have asked about it, since all of the teachers and administrators are volunteers.

As HNC mentioned, KACSCO’s staff issue came up frequently throughout the interviews with the teachers and parents. In particular, some teachers were first time teachers or not experts in certain age levels. Therefore, the teachers disclosed their struggles of managing students and/or developing a curriculum. HNK stated that she sometimes felt very embarrassed when her students didn’t follow her guidance. She asserted that it was difficult for her to handle the students since it was her first time teaching students. In EJ’s case, even though she had teaching experiences of undergraduate students, working with younger students was problematic. She revealed that “in the last semester, I had a little bit hard time with managing and preparing class, because it was the first time to teach kids… I don’t know how to manage the classroom, environment, schedule and time… and I don’t know their language, so it was really hard.” EJ added that it was also difficult for her not to have any extra supports from KACSCO. She reflected that receiving assistances, guideline or suggestions from the school could have been helpful.

Many of the teachers at KACSCO revealed their burden of possible high workload or expectation. EJ stated that since the school teachers are volunteers, they can or do not put enough efforts or passion into the positions compared to the situation when they would do in their regular jobs. HNC also asserted that it would be difficult for her to
keep volunteering if she is expected to dedicate too much time and efforts for the position. In contrast, MJ criticized an administrator’s attitude by arguing that

Sometimes my principal is always talking about, it’s not my job… like a… I need to, I am looking for the next one… so you know, it’s supposed to be really honor job to be a principal… but that kinds of atmosphere is shared in our teachers’ meeting… that is… it’s not her, you know, intention, BUT, like a… I feel like a, it’s not… I don’t know… like… I always think about that… teacher, being a teacher is really responsibility, and it’s really important thing… because, some of my [students], I’m the only one who can connect the Korean culture and language to them… but… if the teachers are going back and forth, and they are sometimes leaving… and… they just cover the textbook without their passion to change how they can interest them… so it was kind of sad.

These disparate expectations and perspectives among KACSCO’s administrators, teachers and parents will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, EJ indicated that it was a challenging experience to encourage students to be motivated in addition to managing the class. Although the Korean-American students can encounter Korean language and culture in the school, EJ questioned if the students have a motivation or realize the importance and reasons of the learning. She maintained that the Korean-American students neither have a clear goal to achieve in the Korean language, history and culture class, consistently learn it in their public school, nor utilize it in their daily
lives. Therefore, she needed to persuade the students to be involved in the learning process, which was difficult for her.

In contrast, EJ also pointed out another limitation of the school’s structure, the inefficiency of KACSCO’s learning resulting from the limited numbers of the KACSCO’s class level. She commented that when she taught kindergarten, K-1 and K-2 students in a beginner level, the students in her class had severe gap in terms of their Korean comprehension, so it was difficult for her to teach them. She assumed that since there are not enough Korean teachers, it is a common problem of having those issues among Korean schools in the United States. Unlike her assumption, some schools, such as ABC school, have much more students and teachers, and thus more levels of classes. EJP, a parent, also disclosed the same aspect. She revealed that her babysitter’s children stopped coming to KACSCO because “I heard the husband mentioned about the school doesn’t really have a lot levels… that’s a little… I think that’s kind of our limitation here. Right? I mean, there is lack of staff issues, staffing… and maybe some money issue as well, those kinds of happening, so as we all know that, except the early kindergarteners, the others are really all mixed, right? Not rely on the age groups or something, this still we have some levels, but it’s quite limited. That’s why the babysitter’s family don’t come anymore.”

*KACSCO's Values and Expectation*

As discussed in the earlier section, the students’, parents’, teachers’, and administrators’ perceptions and values of KACSCO were separated from one another. Although, many the teachers at KACSCO try to meet the parents’ expectation, the
teachers stated that KACSCO’s parents should be also responsible for the students’ understanding of Korean language and culture, since learning persistency is important in education. Sometimes, the teachers revealed that they feel pressure from some of their parents in terms of the sole responsibility of the students’ improvement in that knowledge. Rather, the teachers’ common perspectives of KACSCO are to provide the students with opportunities to be exposed to Korean language, culture, history, so their expectation of their and KACSCO’s role are limited.

In addition, as the students are not fully interested in learning heritage culture and language, it is difficult for the teachers to meet their parents’ high expectations. EJ insisted that although the Korean-American students like to meet other Korean friends at KACSCO, some students “are not interested in Hangul (Korean language).” EJ claimed that students “can understand Korean, but literacy is a problem… reading and writing… speaking and listening is… umm… okay, but…” since they don’t read or write Korean home. She asserted that there is lack of support from their parents. HNC also agreed with that there are different expectations between the students and the parents at KACSCO. She revealed that two students from the last semester dropped the class even though they enjoyed coming to the school. She explained that the parents of the students seemed not to be satisfied with their children’s Korean language improvement. She asserted that the parents of young children should only expect that their students are exposed to Korean language and culture and meet other Korean friends through the KACSCO’s class. However, the expectation of their parents is much higher than their reality and possibility in their situation, which is “very stressful” for her. In her opinion, learning Korean should
be supported by education in their home setting, since only three hours in a week is not enough for the students to improve their Korean comprehension.

**Social Perceptions about Koreans and Korean-Americans**

People often distort Korean- and Asian-Americans’ experiences and their identities in the United States with their own stereotypes (Kim, 2014; Ryu, 2014; Kang, 2014). The interviewees at the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community shared their understandings of how Korean/Asians or Korean-American/Asian-Americans were acknowledged in the United States. Most of all, temporary residents’ and immigrant Koreans’ language issue was one of the key factors. As mentioned earlier, many teachers mentioned that their limited English comprehension hindered their social opportunities to join American communities. In addition, KACSCO’s parents revealed that their children were also perceived as individuals of whose language ability is inferior in comparison with their American peers. Since Korean/Korean-American students were evaluated on their language proficiency based on “monolingual English ideology,” their language ability is considered as poor or needed to be improved (Ryu, 2014, p. 221). For instance, HNC, KACSCO’s parent, shared her experiences related to these stereotypical perspectives toward her son. She highlighted that there are “only white teachers except one Indian teacher” in her son’s school. Therefore, the teachers at his school perceived the son as a child whose English is “extremely poor.” HNC insisted that her son was stigmatized as one of the at-risk students in the school and his teacher applied very strict standards for her son compared
to other classmates. She asserted that the teacher seemed to have a stereotype of the son that he would not speak English well.

This language perception of Korean/Asian or people from other countries as individuals speaking not fluent English caused another cultural and social stigmatization (Ryu, 2014). HNC added that from the beginning, the teacher of her son has continuously asked HNC’s son to take an ESL class even though the son got enough score to skip ESL courses at the evaluation test. She also insisted that her son’s English ability seems to be similar to other American peers of their age level. However, three students, the student whose father is Mexican and mother is Russian, a student from Columbia who seems like very fluent in English, and HNC’s son, were recommended to take an ESL class separated from other native students. HNC expressed that it could be a very sensitive issue if other classmates view the three students in ESL class as different from their own by cultural or social “stigmatization.”

Another example of struggles that HNC’s son experienced was related to Korean food. HNC stated that one of her son’s friends said that the food the son brought smells bad even though HNC and her husband deliberately considered not to prepare Korean food which could smell. Therefore, the son often tells HNC that his “friend could say this food smells [bad]” whenever she prepares his lunch. She said that some of her son’s friends seemed to have these kinds of stereotypes about the son.

In addition to these kinds of cultural stigmatizations, many teachers revealed that many people judge them based on their appearance, which could be due to their dissimilarity or similarity, or disinterest or interest including curiosity. MJ also shared her
experience of a social perception about her as an Asian. She said that “when I was participating in a public school program, [students] tried to identify ME, and tried to know more about me with my appearance. So appearance and language are really important things for them, and even Chinese students or Japanese students tried to… like… Oh, you are looking similar with me, and they wanted to make connections with me… I know that they are Americans but their appearance is totally different, you know… I know, like… we cannot say like a, we don’t have an identity as an Asian, or Korean, or Chinese….” Her own experience as an Asian, students’ perceptions of her, and her own understanding about Korean/Asian-Americans indicated that Korean/Asians and Korean-American/Asian-Americans are viewed as ethnic others due to their appearance. The physical mark that cannot be hidden separated them from American natives or White people.

Unlike the relatively monotonous perspectives toward Korean/Asian and Korean-American/Asian-Americans, the teachers’ and the parents’ perceptions of Korean-Americans’ identity were very complicated. Based on Korean/Korea-American’s parents’ backgrounds, home settings including home language, sibling or peer influences, or school’s circumstances. HNC gave several examples of the complexity, variability, flexibility of the cultural identity of Korean-American young children. The first example she provided was a case of her son’s friend, EA. EA was born and grew up in the United States while his parents were studying. After EA’s father was done with his study, EA went to Korea for the first time at his age of five. HNC stressed that EA became “totally Korean” after staying in Korea for “only one year.” Before going to Korea, EA could
speak Korean like a Gyopo, a term for Korean ethnicity people who permanently live outside of Korea. However, after living in Korea for one year, his Korean dramatically improved and became his main language while almost forgetting English. She added that whenever her son and EA talk, they speak more than ninety five percent of Korean.

In contrast, HNC pointed out that LI, a kindergarten student at KACSCO, whose parents are “Koreans, not even Gyopo,” only uses English when she talks with friends at KACSCO. HNC stated that it is weird that she uses English about ninety eight percent although their parents are Koreans. She explained that LI never uses Korean but English when she talks to another student, YL. HNC argued that even though parents are using only Korean in their home setting, the exposure at their American school settings such as preschools or kindergartens, impacts their language preference and development.

Another unique example that conflicts with the previous example is a case of a twins at KACSCO who were born in the United States. In their cases, HNC emphasized that they “never use English” even though they attend American schools including day care/child care centers, which led her to think that they are “well educated” children who can speak Korean well. She asserted that they are “real Koreans” always wearing “cutting edge” Korean clothes, watches, and shoes with Korean characters. HNC added that their grandparents and relatives send those products from Korea or bring them very often when they come to visit the twins in the United States.

HNC asserted that after growing up, Korean-American adults are always saying that “they should have learned Korean.” HNC presented her cousins’ case, whose father is Gyopo and mother is from Korea. Since the father who grew up in the United States
cannot speak Korean, the parents only used English in their home setting. Therefore, their children, the two cousins of HNC, could not speak Korean at all. However, when the cousins became young adults, the father asked them to find their “identity” and “future direction” by “visiting Korea.”

MJ also expressed her own perspectives toward Korean- and Asian-Americans in the United States, by asserting that there is a third identity for Korean-American students. MJ stated that “the students have cultural identities… as I told you before, there are three identities, so like a… Korean, kind of, I’m a Korean but I’m not included in, perfectly fit to the Korean identity… but… well… American… yah, might be… cause I was in a… for a long time, I was involved in American education, but it’s little bit different, difficult to make some connections with a Caucasian or African-American because the family didn’t connect to each other… and the last one is the, I’m a Korean-American. So, I think… they are struggling with that, between the two, so they built the third one, I’m a Korean-American or Asian-American. That is another identity. I don’t think that we cannot say like… they are Koreans, they have Korean identity, or they have American identity, but they have a Korean-American identity. But they have a more preference in Korean or they are more familiar with Korean culture, so they have a positive Korean identity or… that’s what I’m thinking about.” Similar to Kim (2014)’s study which introduces Korean-Americans’ attitude that prefers to identify them as Korean-Americans instead of Korean or American, MJ highlighted that the third identity as Korean-American might describe their complex identity of multicultural background and marginal status better.
Moreover, KACSCO’s students with multiethnic or multicultural family backgrounds, of which number became over a quarter of the total students, were perceived differently compared to the other Korean/Korean-American students. In contrast to the cases of HNC’s son and his friend, EA, who confidently see themselves as “Koreans who can speak English,” HNC stated that it is difficult for the students with multiethnic background to “define” their identity. MJ’s example supports these dynamics of the multiethnic students at KACSCO. MJ voiced that her four students, YS, MS, JS and HR (the four students that I taught) of multiethnic backgrounds experienced a complex situation due to their ethnicities. She asserted that “they were categorized as… there were excluded from the other [KACSCO] classroom, the preschool classroom because of their language level, but actually I feel like a… it’s NOT because of their language… of course it’s really hard if they have a language gap… BUT, the four of them, I feel like a, they ARE EXCLUDED they identity from that classroom…. Of course, their language is different, but their identity is supposed NOT to [be] excluded from them… but… I started with them… MS and YS went through, of course JS and HR left, but MS and YS survived through this program, and… NOW, they tried to use more Korean…”

In particular, MJ talked more about JS’s case, stating that “she didn’t know any Korean. And she didn’t know why [she] need[s] to speak Korean… and it doesn’t need to be. But… she was trying to… cause her mother is Korean [and her father is German-American], so she was trying to show off [to] her [mother] how she can say Umma (mother in Korean), or Sunsangnim (teacher in Korean). She knows only two words,
Umma and Sunsangnim… I think she didn’t want to have a Korean identity… but the prior Korean classroom that makes her to feel, Korean and Korean identity, or Korean culture is really important, it is not fit to her. That is why, not the class or teacher excluded her from the classroom, but the atmosphere or the school culture excluded her from having the Korean identity.”

MJ also talked about another student with a multicultural family background. “One of the really interesting cases, SMD, she is a Korean adoptee in an American family, and the family really emphasizes her Korean identity. So she cannot speak Korean a lot, she rarely speak in Korean and she… but… her father is really enthusiastic for teaching Korean more than other families… she might have a different category… and I would like to connect to my prior experience with the Korean-American adoptee camp… I have a really strong connection with them… cause I spent ten days in a camp… each year, they meet each other from the camp, so they have their own Korean-American-Adoptee identity… they identify themselves as Korean-American-ADOPTEE…. So I assumed that SMD might have another identity from the other, the rest of my students…” She quoted the adoptees’ statement, “they say, adoptees always BE ASKED WHO ARE YOU… EVERYONE is asking them who are you every time when they are young. After they realized their family is Caucasian or African-American, their appearances are totally different from them, they kept thinking why I am different from the rest of my family. They are ALWAYS thinking about that… Korean-American adoptees, they are ALWAYS thinking about that from when they are preschoolers or kindergarteners.”
Nevertheless, the young students’ identity perceptions did not seem to have continuous rigidity but rather they showed fluidity. Since all the students at KACSCO are under twelve years old, their viewpoints toward their cultural and social identities could be shifted. For example, MJ’s survey with her nine kindergarten students aged ranging from four to six years old showed that most of the Korean-American students see themselves as Koreans, whereas all my five students aged ranging from eight to twelve revealed that they are Americans. In contrast, based on EJ’s and HNC’s observation, the Korean-American undergraduate students seem to seek their Korean identity as they grow up.

Above all, EJ, who has taught Korean to undergraduate students for several years, explained that many Korean-American undergraduate students want to learn Korean culture and language. EJ conveyed that, however, they were not interested in Korean language when they were young. Many Korean-American students did not realize the reasons and necessity of learning Korean since they do not use the language outside of Korean communities. Nevertheless, the Korean-American students feel shameful of not being able to speak Korean when they become undergraduate students. Moreover, EJ revealed that the Korean-American undergraduate students realized that it is difficult for them to enter the American mainstream community after trying hard to live as if they are natives in the United States.

Although the Korean-American students had been gotten along with their American friends in K-12 schools, when they entered a university, they realized that a Korean community is where they need to go back ultimately (Kim, 2014). Dae Young
Kim (2014) states that Korean-American students start to embrace and feel strong tie to Korean community when they enter a college where there are enough Asian-American students to support their ethnic heritage.

On the other hand, each individual’s situational factors affect their approach as well. HNC pointed out that the attitude toward learning Korean identity and culture could depend on individuals’ situations. Since HNC plans to go back to Korea after her husband’s work, attending a Korean school and learning Korean are “necessary” for her child whereas Korean immigrants who live in the United States might not feel the significance of learning Korean language. However, HNC stated that some of the immigrants, who have lived in the United States for more than twenty years, only use Korean at home and strongly asked their children to learn Korean and talk to each other only in Korean, which led the Korean-American children to be fluent in both languages.

Similarly, EJP also highlighted the importance of keeping his son’s Korean identity and language ability, since they plan to go back to Korea. EJP asserted that she could observe her son’s identity conflict. She explained that her son’s “natural language now is of course English… The identity issue is also quite problematic, because he thinks that, I mean… I emphasize a lot of times, he was born in Korea, and then we are going back or your parents, me, I mean, your dead is in Korea, all families are in Korea, we have to go back… [Even though he grew up in Korea until three year old] he thinks that America or USA is kind of only the country that he experienced… but he knows that he was born in Korea.”
EJP also disclosed her concern about the son’s losing Korean ability via her conversation with her husband. The husband said that the communication with his son became problematic due to the son’s decreasing Korean comprehension whenever they talked through phone calls. Even though the son can understand general conversations, EJP also revealed that she got shocked when the son recently couldn’t answer a Korean question that was assigned in the Korean class at KACSCO. She stated that his losing his Korean ability upset her since he was speaking Korean fluently before coming to USA. While interviewing, she repeatedly asked her son who stayed next to her to speak certain words or sentences in Korean.

EJP stated that she tries hard to maintain her son’s Korean comprehension. She said that “even last year, I really tried myself to teach him. Not even though we don’t come to weekend Korean school during the summer, I still remember because I really want him to learn Korean language, so we had some Korean books, similar to our textbook… I asked my sister and my husband to bring them, and I got it, and… during the summer time, I really wanted him to know Korean language… so I tried myself to talk with him and then… actually I really wanted him to READ and then WRITE Korean language.”

Alternatively, HNK expressed that her moderate and flexible standpoint about the concept of Korean and Korean-American identities as a potential parent. The viewpoint she suggested was a more open-minded approach. HNK asserted that if she has a child, she will explain to her children that obtaining a nationality differs in different countries. She said that she will let the child know that he or she possesses two identities formally
and informally, so that the child doesn’t need to pick only one. However, HNK still wants her child to remember his or her Korean root originated from HNK’s home country. She revealed that although the child would live and be educated in the United States, HNK hopes the child will be aware of his/her identity as a Korean, since the parents are Koreans.

Regardless of their future plans, whether they would stay in the United States or go back to Korea, most parents and teachers revealed their desire of their children to maintain their Korean identity. HNC asserted that she and her husband, temporary residents from Korea, will say to their son that “you are Korean” even if they would decide to live in the United States. She anticipated that the son would think that he has both Korean and American culture even though he would be an American citizen. Similarly, HNK also indicated that in fact, she was surprised about the Korean-American students’ perceptions of their identity as Americans. She assumed that the Korean-American students would maintain strong Korean identity, since their parents are Koreans. However, the students’ perspective of considering them as Americans was an unanticipated aspect for her. By referring to the Korean media that shows Korean adoptees’ lives in the United States, HNK pointed out that Korean adoptees keep their Korean identity very strongly even though they are more exposed to American culture than Korean-American children who have Korean parents.

*Exposure to Korean Culture*

KACSCO’s students’ cultural exposure to Korean culture is reported as very limited. HNC revealed that although some of the students might prefer to use English, she
solely uses Korean in her class, since parents might want their children to be exposed to Korean as much as possible. Furthermore, the channels from which the students could obtain knowledge about Korean culture are very limited. There are two main influences, parents and media, which will be discussed in this section.

Interestingly, some of the Korean-American students at KACSCO were aware of Korean popular culture such as movies, animation characters, or songs. However, they are often from the previous generation. EJ shared her insight that Korean-American students barely have a chance to be exposed to Korean traditional culture except through the events at the Korean-American community school. Additionally, K-12 students are too young to be interested in contemporary Korean culture including K-pop\textsuperscript{20} or Korean drama, of which culture are widely consumed by Korean or Korean-American college students or young adults in the United States. She provided me with an example of her student, JHS, who exceptionally likes an old song consisting of numbers in its relics. EJ stated that JHS’ mother repeatedly shows JHS the video of this old-fashioned song, so she loves it very much. EJ explained that it is difficult for the parents to find the latest resources from Korea and often they need to pay for those contents, so they seem to show their children outdated materials that are cheaper or free, and the parents feel familiar with. Similarly, HNC pointed out that her students are familiar with the songs that their parents know. She assumed that parents can easily find audio or visual materials and

\textsuperscript{20} K-pop is a genre/trend of Korean popular music, which is originated from South Korea but is well known among teenagers not only in Eastern but also in Western countries.
show them to their children within the boundary of what they are aware of or familiar
with, which might lead the parents to show outdated materials.

Similarly, EJP stressed that his son has less cultural and social exposure to Korean
culture than American counterparts. She stated that “But the thing is… Yah, but because
of the Korean school, the good thing was that he still knows the Korean flag, Korean
national flag, but uh… still like… he is very very familiar with American flag or… you
know… Definitely because of the exposure, cultural exposure and… so very funny thing
is… last year, definitely, he watched two things, Korean cartoons, Pororo or the other
things, and nowadays, I think from this year, he doesn’t watch anymore Korean movies
or Korean cartoons.”

EJP added that “I think, maybe because, just kind of randomly, when you go to
YouTube, I think YouTube is also very influential of course… this year, maybe, after this
conversation, definitely I think I have to enforce myself to watch more Korean movies…
but anyway the last year, he still watched Korean cartoons last year, and this year he
didn’t watch! Because maybe, I didn’t really show him about some Koreans or… yah,
even I also don’t remember like what other Korean cartoons are nowadays popular or
famous. So maybe I also have to let him watch some other Korean movies, so that he can
still understand or hear some sounds…”

Regarding to Korean contemporary culture, HNK maintained that students are
familiar with some Korean animation characters, such as Pororo and Tayo. As EJP
pointed out, HNK’s students also often watch YouTube videos including Korean related
channels and talk about them in class. Sometimes sing a latest song of Psy, Korean singer, in addition to other American songs.

Limited exposure to Korean language and culture plays an important role in Korean-Americans’ identity. EJ stressed that Korean-American students hardly have a chance to mingle with their Korean or Korean-American peers in their age, so they are barely exposed to or share the contemporary Korean culture with one another. HNC also pointed out that her son was very excited about attending Korean school since he could meet the friends who can speak Korean. HNC emphasized that it is very difficult for young Korean kids to find a Korean friend of similar age. EJP also talked about her son’s cultural situation saying that “the environment is like that. If we have other Korean friends, again, even in this [Korean-American community] school, as you know that…his classroom, all various age groups, but he doesn’t have any friend with the same age. Definitely that’s also kind of problematic… we also go to church, but of course, we don’t really stay longer there, so cannot have a friend there too.”

While EJP was talking about her son’s American school setting, “the sad thing is there is no Korean mate in his classroom… but I think there is one Asian… I think… the very funny thing is her name is YJ (a common Korean name), so I thought she is Korean… but the thing is… maybe they are mixed… like Japanese… because the family name is…,” her son stayed next to her said “SHE IS JAPANESE!” EJP added that “maybe, I guess… it is just my guessing, because I never met her parents, but maybe one is from Japan and one is from Korea… maybe mother is from Korea and then, father is from Japan, that’s why the family name is a Japanese… but thing is he (EJP’s son)
usually says it, she speaks Japanese. He doesn’t say about Korean whether YJ speaks Korean, but rather, she speaks Japanese. She also goes to Japanese school just like him (EJP’s son), like he goes to the Korean school… I assume that maybe they are Japanese… but the thing is the name, YJ, really familiar to me, so I was really happy to hear it. But then, eventually I learned that she is not really, maybe half Korean, but we never know.”

HNC also claimed the same issue. When her family moved to Ohio, HNC stated that she and her husband wanted to find the best education for their son, so searched “Ohio number 1.” While attending the public kindergarten school appreciated as the Ohio number 1 for HNC, she stated that the son seemed to be always long for Korean peers. She explained that there is no Korean student in his school but approximately two or three Asian students in class. Whenever HNC says that she will meet someone, her son was always asking whether the person speaks Korean or English. HNC pointed out that the son wants to be in the circumstance that he could understand what other people are talking about. The environment that younger Korean students cannot find their peers with the same ethnicity seemed to be very problematic for the parents. Additionally, there are separate standpoints for the Korean parents to embrace Korean identity from Asian identity as a whole.

Language Issues and Development in Different Settings

Among all the interviewees, learning Korean and English in both settings, in Korea and US, were one of the important matters. It was interesting to compare the diverse situations between the Korean-American students’ Korean language learning or
Korean students’ English learning in US and their English learning in Korean settings. As a researcher in linguistics, EJ asserted that “as [Korean-Americans] grow, they could experience confusion of their identity as Koreans or Americans… and I think…the language is the… umm… main point of the identity.” In order to understand how language impacted the students’ behaviors, attitudes, perspectives, I asked several questions to the interviewees. Among all, EJP explained that

When he speaks Korean, again, as you saw him before, he was definitely confident in both languages at that time, but now, because I also recognize when we talk about Korean language when we do the homework together, and then he couldn’t say anything. And of course, as we all know that, if we are limited about the language… we definitely kind of lose some confidence about expressing or having some conversations with others. Right? So, same thing! I mean… he also, even like last weekend, I realized he… uh… Yah, he didn’t talk to me in Korean because I required him to speak Korean while we were doing some homework, and he kind of resistant because he couldn’t say it. So it was quite, again, very surprising and very shocking because I thought even he could speak a little, you know, a little, shorter phrases… I thought. I expected he could tell something… I thought he would know or he still remember that. But he even couldn’t say anything.
Through this answer, I could see the two things. First of all, there are different attitudes of EJP’s son when he used a language that he didn’t feel comfortable with (any more). As I observed in my class, the Korean-American students’ attitudes changed automatically when they speak English and Korean. The second thing is EJP’s attitude toward her son’s behavior. Many parents expect their children to communicate with them through Korean. If the need could not be fulfilled, the parents would be disappointed by the situation.

In EJP’s case, she also compared the two situations of her son’s English learning in Korean and US. She stated that although her son was exposed to English in Korea, he couldn’t really understand English when he first came to the United States. However, the son “had to go to the childcare program like a pre-school, so eventually… formal instruction, just naturally he learned” in Columbus, Ohio. However, EJP revealed that her son’s English fluency developed suddenly. She said that “it was quite sudden nowadays. I was also kind of a little shocked about how I can make a balance between the two languages, definitely, I am also planning to go back, and maybe he also has to adjust himself to Korean environment as well, so… little… actually unexpected why it happens… I also don’t get that.”

Moreover, HNK shared her unique experience with the Korean-American students in terms of their attitude of learning language. On the week prior to the ending ceremony, all students needed to take a final test in Korean language at the Korean-American community school. One of the HNK’s students cried for more than ten minutes due to the stress from the gap between his expectation and his current Korean proficiency. HNK added that some students feel a high stress of possible failure of
advancement in their Korean level. Although the students do not have a strong desire in learning Korean, they show competitive attitudes in answering questions or achieving a good test result.

In addition, I could listen to another context of learning Korean language and culture in other cities in US. MJ pointed out the different sizes of the Korean/Korean-American populations in New York or New Jersey. Compare to Columbus, Ohio, MJ stated that there are many Korean-American students who want to learn Korean culture and language, since “it’s more like… the Korean school which is in New York or New Jersey, there is a more huge community in there….” Moreover, EJ gave her examples as a volunteer to teach Korean language to Korean-American undergraduate students in Los Angeles, California. EJ, who taught Korean in Los Angeles, pointed out that the undergraduate students were eager to learn Korean language because they felt that they could not belong to any of the communities, an American community and a Korean community, without learning Korean. She also highlighted that Hallyu, a growing popularity of Korean contemporary culture, got attention in Los Angeles, so the Korean-American students felt proud of the culture, which encouraged them to learn Korean language. However, EJ disclosed that the Korean-American students were not considered as Koreans in Korean communities, but viewed as Americans with Korean appearance since they could not speak Korean language. Therefore, they struggle from identity conflict of not being able to belong to any of the two groups.

On the other hand, HNK shared her experiences with the Korean-American students who lived in Korea, which impacted their attitude toward the two cultures. When
HNK worked in an English library in Seoul, Korea, she found an interesting aspect which can be compared with the situation of the Korean-American students at KACSCO. She indicated that the students who came to the library spoke English with their peers. She explained that the students seemed like they grew up in the United States similar as like the Korean-American students at KACSCO, but moved to Korea. In addition, some parents only spoke English to their children and they seemed to be familiar with communicating in English. HNK added that they mainly talked about American cultural products including American games or animations, but barely mentioned Korean counterparts. She asserted that she could observe American cultural influences on the students, and the parents’ desire of maintaining those attitudes.

The desire toward improving English language for their children could be observed in EJP’s comment. As a temporary resident in US, EJP testified that “it turns little different. Before I realized his English is better than Korean, I, again maybe until last year, I… I tried to communicate with English also, because his school setting is here, so I definitely don’t want him to be isolated or have no problem about language issues in his school. Think about it. I mean, as an international student, if we have a language barrier, it is really hard to communicate with others, and you cannot really make friends with others in English or in the target language, so I think up to last year, I kind of communicate with him in English of course, but of course sometimes I speak, I cannot say like I 100% I speak English, definitely… maybe half of them maybe I spoke Korean too, but umm… but nowadays I kind of try to speak Korean more than English now. Because I also want him to still remember and memorize some [Korean] words.”
EJP also revealed that her son “says English is easier than Korean.” She further asserted that “he cannot produce Korean language… he cannot make the Korean language structure, so that’s kind of problematic now, so I think I also have to work with him about something like… that’s like my problem or my target like how I can deal with it.” In the meanwhile, EJP shared her satisfaction of the fact that the son’s American school teacher stated that “his vocabulary is also good… she said that his level is kind of grade 1 or grade 2 even though he is a kindergartener… it was a quite good sign I thought.”

Learning their heritage language was considered as a necessary aspect among many. In particular, EJ testified that she observed the students’ identity “recovery” when the students learned and could be able to speak Korean. She added that when the students couldn’t speak Korean, they lacked confidence to say they are Korean-Americans. In addition, the Korean-American students had communication problems with their parents who are immigrants and cannot speak English fluently when they couldn’t speak Korean. EJ add that some students recognized the benefits of learning Korean, sometimes as one of second languages and other times as their heritage language.

**Roles and Impacts of Arts**

Many teachers pointed out that utilizing arts as a means of teaching and learning Korean culture and language is very effective. They asserted that students get easily engaged in learning and collaborating with other students. As a kindergarten teacher, HNC stated that she actively utilizes arts activities, such as singing songs and creating visual artworks. She insisted that these activities are very effective for the young students
to learn Korean language and culture. HNC concluded that her students got easily involved in the learning process working with other peers.

On the other hand, MJ explained that “I use visual components as a reference, and also [students] wrap up their ideas… I use a lot of pictures… they can draw their prior knowledge from their experiences. They might have seen these kind of things (showing me her students’ images) before… but by bringing this picture in my classroom, they could see… Oh, yah! I remember that! They recalled… that is one thing… and also we use a lot of videos and photos, I think it’s really good to… it’s really help them to imagine more details… what I believe is if they have more details visual, imaginations, then, they can have more developed writing or developed…”

MJ revealed that visual aspects represent her students’ different cultural backgrounds. For example, when she asked her students to draw a hospital, some students who grew up in Korea drew a cross sign as a symbol of the building. Since most hospitals in Korea have the sign on their building, the students who are more familiar with Korean culture added it as a significant element of their “tall” buildings. In contrast, the students who mainly grew up in the United States illustrated the situations of what is happening inside of the building instead of drawing its external views.

As a teacher of the Origami class at KACSCO, HNK confirmed that the Korean-American students are more actively involved in the Origami class than the Korean language, history and culture class. She maintained that the students do not have any interest in the Korean class while they are very enthusiastic about the Origami class. She indicated that students often ask what they will do in the Origami class and provide her
with their ideas. In her opinion, students seem to like to create visual and physical outcomes which they can show to their parents and bring home. HNK asserted that although students suffer from the process of making complicated origamis, they are very satisfied with their final results to be able to show them to their parents and receive their compliments. EJP also revealed that her child always brings his artwork to her, and talked about it together. EJP added that “we talked about what he drew in the class time… even, I think, almost every day, he draws anyways.” She stated that “even though I don’t force him, he wants to tell me. That’s another thing, he wants to show off what he draws… He wants to explain to me… he wants to tell me…”

On the other hand, EJP stressed that students do not have enough opportunities to work on artmaking in US. Referring to Korean’s art education, EJP explained the reason why her son takes Art & Craft class at KACSCO, because “Actually, maybe I kind of force him to do. I realized he is good at art… I mean… I also realized his art is quite good, so I just want to have some art classes... I didn’t have any opportunity here that usually I think you may know… in Korea, there are some art classes, you know, some private art classes… so even though [artmaking in KACSCO] is only one hour a week, it’s still really good opportunity for him to develop more art lessons… so I definitely asked him, and he was okay with it.”
Chapter 5: Interpretations and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the interpretations of the data presented in Chapter Four. The discussion will be described based on the three research questions stated in Chapter One, followed by the research implications. The outcomes of this research study with Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) will be analyzed in both contexts of the local setting in Columbus, Ohio, and a bigger boundary of sociocultural understandings of Korean/Korean-American communities in the United States. The approach of considering both micro and macro levels of historical, cultural, social, and political contexts of the community may bring a new insight into our society (Ryu, 2014).

As stated in the previous Chapters, the collaborators of this research study were not limited to a narrow definition of Korean-American individuals. Rather, the population of this study included KACSCO’s community members, the students, parents, teachers, and administrators, regardless of their individual backgrounds. In other words, the community members who did not define themselves as Korean-Americans were also important participants, and they significantly contributed to this study. For example, there
were many temporary residents with Korean nationality\textsuperscript{21}, non-Korean parents\textsuperscript{22}, and multiethnic students who are the growing population and an important part of the Korean-American community. Therefore, the angle of this study might differ from other research studies emphasized solely on the Korean-American population.

This study took place over two years of interactions between KACSCO’s members and myself as a member of the community. As participatory action research, the aim of this study was not finding rigid knowledge about the target population (Stringer, 1996, 2008 & 2014; Lawson et al., 2015; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McIntyre, 2008), but trying to understand the community’s experiences in their contexts and bring it into an academic discourse. The initially designed research direction had countlessly changed based on each individual’s feedback, conflicts, unpredicted situations, and ongoing relationships between the participants and me, and among the participants. Nevertheless, the primary goal of this study which is to understand the community, especially understanding the Korean-American students’ cultural identities in a multicultural setting, had been maintained. To achieve this goal, three research questions were investigated:

1. How do external factors including social perceptions, social structures, and situational factors influence the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community members’ cultural identity?

\textsuperscript{21} Among the KACSCO’s population, there were many Korean people who came to the United States as non-immigrants, such as F-1, J-1, or H-1 visa holders, for their study or work, and stay in the country temporarily.

\textsuperscript{22} The parents’ racial and ethnic backgrounds are varied. There were Americans, Japanese, Chinese-American, German-American, Puerto Rican-American, etc.
2. How do internal factors such as family backgrounds, parental influences, and age differences affect the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio students’ learning Korean language, history, culture, and/or art in multicultural settings, constructing their identity as part of the learning process?

3. What are the roles and impacts of storytelling and visual artmaking components in addressing the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community members’ cultural understandings and experiences?

The first question is about a general picture of the Korean-American community’s experience in the United States related to the external factors such as social structures and other people’s perceptions about the group. This question is mainly analyzed based on the theoretical framework of this study, critical multiculturalism perspective, with two parts: *Part I Commonalities*, and *Part II Differences*. There are various Korean/Korean-American related research studies in academia, which focus on similar aspects of American culture. Therefore, in the first part, Part I Commonalities, I will re-highlight some of the similar findings with those research studies.

However, most of the research has been carried out in other bigger cities, such as Los Angeles or New York City (Kim & Oh, 2014; Kim, 2008), where the size of the Korean/Korean-American population is much bigger than Columbus, Ohio, where this study was conducted. Multicultural circumstances and the local contexts of an urban setting in Columbus, Ohio, impacted the dynamics of the Korean-American community. Specifically, the study was conducted in Columbus, the fifteenth largest city in the United
States, where The Ohio State University, one of the largest American universities with diverse populations, is located. Therefore, in Part II Differences, I will mainly focus on the differences in the research setting.

As a Participatory Action Research study, this research study paid close attention to the local community, and their internal dynamics (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Stringer, 2008; Stringer, 2014). In addition to the unique local contexts discussed in Part II Differences for the first research question, there were many internal aspects which affect the community’s identity establishment and experiences. For example, this study will underline several factors, such as the community members’ family backgrounds, parental influences, and age differences in order to see how they construct their identity differently in this local context. Consequently, the interpretations and conclusions of this research study should be considered based on these settings.

Analysis, Interpretation, and Implications for Question 1

How do external factors including social perceptions, social structures, and situational factors influence the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community members’ cultural identity?

Analysis and Interpretation

The external factors of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) contexts were mainly observed, shared, and analyzed through the interactions with diverse individuals in the community. This includes general
conversation with the administrators, teachers, and other community members and in-depth formal interviews with the teachers and parents. The process unveiled the KACSCO community members’ social, cultural, historical, and political contexts both in the community’s local setting in Columbus, Ohio, and the bigger contexts in the United States.

Most of all, my interactions with the administrators, teachers, and parents revealed the bigger contexts of the community in the United States. For example, many administrators and teachers shared their daily experiences in the United States, including limitations of living in another country rather than their own country, Korea. Similarly, the interviews with the school teachers and parents disclosed that the cultural and physical differences of Koreans/Korean-Americans still trigger for the mainstream Americans to view the population as a different group regardless of their American nationality or strong sense of belonging to the United States.

On the other hand, the communication with the Korean/Korean-American/multi-racial, or multi-ethnic students showed their experiences in the local community in Columbus, Ohio. For example, the students shared their stories of how they are perceived by their peers or other community members in their public schools, KACSCO, and other local communities. These stories highlighted the local contexts of KACSCO’s community members’ cultural identity in addition to the bigger contexts.

There are two categories in this section: commonalities and differences. The first category, Part I Commonalities, focuses on the common perceptions about Korean/Asian populations in the United States. The result indicates several similarities between other
Korean/Korean-American related research findings and the experiences of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) members in this study. Several social perceptions and social structures toward Korean/Asian populations, which impact the KACSCO’s cultural identity establishment, will be discussed under this category.

*Part I Commonalities: Social Perceptions and Structures toward Korean/Asian ethnic groups as the Other*

Many Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community members shared their sense of being different as racial/ethnic minorities in the United States. The KACSCO’s students, parents, teachers, and administrators commonly argued that they are perceived differently due to their Korean/Asian backgrounds. They revealed that they were repeatedly identified as others owing to their race, which led them to the several challenges of validating their American nationality. Furthermore, KACSCO members’ linguistic and cultural differences often resulted in people’s perspective of being members of a deficit group. Therefore, several race and nationality related issues of the KACSCO’s participants, and the deficit perspective toward them caused by social perceptions and structures will be discussed in this section.

**Race. Racial Othering.** Race, as a “system of power” (Kibria, 2002), puts an important facet into the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community’s identity. The Koreans/Korean-Americans’ visible differences such as physical appearance stigmatize the population as “others” in a bigger context (Min, 2002, 2004, 2013; Kim, 2014; Kim, 2008, 2014; Pak, 2006; Park, 2009; Chung,
Ruth Chung, Korean-American scholar, revealed that she was “painfully conscious of being different” due to her physical presence which is different from her white classmates (Chung, 1999, p. 60).

Similarly, many of the racial minorities try to fit in or belong to the majority, but failed due to their visible differences (Chung, 1999; Kang, 2014). Several KACSCO teachers and students also reported that their physical differences directly signified their otherness. EJ, teacher at KACSCO, asserted that Korean/Korean-American students are perceived as Koreans/Asians by other people due to their physical appearance. She argued that her students tried to “be included” and fit into the majority group in their school years, but the majorities claimed to the Korean-American students that “your physical appearance is Korean” and “you are different from us.” The physical differences between the racial majority and minorities allocate the power of being the majority and minorities who are “excluded from” society while being “visibly different” from their counterpart (Chung, 1999, p. 61). Unlike White people, being people of color accompanies “ongoing social exclusion” (Kang, 2014) and racial visibility (Kim, 2008; Kim, 2014).

Furthermore, the KACSCO members’ Korean/Korean-American appearance brought the racial majority’s attention whenever they went to the places where the majority of the people were White. MJ, another KACSCO teacher, revealed that her physical difference as an Asian triggered American students’ perception of her as a stranger when she visited American public schools. MJ stated that American students “tried to identify… tried to know about me with my appearance.” She argued that
“appearance is really important thing for them,” which distinguishes them from other people with a different racial background.

Like this, racial othering is a common issue among racial minorities, including Asian/Asian-American, in the United States (Kibria, 2002; Mori-Quayle, 1999; Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014; Bose, 1999). As, MJ, KACSCO’s teacher, pointed out, “even Chinese students or Japanese students… I know that they are Americans, but their appearance is totally different.” Compared to the Caucasian immigrants, Korean/Asian immigrants are obviously “outsiders” based on the way they look (Kim, 2008, p. 220; Mediratta, 1999). Most Asians in the United States, including the KACSCO’s community members, do not need to tell other American people about their different racial background. As MJ stated, “we cannot say… we don’t have an identity as an Asian, or Korean or Chinese,” since the physical difference could not be hidden. In response to this racial othering perspective, the existing tension between the KACSCO students’ racial identity and nationality will be reemphasized in the following section, nationality.

**Nationality.** *Foreigner.* The ongoing challenges about Korean-American population’s racial ascription lead to another issue, struggles of embracing their nationality as American citizens (Kim, 2014; Kim, 2008). The perspectives toward Korean-Americans in regard of their nationality is a significant issue in many Korean-American communities (Kim, 2014) including the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) members. Although most second-generation Korean-Americans consider themselves as Americans, there are existing conflicts about the perception (Kim, 2014; Chung, 1999; Oh, 2011). Many people, including both American
and Korean people see the Korean-American racial/ethnic group as not “real” Americans nor Koreans (Kim, 2014; Kim, 2008). Therefore, race and nationality which differentiate the Korean-American community as others will be deliberated in this section.

One of the keywords that provoked the KACSCO community members’ active conversations was the term, “foreigner.” Owing to their non-White appearance (Ryu, 2014), this term should be considered with the perspective of Koreans/Korean-Americans as “racial others” (Kim, 2014) stated in the previous section. However, there were more complicated issues within the racial categorizations, since a layer of “nativism” or “Americanness” (Kim, 2014, p. 150) added the complexities of identity among the KACSCO community members. Kim (2014) insisted that claiming an American citizenship for Korean- or Asian-Americans has its own limitation. As a “racialized foreigner” (Kim, 2014, p. 157; Ryu, 2014; Kang, 2014), the KACSCO’s members are often denied as real “Americans.” In other words, in addition to the social perception that White people consider racial minorities as outsiders, Korean/Asian ethnic groups are recognized as “forever foreigner” (Kim, 2014, p. 150) due to their short immigration history23 (Min, 1995).

The relatively recent immigrant history and their visibly foreign appearance “hampered” the Korean/Korean-American population to claim their “social citizenship” “in their own country” (Kim, 2008, p. 202; Kim, 2014; Ryu, 2014). Nadia Y. Kim (2008) highlighted that there are “cross-border dimensions” in Korean/Korean-American

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23 As stated in the previous chapters, the main population of this research is the immigrants or temporary residents who came to the United States after the 1965 immigration law.
communities in the United States (p. 17). As HL, a Korean-American student in my
*Advanced* class, revealed, she is often perceived as a foreigner due to her “foreign”
appearance even though she was born and raised in the United States. She stressed that “I
kept asked *where are you from?*” HL pointed out that people assume her identity as a
foreigner who came “from Asia.” Furthermore, they often “get confused” whenever she
answered them “I’m from America,” because she looks “like a Korean.” Although she
strongly believes her identity as an “American,” her entitlement as an American citizen
often conflicts with other citizens’ idea of *American identity*. These distinctions of HL as
a foreigner resonated with many community members at KACSCO and other research’s
accounts (Min & Kim, 1999; Kim, 2008; Kim, 2014; Kibria, 2002; Kang, 2014).

*Beyond the Categories: Multiplicity of Korean-Americans’ Identity.* Korean-
American students are perceived and categorized as both Korean and American (Chung,
1999; Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014; Kibria, 2002). However, they are often marginalized from
or not fully accepted by both parties (Mori-Quayle, 1999; Ryu, 2014; Kim, 2014). Dae
Young Kim (2014) insists that many Korean-Americans feel “neither fully Korean nor
American”, and one of the most important reasons that causes this tendency is due to
social structures (p. 161). Furthermore, Korean/Asian related discourses are
underrepresented in the United States (Kim, 2008; Kibria, 2002; Gay, 2000) due to the
social perception and structure of the “denial of citizenship to Asian groups” (Kim, 2008,
have been racially triangulated vis-à-vis Blacks and Whites” (p. 107).
First of all, the Korean-Americans’ Americanness is often challenged by other “native” Americans (Kang, 2014), both White mainstream and Black Americans (Kim, 2014). Kim (2014) argues that “the mainstream society draws rigid boundaries that limit the inclusion of immigrant minorities” (p. 162). Through the multiple examples that were discussed in the earlier section, it is obvious to see how Koreans/Korean-Americans have been isolated from the White mainstream population (Kim, 2014). Moreover, in addition to the loss of Korean communities during the Los Angeles race riots in 1992 (Min, 1995, 2004; Kim, 2008), the recent accident\(^\text{24}\) of EJ’s colleague in Los Angeles, solely due to his/her Korean ethnicity, revealed the remained tension and foreignization between Korean and Black populations in the United States.

Secondly, the Korean-Americans’ Koreanness is also challenged by other Koreans (Ryu, 2014; Kim, 2008). Nadia Kim (2008) maintains that she as a Korean-American felt “lack of insiderness” in Korean communities when she interacted with Korean people (p. 257). Many second-generation hyphenated Americans who were raised in the United States are faced with this situation in the countries of their cultural origins (Mori-Quayle, 1999). EJ, KACSCO’s teacher, testified that many Korean-American students who cannot speak Korean fluently feel ashamed of their lack of Koreanness, when they are in a community with the majority of Korean speaking population. EJ added that sometimes they are not welcomed in Korean communities due to the language

\(^{24}\) Based on EJ’s description, the colleague who was working in the EJ’s church was stabbed several times by a stranger, Black male, on the way home from work in Los Angeles in 2015. EJ explained that the man asked the EJ’s colleague if he/she is Korean, and stabbed him/her when the person answered that he/she is Korean. The colleague survived, but he/she is still paralyzed from waist down, and continues participating in rehabilitation process.
and cultural differences. In particular, many Korean-Americans including the KACSCO’s students have experiences of marginalization as “Korean-Americans” when they visited to Korea (Kim, 2008). These unique experiences attest the complex social and cultural positions of Korean-Americans in both American and Korean communities.

**Being Different as Being Deficit.** *Deficit Perspective.* The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community member’s different cultural aspects, such as language differences or modest ways of behavior, created conflicts or tensions among themselves and/or with other racial groups. Those differences were considered as being deficit, of which concept was the one of the social perceptions that the KACSCO’s members repeatedly testified in this study.

As racial differences are socially structured (May & Sleeter, 2010; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; McLaren, 2007; McLaren & Torres, 1999), this deficit perspective toward KACSCO’s unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds has been embraced, and even inherent in the community (Kibria, 2002; Kim, 2014; Irizarry, 2011; Kim & Oh, 2014; Ryu, 2014). Irizarry cited Flores-Gonzalez’s (2002, p. 5) opinion about the deficit views which “place the cause of the problem on the individual, family, or culture” (cited in Irizarry, 2011, p. 39). Irizarry (2011) argues that people “assign” negative viewpoints such as low expectations or deficit perceptions to the minorities, leading to problems of the groups (p. 45). This generalized deficit perspective was overwhelmingly observed among the KACSCO’s community members.

**Language Difference.** The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members’ language difference directly implied their inferiority in
multiple settings (Kim, 2014). Above all, certain biases toward Korean/Asian population’s language difference as viewed as being insufficient (Ryu, 2014; Kim & Oh, 2014) were discussed multiple times during the interviews, especially in public school settings. Irizarry (2011) asserts that schools play pivotal roles in “shaping the experiences of students” (p. 43). However, schools, as structured educational systems, often put minority students into the category of deficiency (Irizarry, 2011). For example, MJ, KACSCO’s teacher, criticized that non-native students, including some of the KACSCO’s students, are often “pulled out” from their classroom to attend an ESL class. She asserted that the ESL class is not their “main” class, but the space for the students with deficiency. Based on the standardized language proficiency test developed by and for the White mainstream population, the non-native students are required to take the test and categorized as the students who “need to improve” their language skills.

Moreover, several KACSCO interviewees revealed that they or their children are considered as Asians with poor English ability in their public school settings. HNC, KACSCO’s parent, argued that JY, HNC’s son, was treated as an Asian kid with “extremely poor” English, even though he passed his public school’s English evaluation test. She asserted that JY seemed to have comparable English ability compared to other American peers. However, from the beginning of the school year, JY’s teacher repeatedly asked him to register an ESL class. In conclusion, HNC’s son and two other students from other countries were excluded from their American main classroom setting to an ESL class due to the “language deficiency.” She expressed that she was worried about how JY would embrace this situation of being perceived both as different and deficient.
HNC also added her concern whether JY might be stigmatized by peers as a student with poor achievement.

In addition to these systematical distinctions between native speaking Americans and Korean/Korean-American students via social structures (Ryu, 2014; Kang, 2014), teachers’ biased attitudes toward minority students worsen the minority students’ situations. MJ, KACSCO’s teacher, pointed out that “there is a more like a power issue” within school settings. She stated that when students start attending a school, they become greatly influenced by their teachers (Irizarry, 2011). MJ argued that teachers are “the people of power,” and students see them as “big lords.” In other words, generally teachers have more power than parents, so teachers’ attitudes toward minority students strongly impact the minority students’ identity development. In addition, teachers’ perceptions on the students of color affect other classmates’ perceptions of the minority students. Since many teachers see minority students with a deficit perspective (Nieto, 1999; Irizarry, 2011), their peers whose native language is English perceive the linguistically minority students as students of insufficiency (Kim & Oh, 2014; Ryu, 2014).

Unlike other minority groups who have no issues with their language differences, the Korean/Korean-American population’s “language barrier” limits their social integration (Min, 1995; Kim & Oh, 2014; Min & Kim-Lu, 2014), especially among recent immigrants and their children, or Korean non-resident aliens. For instance, many KACSCO’s teachers disclosed that their low level of English proficiency restricted their participations in American society, which partially led them to volunteering at KACSCO.
In particular, HNC and HNK, KACSCO’s teachers, stated that they wanted to be involved in social activities, but there were not many things that they could do with their limited English.

On the other hand, speaking English fluently was often considered one of the important and successful achievements among the KACSCO’s members in multiple settling in the United States. In other words, Korean/Korean-American students cannot be perceived as acquiring high completions without minimizing the gap between their first language and English proficiency. Ryu (2014) highlights this perspective, citing her research participants’ opinions which view “English as a means to achieve success in schooling or social status in the United States. She added that some Korean students view “learning and mastering English as something that immigrants have to accomplish” or “English as a means to achieve success in schooling or social status in the United States” (p. 209). Correspondingly, EJP, KACSCO’s parent, shared her stories reflecting on her perception about achieving proficient English ability is a fundamental means of successful education in America. She said that she tried to communicate with her son, JHJ, in English even in their home setting in order to improve JHJ’s English proficiency. EJP asserted that she did not want her son “to be isolated” or have “problem about language issues in his school.” Therefore, she tried to use English most of the time while interacting with her son. As EJ admitted, among KACSCO’s member, “language barrier” was viewed as the key obstacle that most immigrants have to overcome.

Furthermore, the deficit perspective not only limits the population’s social engagement, but also restrains their self-esteem (Kang, 2014). Kim and Oh (2014) points
out Korean-Americans’ “weaker English proficiency” as one of the “major contributors to the high suicide rates,” “higher isolation,” or depression of the individuals among Koreans/Korean-Americans (p. 168). In fact, several KACSCO’s interviewees also stressed out their low self-esteem and self-perception due to their different linguistic background, and the deficit perspective toward the difference. All the interviewees, KACSCO’s teachers and parents, whose mother tongue is Korean showed diverse levels of hesitation or shamefulness before participating in this study which recommended them to speak English during the interviews.

Particularly, HNC, KACSCO’s parent who has PhD degree in early child education and had been actively participated in the field before coming to the United States, strongly refused speaking English, and expressed her struggles due to the lack of confidence in speaking English. Similarity, HNK and EJ, KACSCO’s teachers, both of who earned a master degree in a renowned University in Korea, also revealed the sense of inferiority when they were asked to use English for the interviews with me. Although I emphasized that it is okay not to be fluent in English, they apologized for their lower English proficiency multiple times during the interviews. They embraced the deficit perspective created by social structure, and felt that this is their fault. Like this, regardless of their expertise or high educational backgrounds, their lack of English proficiency naturally shaped their low self-esteem and sense of inferiority in the setting in the United States (Kim & Oh, 2014; Ryu, 2014; Kang, 2014).

Cultural Difference. The cultural difference of Korean heritage background from American culture induces the sense of cultural awkwardness (Kim, 2014; Ryu, 2014)
among some of KACSCO’s members. For example, Korean people’s daily habit including dietary menu impacted HNC’s son’s school experiences. JY, HNC’s son, was teased by his classmates due to the “smelly food” in his lunch box. Therefore, HNC, her husband, and JY became very sensitive about the smell of Korean food, which might “smell bad” for other racial groups. In these situations, a different characteristic of the Korean culture was considered as a “symptom of failure of acculturation” (Ryu, 2014, p. 210). In addition, due to the different cultural patterns or behaviors such as being modest and polite, the Korean/Asian populations are casted as a “passive” and “unmotivated” group of people who are ideal for “entry-level” jobs (Kim, 2014, p. 149; Kim, 2008).

**Part II Differences: Local Contexts of the Korean-American Community in Columbus, Ohio**

The local contexts of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community were underlined constantly in this participatory action research study, some of which elements should be deliberated in this section. First of all, I will focus on the unique background of the Korean/Korean-American population in Columbus, Ohio, related to The Ohio State University (OSU). As highlighted, one of the main reasons why many Korean-American community members settled down in Columbus, Ohio, is due to their study or school related jobs. Therefore, the unique contexts of the Korean/Korean-American population linked to OSU brought several different dynamics of this study.

Furthermore, these situational factors provide this research study with another context in terms of the community’s perceptions about Korean identity. Unlike the
Korean-American populations in other bigger cities such as New York or Los Angeles where much higher population inhabit for more than several decades, and create their own Korean towns, the Korean-American population in Columbus, Ohio, consists of much smaller number of people who are relatively recent immigrants and keep their Korean identity as an ethnic minority group.

Lastly, several dynamics including the new tendency of increasing number of multiracial and multiethnic students, the school’s financial and physical situations, and the influence of Korean network and church communities will be presented as important contexts of the community. These unique situations bring the distinctive contexts of the Korean-American community compared to other settings in different cities, which will be discussed under this category.

**Social Contexts. Korean Population in Columbus.** The general demographic of the Korean population in Columbus, and the background of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) community members greatly influenced on this research study’s cultural and sociopolitical contexts, and thus final findings. The Korean/Korean-American population in Columbus area comprises different aspects such as the size of the population, the recent immigration history, and the specified jobs related to the local circumstance. The number of Korean population in Columbus is 2,549, ranked as 41st largest Korean population in the United States, in comparison with the numbers of the population in Los Angeles, 91,595 ranked as 1st, and New York City, 86,473 ranked as 2nd (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Therefore, the contexts of the Korean/Korean-American population in Columbus differ from the two
counterparts. However, several students, teachers and administrators at KACSCO often compared the KACSCO’s settings with other Korean-American schools in those bigger cities.

From another standpoint of the social context, most KACSCO’s community members have little influences on local economy or politics in contrast to the Korean communities in those two big cities. As Min (1995) points out, “the tendency of Korean immigrants to consolidate in the two areas,” Southern California and New York-New Jersey (p. 208). In the two regions, there are better infrastructures and job opportunities for Korean people who seek other possibilities or jobs rather than the ones related to academia. As EJ, KACSCO’s teacher, asserted, Korean-American communities in Los Angeles possess their own authority and “power” to create jobs and strong networks to voice their political viewpoints in their local settings. People in this big Korean community easily find the place where they find emotional bond, social and cultural belonging, and practical assistance within the community. Besides, there are greater acceptance of Asian community and multicultural perspective in the two cities, which support Korean-American students’ comfort and pride in their ethnic identity (Kim, 2014).

On the other hand, Korean population in Columbus, Ohio, has limited power and social networks in relationship with their local community. Most Korean/Korean-American population gather through Churches, Korean community schools, and OSU, which will be discussed in the following section. Next, the relatively small number of the population, short history of immigration, and lack of community organizations led
several issues of the KACSCO’s community. Most community members at KACSCO brought these limitations multiple times during the teacher and parent meetings, personal conversations, and formal interviews. The detailed discourses about the negative features of the community will be followed by the next section.

A Community Linked to OSU. Many Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) members are affiliated with The Ohio State University (OSU). Unlike the cases in Los Angeles and New York City or New Jersey\(^ {25} \) (Min & Noh, 2014; Kim & Oh, 2014; Ryu, 2014), one of the main purposes of the Korean immigrants and other Korean non-resident aliens in Columbus, Ohio, is related to OSU. Many Korean students moved to Columbus to attend OSU, and stayed in the city after their graduation. In accordance with the Min’s and Noh’s point of view (2014), “Korean international students comprise the largest group” among Korean non-resident aliens in the United States (p. 5). Correspondingly, a large number of the KACSCO community consists of OSU undergraduate, graduate, alumni, or employees. Particularly, as a statistic reveals, South Korea has been one of the top three countries sending international students to OSU for years\(^ {26} \) (Knox, 2015). Therefore, the OSU affiliates became a big portion of the Korean/Korean-American population in the Columbus region.

\(^{25}\) As an example, Ryu’s study population is totally different from the main population of this study, which might reveal the different context of the population. She described her population that “Korean immigrants in Parkview City were primarily from the lower middle class” (p. 206), and “immigrated after having a life event, such as divorce of failure of a business” (p. 213) in Korea.

\(^{26}\) The number of South Koreans at OSU was: In 2000, 654, compared to 693 from China and 562 from India; in 2005, 754, compared to 790 from China and 622 from India; in 2010, 665, compared to 2,145 from China and 661 from India; and in 2015, 413, compared to 3,694 from China and 598 from India.
Furthermore, many international students settled down in the city and adjusted their legal status to permanent residents (Kim, 2014), which reflects many of the KACSCO’s community members’ backgrounds. ChanHwan Kim (2014) refers Pyong Gap Min’s study (Min, 2013) to highlight this situation, citing that “More than half of the college-educated first generation first came to the United States as international students… and changed their status in the United States upon completion of their studies” (p. 19). Consequently, most KACSCO members shared their common ground as a part of OSU alumni or current students or employees. For example, many members of the Korean-American community school are currently affiliated with or alumni of OSU. As described in Chapter Four, both the chairman of the board and principal are professors at OSU, five teachers among six are currently OSU graduate students or spouses of graduate students, and many parents are also professors or post-doctoral researchers at OSU. In this study, this connectedness to OSU implies two things: the Korean-American students’ parental background as temporary residences or adult immigrants who emphasize Korean identity, and their socio-economic status in the United States.

*Korean Parents.* Many parents and teachers and a few students at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) are Korean non-resident aliens who plan to stay in the United States temporarily. Many of the current members moved to Columbus recently, and most of them would go back to Korea within years. Therefore, the high number of floating population and their stronger Korean identity and cultural input affected the KACSCO’s circumstances and this research study. For example, as HNC, KACSCO’s parent, emphasized, most of the Korean temporary aliens argue that
learning Korean is “necessary.” If their child cannot utilize Korean sufficiently, as EJP, another KACSCO’s parent, asserted, it is “problematic.” As HNC and EJP, the Korean parents pursue their children’s Koreanness in the United States, of which tendency impacted other Korean-American students who were raised and would stay in the United States. In general, the American-born Korean-American students were motivated to learn Korean culture and language, and started to value their heritage cultures thanks to those circumstances. On the other hand, many students, including HR, HL and JHJ, were frustrated due to their lack of Korean comprehension in comparison to their parents’ and the community’s high expectation.

Furthermore, parents’ social status and identity perception strongly influence the Korean-American community school’s students’ cultural perspectives regardless of their nationality. As mentioned earlier, among the six school teachers, five teachers are temporary residents who came to the United States for their or their spouse’s study, while one teacher is an American citizen who also came to the United States for her study initially. Many parents also have a similar situation that they came to the United States to work or study for a certain period of time and plan to go back to Korea in years. In these cases, those group members see themselves as Koreans even though they are the part of the KACSCO’s community.

During an interview with HNC, KACSCO’s teacher and temporary resident, she revealed that her husband is very strict about his child’s identity as Korean even though they live in the United States. HNC added that she will impose Korean identity onto her son even if they would decide to permanently live in the United States. HNK, another
KACSCO’s teacher and temporary resident, also revealed that “it would be very sad” if her children see themselves as Americans even though they would be born and raised in the United States.\(^{27}\) The next week, after having a conversation with her husband, HNK stated that her husband is very confident that their children will see themselves as Koreans. Like these examples, most Korean parents believe that their children should and would see themselves as Koreans, or at least they have to be fully aware of their Korean heritage.

Similarly, many Korean immigrants who are permanent residents or obtained an American citizenship still see themselves as Koreans (Kim, 2014). They speak Korean as main language at home, hang out with other Korean people, and/or are affiliated with a Korean network such as Korean churches or the Korean-American community school due to several reasons. Some of them stated that it is more comfortable to belong to a Korean community, and others indicated that there are benefits to connect with both communities, Korean/Korean-American and American communities. For example, the Korean-American students could learn two languages through these opportunities, have more chances to meet diverse populations, and take an advantage of college admission or job application. Those positive standpoints about Korean communities encourage the KACSCO’s parents to ask their children to learn Korean language, history, and culture.

\(^{27}\) In fact, there is a difference discipline between Korean’s and American’s national principles. Whereas American government provides people with their citizenships based on their birth country, Korean government offers Korean citizenship based on their parents’ Korean nationality. Therefore, all Korean children who were born in both Korea and America automatically obtain Korean nationality, which emphasizes their heritage belonging.
A Growing Population: Multiracial/ethnic Students. Another major aspect of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) environment was the increasing number of multiracial and multiethnic students. As ChangHwan Kim (2014) pointed out, the drastically rising number of multi-racial/ethnic Korean-Americans is one of “the most prominent” changes of the recent generation of Korean-Americans (p. 18). Korean people used to show very low rate of multi-racial/ethnic population, but recently there is significant demographic change within the population (Kim, 2014; Min & Kim, 2014). The community members of KACSCO comprise both Korean race/ethnicity alone and multiple-race or -ethnicity combined with Korean race/ethnicity. Corresponding to the general statistic of the U.S. Census Bureau report in 2010 and other research (Min, 1995; Kim, 2014), the KACSCO’s previous principal and the current vice principal recounted that the population of the multiethnic students has dramatically increased at KACSCO recently. Indeed, among the total number of 28 students at KACSCO in 2016, there were eight students with multiracial or multiethnic backgrounds. Although six multi-race/ethnic students dropped the school in 2015, over 28 percent of the total student body embraces their multiracial and/or multiethnic backgrounds. Therefore, the boundary of this study population was bigger, in terms of their diverse backgrounds, than those of the research solely focusing on the “Korean-American students” in the United States.

Situational Contexts. The School Setting. The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) unique school circumstances implies its financial, physical, and organizational struggles. For example, as a non-profit organizational
Sunday school which is partially supported by Korean government, KACSCO’s financial difficulty was mentioned recurrently among the administrators, teachers, and students. At teachers’ meetings, KACSCO’s principal explained the limitation of finding a rental space within the school’s budget, while the vice principal asked the teachers to decrease their spending for the class resources. The teachers often raised their voices to stress the difficult situation at KACSCO in comparison with other Korean schools.

The challenging financial situation also limited the school’s options for finding a better location and physical environment. Above all, many administrators, teachers and parents asserted the importance of the location of KACSCO. For example, EJP, KACSCO’s parent, highlighted that the location of the school is one of the key factors many parents consider. She advocated the relevancy of attending a Korean-American school where many Korean people dwell or near a Korean church. The principal also disclosed that many KACSCO’s parents were not satisfied with the location at the time of this study. She revealed that several parents claimed that they would drop the school if KACSCO maintained the school’s location. Additionally, some teachers and all of my students in the advanced class complained about the physical condition of the school building. Owing to the affordable rental price of the building, KACSCO moved the school’s location in 2014, which caused increasing dissatisfaction rates among the students and parents.

28 As of September 4th, Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio moved to a new location, which is located inside of a Korean church, where many Korean/Korean-American people reside.
The structural or organizational issue was mentioned as a negative facet of KACSCO. All interviewees revealed their negative impression about the school’s structure. Among all, MJ highly criticized its “superficial” education approach “to satisfy” the school parents’ needs. As many teachers pointed out, KACSCO has no accumulated curriculum from previous years nor support for developing a curriculum among unexperienced teachers. In addition, since all administrators and teachers at KACSCO are volunteers, their lack of commitment or the sense of burden while supporting the school voluntarily became a severe issue. Besides, owing to the teachers’ voluntary characteristics and temporality, the staff issues and the lack of continuity of KACSCO’s education became problematic, especially when administrators or teachers were changed, resulting in discontinuity of school’s visions and academic curricula. The visions of the school have been shifted several times based on who are in the school’s administration. This circumstance leads limitation of developing organized curricula of the classes, and also promotes the parents’ deep involvements in the school’s activities to support unexpected situations. EJ, KACSCO’s teacher, and EJP, KACSCO’s parent, also underlined that the insufficient numbers of the class levels caused many students to drop the school.

Moreover, relying on a few and narrow Korean networks (Ryu, 2014) also added negative situations of the KACSCO’s local context. Due to the temporality of the community members who are staying in Columbus for several years and leave, the Korean-American community school heavily relies on personal networks and connections to recruit administrators, teachers and students. Most ways of KACSCO’s
advertising the school programs, recruiting the students, teachers and administrators, and celebrating their cultural or social events are through the limited Korean networks in Columbus, Ohio. Therefore, sometimes the school can find trained teachers depending on the candidates’ pool in the individual networks, and other times they cannot secure enough teachers, which causes a poor academic condition. Therefore, there was lack of publicity, decreasing student enrollment, and limited communication with other communities.

Church. Many Korean immigrants and second generation Korean-American students have been involved in churches. Religious congregation is a big part of Korean immigrants’ characteristics, and Christian churches “play the role of the most important social service agencies in Korean immigrant communities” to socialize with the same ethnic group (Hurh & Kim, 1990, retrieved from Min, 2004, p. 336). Jung (2008) maintains that Korean churches play a role as “the center of the Korean community” (p. 186). In fact, Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) was established in June, 1977, as a part of a Korean church in Columbus, OH (Shim & Koo, 2015). While students learned Bible through both Korean and English, the community members of the church felt the needs of a Korean school to teach students Korean language (Shim & Koo, 2015). However, in 1981, KACSCO became an independent community school from a church, and started to teach Korean language, history and culture as a Sunday school. Nevertheless, building networks via churches are still a significant factor of the KACSCO community members’ relationships. Many close ties
among the community members were created by people in the same churches even though the Korean-American community school is not affiliated with a church anymore.

**Perceptions about KACSCO. Korean-Americans.** My curiosity of the notion and sensitivity of “who Korean-Americans are” in the KACSCO setting was one of the starting points of this research study. However, exploring the notion was a very complex process for the students and myself, and that is still not defined. Additionally, the Korean-American students’ understandings of the boundary of Korean-Americans were uncertain and fluid (Kim, 162). As revealed, the boundary of the Korean-American community in this study was bigger than the perception of the Korean-American in general. The temporary residents from Korea, Korean immigrants, second or third generation Korean-Americans, Korean racial/ethnic population in combination with other race/ethnicity people were all included in the community’s boundary, and they showed very strong connections between one another.

As pointed out earlier, due to the large portion of multiracial/ethnic background students, KACSCO’s members paid attentions to the students’ national identity. Many students including HL often questioned “what if father is American and mother is Korean?” There was an obvious confusion between American nationality and the categorization of “Korean,” and “Korean-American” among all students. Moreover, due to the fact that some of the parents are temporary residents or recent immigrants, the Korean-American students’ perceptions of the Korean-American community embrace the people with Korean nationality.
Korean-American Community. Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students indicated that their parents or relatives see themselves as Koreans although they see themselves as “Americans.” Students pointed out that this is a “weird” situation, but nobody questioned about it and they never had a conversation about the concept of Korean-American identity. Indeed, all my students in the advanced class were born and grew up in the United States, and consider them as “Americans” regardless of other people’s perception of them. Sometime, the students were viewed as foreigners due to their appearance (Kim. 2014; Ryu, 2014), but their beliefs in American identity looked very solid.

On the other hand, it was difficult to find any general perceptions of the Korean-American community from outside of the KACSCO community. In other words, the Korean-American community is not at the center of attention in the local area in Columbus, Ohio, even though the number of Asian ethnicity is the second fastest growing population in Columbus (U.S Census Bureau, 2016; Greater Ohio Policy Center, 2008). In fact, compared to other Asian communities such as Indian or Chinese communities, the total number of the Korean ethnicity is much lower, resulting in the invisibility of the Korean-American community’s presence in the local setting.

Value and Expectation. The expectations for the roles of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) were varied among parents, teachers, administrators and children. Some parents expected that their children’s Korean ability would be drastically improved if they learned Korean language through the Korean community school. Other parents hoped that their children would be exposed to Korean
as much as possible. In these two cases, they had a higher expectation for the community school, and if they could not achieve the goal, they got frustrated or dropped the school.

Nevertheless, the teachers or administrators’ perceptions of the functions of the community school are different from those parents. Many teachers testified that parents should put more efforts on their children’s Korean learning in their home settings. Since the students came to the community school only during Sundays, fourteen times a semester, it would be difficult for the teachers to improve their students’ learning outcome. Rather, most teachers valued the Korean-American community school as a place where Korean-American students maintained their heritage by spending time with the same ethnic group peers.

Therefore, those parents’ high expectations of the community school and their children’s learning outcome encountered a severe discrepancy with teachers’ or students’ viewpoints and desires. For example, three teachers indicated that some Korean or Korean-American parents requested them to speak only Korean language during their class, which ideas conflicted with some teachers’ educational approaches. Additionally, parents often asked their children not to speak or read English in the community school, but their native or preferred language is English, so they used it with their peers, which created tensions between the teachers, parents, and students.

**Implications**

The diverse social perceptions, social structures, and situational factors of the community strongly impacted the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members’ self-recognition and their identity establishment.
Therefore, the KACSCO community’s cultural identities should be understood based on the population’s both social and local contexts (Ryu, 2014), including race, nationality, and the community’s complex backgrounds. Other people’s perceptions about the KACSCO’s community and socially constructed systems around the community which has different linguistic and cultural values should not be viewed as deficit. These biased social structures could contribute to the community’s depression or low self-esteem (Ryu, 2014; Kang, 2014). In other words, these ongoing socially constructed and emphasized racial distinctions (McLaren & Torres, 1999; Kang, 2014) cause many Koreans/Korean-Americans to feel the sense of otherness and inferiority (Kim, 2014) in multicultural settings. Therefore, the existing stereotypical notions about the Korean/Asian culture or its unfamiliarity in the United States should be revised (Kim, 2014; Chung, 1999; Kim, 2008), before the KACSCO’s students start to have “the bitter realization that as racial minorities” (Kim, 2014).

Analysis, Interpretation, and Implications for Question 2

*How do internal factors such as family backgrounds, parental influences, and age differences affect the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio students’ learning Korean language, history, culture, and/or art in multicultural settings, constructing their identity as part of the learning process?*
Analysis and Interpretation

Learning heritage language is the essence of maintaining cultural root, and “it has the strongest effect on integrating members into a particular ethnic group” (Min, 1999, p. 18). Learning Korean language, history, and culture, the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students embraced and developed their cultural identity. Several internal factors such as individuals’ legal or social status, cultural influences from their parents, or their age levels affect the students’ identity development and their learning process. In other words, having multiethnic backgrounds or being a 1.5, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, or 3\textsuperscript{rd} generation Korean-American brought the students’ different perspectives about their cultural identity and their sense of necessity of knowing their heritage language and culture. In addition, their parents’ influence was a significant factor in their learning as well, especially in their early ages. Therefore, in this section, I will analyze the data based on the three categories: Family structure and status, parental influences, and age of the students.

Part I Family Structure and Status

It is important to highlight the Korean-American students’ diverse family backgrounds in order to understand the students’ learning experiences in the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) setting. As mentioned, this study focuses on the wider concept of a Korean-American community which includes temporary residents with Korean nationality, 1.5, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, and 3\textsuperscript{rd} generation Korean-American students, and multi-racial/ethnic students, one of whose parents has Korean ethnicity. These different factors should be considered as main components of the result
of the data. Therefore, I will analyze the data based on their ethnic backgrounds, variations of social status, and generational differences.

**Multi-racial and -ethnic Backgrounds.** *Homo- vs. Multi-.* The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members’ racial and ethnic backgrounds influenced the KACSCO students’ motivation, continuity, and improvement in learning Korean language, history, and culture. As stated in the earlier sections, the number of the students with multi-racial and -ethnic backgrounds has been drastically increased (Kim, 2014; Min & Kim, 2014) at KACSCO due to a growing number of interracial and international marriages. However, based on their different backgrounds, their perceptions about the necessity of learning Korean were different. Generally, the individuals with the homo-racial and Korean ethnic background put higher importance on their heritage culture. In contrast, many family members with multi-racial or –ethnic backgrounds revealed inner conflicts over whether or not they should keep teaching Korean language, history, or culture.

Specifically, most of the KACSCO’s Korean-American students who have a homo-ethnic background of Korean ethnicity had better comprehension and deeper interests in their heritage culture and language. One of the reasons is that the students’ home language is mostly Korean if they have the homo-ethnic background. There are some exceptions for students who have siblings and prefer to speak English with one another, but they still communicate with their parents in Korean. Therefore, the homo-ethnic students are more exposed to the Korean culture and language compared to the students with multi-racial and -ethnic backgrounds.
Moreover, there are more contacts with Korean people and Korean communities if the KACSCO student has a homo-ethnic background. For example, they visited Korea more often, talked to their relatives or family members in Korean and received diverse Korean products including educational textbooks, video materials, or general gifts such as clothing, accessories, or cartoons from them. Many students who have a homo-ethnic background stated that they went to Korea one or twice a year to meet their grandparents in Korea or to attend a Korean summer camp to be exposed to Korean culture in Korea. These connections encourage Korean-American students to have better understanding of their heritage culture and be aware of their Korean ethnicity.

On the other hand, the students with multi-racial or –ethnic backgrounds had fewer opportunities to use Korean in their home settings. Their home language is often English when their parents’ ethnic backgrounds are different. Therefore, it was natural for them to speak English when they talked to people even in the Korean-American community school. Additionally, the chances to connect with people in Korea were lower than the students of both Korean parents. Certainly, they had fewer chances to visit their relatives in Korea.

Many Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) parents who have multi-racial or –ethnic backgrounds revealed that they often hesitate whether they should keep forcing their students to value Korean ethnicity. Sometimes, the only chance for the students to use Korean language and study Korean history and culture is at KACSCO; other than that, their opportunities to use Korean are limited. Therefore, the parents cannot be strongly persuasive to ask their children to learn their “part” of heritage
culture and language. This led many students to believe that learning Korean was boring rather than useful.

For example, the mother of two students, YG and HR, stated that she thought about giving up teaching Korean to her children several times, because they do not use it outside of the school setting. She added that unlike the other students with homo-Korean ethnicity who might go back to Korea, YG and HR will stay in the United States, so learning Korean might not be necessary for them. In fact, YG and HR often expressed their resistance to learning Korean language in my class. They also stated that their father, whose ethnic origin is Spanish, asked them to learn Spanish, because they are “Spanish.” At the same time, YG and HR stated that they learned Korean because their mother is “Korean.” The existence of multi-ethnic backgrounds in their family structure strongly impacted the students’ needs in their heritage culture and language, which was not valued enough compared to the students with a homogeneous Korean ethnic background.

*Mother vs. Father.* Among the multi-racial/ethnic background families, there are different levels of interests and understandings of maintaining their heritage cultures based on the parents’ cultural origin. Although parents’ strong influences on their children’s cultural identity establishment will be analyzed in the later section, I will highlight how the parents’ gender and their cultural origin impacted the learning process of the KACSCO’s students with multi-racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Interestingly, most cases of the multi-racial/ethnic background students in the Korean-American community school were the students with a Korean mother and a non-
Korean father. In general, students have more chances to talk with their mother in their home setting, so the KACSCO’s multiethnic students and their parents feel the needs of learning Korean language and culture if their mothers’ ethnicity is Korean. There were a few students whose father is Korean and mother is not Korean, but they couldn’t continue the motivation of learning, so often dropped the school.

**Social Variations. Legal Status.** The family members’ social status is another key factor of the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) students’ cultural identity. When parents moved or immigrated to the United States and their current legal status impacted the students’ cultural identity. In other words, the Korean-American students established their cultural understandings differently based on whether the parents were temporary residents, the first-generation immigrants, or second generation Korean-Americans in the United States (Kim, 2014).

The students whose parents are temporary residents were expected to keep their Korean identity since they needed to go back to Korea. In the Korean-American community school, there were many parents who stayed in the United States for their study or work temporarily. Even though the students were born and grew up in the United State, their parents who plan to go back to Korea encouraged them to build Korean identity through coming to KACSCO, mingling with other Korean or Korean-American students, and learning Korean language, history, and culture. The parents put a great value in developing Korean identity, and encouraged their children to keep their heritage pride.
On the other hand, many students at KACSCO are second generation Korean-Americans whose parents live in the United States as immigrants. Some parents came to the United States for their study or work and decided to stay in the United States due to various reasons. In these cases, the possibility of the Korean-American students’ staying in the United States is much higher than the Korean-American students with their temporary resident parents. However, the group’s purposes and goals of learning Korean language, history, and cultures were different. Some students learned Korean language to have better communications with their parents or relatives in Korea, which will be described in the following paragraph. Other students developed Korean linguistic competence due to the benefits of being bi-lingual. Similarly, they believed in the advantages of learning other cultures to expand their understandings of our society. However, several students in the community school revealed that they learned Korean language and history to take advantages for university admissions or future job markets. As I pointed out, Korean companies in the United States often hire Korean-Americans who can use both languages, so the Korean-American students are looking forward to acquiring those possibilities. Certainly, each individual shared in different degrees of interests and desires, and they often lost these motivations as well.

Part II Parental Influences

Parents were the most important factor in shaping the Korean-American students’ cultural identity in this study. Since most Korean parents or first generation Korean-Americans are more familiar with Korean ways of thinking, behavior, and custom, the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students tended to
preserve these tendencies (Kang, 2014). In addition, since all the study participants were under eighteen year old, parental influences were stronger than any other factors, especially in the students’ earlier age.

With the strong influences from their parents (Bose, 1999; Mori-Quayle, 1999; Kim, 2014, Kim & Oh, 2014), many 1.5 or second generation Americans, including KACSCO’s students, keep their heritage cultural ties. The parents often encouraged or even forced their children to speak their heritage language with them, visit to their heritage country, and attend a Sunday or Saturday community school to learn their language, culture, and history (Bose, 1999; Kang, 2014). Most KACSCO’s students shared the similar situations and experiences; thus, parental influences were at the center for the students’ learning and cultural understanding.

To sum up, in addition to the parents’ racial or ethnic backgrounds and social status that were examined in Part I, parents’ English or Korean competence, cultural and educational perspectives, personal experiences and relationships also impacted the KACSCO students’ perspective of Korean and Korean-American cultures, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Parents. English or Korean Capability. Parents’ English fluency impacted the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) students’ motivation on learning Korean. Although some parents were fluent in English and others were not, English is not their native language for most of the KACSCO’s parents. Therefore, KACSCO’s parents who could speak English well still had limitations in using the language, so Korean language became a basic way of communication between the
KACSCO’ students and their parents in most of the cases. For instance, HNC, KACSCO’s parent who indicated her lack of English confidence, revealed that she used only Korean with her son, JY, which led his slow English improvement. In contrast, his Korean capacity had not been decreased too much, since he used Korean with his mother. Learning Korean was more interesting thing for him, and coming to KACSCO was the thing that he desired for every week.

On the other hand, EJK, another KACSCO’s parent who showed higher confidence in using English, indicated that Korean fluency of her son, JHJ, drastically decreased recently. EJK often used English at home, and JHJ became more comfortable with utilizing English. In fact, EJK insisted that sometimes JHJ pretended that he could not understand her Korean. Indeed, JHJ preferred to use English while I was conducting an interview with him, and even in my Art Class where they were supposed to speak Korean. This situation became a significant concern for EJK, since they planned to go back to Korea.

Cultural Perspectives and Educational Approaches. The parents’ cultural perceptions about Korean culture and ethnicity had implications for the Korean-American students’ identity. Many parents who had positive perspectives toward Korean culture encouraged the Korean-American students to maintain the culture and to be proud of the Korean ethnicity (Kim, 2014; Kang, 2014). For example, JY, LS, and LY’s parents showed their value of Korean culture, and their children seemed to have a positive attitude toward it. In this case, students embraced Korean culture and their heritage as valuable assets to pursue or maintain.
On the other hand, some of the KACSCO parents’ conservative perspectives influenced on the students’ perceptions about liberal contents. Since Korean culture is more conservative than American culture, having a conversation about LGBTQ issues was controversial. Several students in my Advanced class conveyed their thoughts that homosexual relationships are “disgusting,” and they preferred not to talk about these topics in this school.

Furthermore, parents’ educational approaches affected the students’ identity development in the context of the Korean-American community (Kang, 2014). Due to the various educational reasons, some Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) parents kept focusing on using Korean in their home settings. For example, HJ’s father’s educational belief was to teach only one language until their children become an age of five. Therefore, HJ had been encouraged to use Korean as a main language until five years old. Based on my observation, HJ’s Korean proficiency was one of the tops at KACSCO, and his interest in Korean culture and history was beyond other peers’ average interest. The parents’ disparate approaches resulted in students’ ability, familiarity and interests in Korean language, history, and culture.

Part III Age Differences

The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) age level brought another dynamics of the Korean-American students’ cultural identity. The Korean-American students, in which level they belonged to, showed different attitudes toward Korean identity and learning Korean language, history, and culture, along with the difference from their parents (Bose, 1999). Since I had observed and interacted with
diverse age level students, from preschoolers to Middle school students, and gathered the information about university students, I will discuss about the findings with the three age levels, students in early childhood, K-12 school, and undergraduate.

**Age. Early Childhood.** In their early childhood, most KACSCO’s students defined themselves as Koreans, and showed profound interest in coming to KACSCO. In fact, as stated earlier, they had higher exposure to Korean culture in their home settings, since they spent more time home at this age instead of going to an American school. KACSCO’s students with Korean culture in their home setting barely had chances to meet or communicate with non-Korean peers in their early age (Kim, 2014). Rather, they were mostly exposed to Korean cultural identity. As a result, most students spoke Korean fluently, and enjoyed mingling with the other students with Korean background. Therefore, kindergarten students’ and preschoolers’ attitudes toward Korean culture was very positive compared the other age groups.

**K-12 School Age.** The American cultural influences outweighed their Korean cultural exposure in their home settings (Bose, 1999; Chung, 1999) after the KACSCO’s students attended public schools. I could observe ongoing resistance and struggles of the Korean-American students in learning Korean language. Notably, the students in the age group of eight to twelve showed their lack of interest in learning Korean language. Among the five students, four students admitted that they dislike learning Korean language. Many of them got easily bored and drew doodles in their text book. They explained that they did not see the necessity of learning Korean language and cultural
aspects, so did not understand why they need to learn them. They added that they did not use Korean outside of their home setting.

The neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio, lack opportunities for the KACSCO’s students to be exposed to their heritage ethnic community. Since the KACSCO’s students went to a K-12 school, they started to meet and communicate with other peers who have different backgrounds than their own. The students stated that most of their classmates were Americans and there were few Asians in their public schools. Therefore, the Korean-American students embraced English as their main language, and became immersed in American principles. Kim (2014) stated that in a more “homogeneous neighborhoods with few Korean and/or Asian Americans… they were likely to become highly acculturated and uninterested in their Korean heritage” (Kim, 2014, p. 160). Similar to the testimony of a Korean-American student in his article, most KACSCO’s students in their K-12 school age lost their interest in learning Korean, and need for coming to KACSCO, but becoming assimilated with their American peers. Therefore, their ability in Korean language, and positive perspective toward Korean culture decreased. Correspondingly, many students in my Advanced class argued that their Korean language proficiency was much higher when they were in their early childhood.

University Students. When the Korean-American students entered the undergraduates, the situation could be shifted again (Kim, 2014). Dae Young Kim (2014)

29 It might be controversial to view Columbus as a homogeneous city. However, most KACSCO’s participants from preschool to K-12 levels reported that in their classroom they have few Asian or Korean classmates if there is none. Additionally, in this study, communities in Columbus have been compared with the two big cities, New York City and Los Angeles, where most Korean related research has conducted. Therefore, the context of the argument is in the comparison with the demography of the two cities.
states that Korean-American students’ “ethnic reawakenings take place during college as exposure to a critical mass of co-ethnics, Asian-American studies courses, and Korean- or Asian-American student organizations” (p. 159). Kim (2014) sheds a light on this aspect by conveying a voice of a Korean-American, “It was not until he began college that he finally came to accept and find comfort in his Koreaness, a time when the Asian-American demographic was large enough to support explorations of and identification with his ethnic heritage” (p. 153). As Kim underlines, the population in the new circumstance reawakened the Korean-American students’ identity (Kim, 2014). In college settings, especially in the cases that the college is big and open to diverse populations such as the circumstance at The Ohio State University (OSU), the Korean-American students have more chances to meet other Korean-American or Asian-American students, which provide them a chance to gather or belong to the communities. EJ, KACSCO’s teacher and OSU’s instructor in Korean major, stated that undergraduate students become more interested in Korean or Asian culture, and look forward to find the possible connections to the culture.

Implications

Internal factors, such as family structures, parents’ different backgrounds and inputs, and students’ age, had significant influences in the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students’ cultural perceptions and identity development in addition to the general aspects of the community in the context of a Korean-American community in Columbus, Ohio. Based on the individuals’ differences and circumstances, KACSCO’s students perceived Korean language, history, and culture
differently; sometimes, learning and maintaining their heritage roots are meaningful, and other times, it is not necessary or boring things to spend their time on.

Most of all, KACSCO’s parents’ diverse social and cultural status, and their standpoints about the Korean cultural shaped the KACSCO’s students’ basic understanding of the values of their learning at KACSCO. Particularly, students with multi-racial or –ethnic backgrounds revealed their different perspectives toward learning Korean language, history, and culture. Furthermore, based on their age levels, KACSCO’s students showed different levels of interests or needs of learning Korean heritage culture. Therefore, understanding the internal factors of each individual is a very important factor when we explore KACSCO’s students’ varied identity perceptions.

Analysis, Interpretation, and Implications for Question 3

What are the roles and impacts of storytelling and visual artmaking components in addressing the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio community members’ cultural understandings and experiences?

Analysis and Interpretation

This section combines two components, storytelling and visual artmaking, to describe their positive roles in conveying the Korean-American students’ cultural and social understandings and experiences. Prior to the actual analysis, I need to acknowledge that I failed to achieve meaningful discourses about multicultural issues via visual representations. Although I had a clear goal to discuss multicultural issues via both
stories and visual images with the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students, the visual outcomes of this study could not fully capture the goal.

The lack of relevancy of the multicultural aspects in the process of visual artmaking was due to several reasons. As a participatory action research study, the whole process of conducting this study had always included inherent tensions and negotiations (Lawson et al., 2015). First of all, there was an unexpected change of the leadership at KACSCO in 2015. Unlike the previous principal who encouraged me to explore multicultural issues through artmaking, the new administrators wanted me to teach the school’s textbook. Secondly, the leadership change delayed this study to be conducted during the Spring 2016, the following semester of the time period that I originally had anticipated to conduct this research study. In fact, during the Spring 2015 and Fall 2015 semesters, there were students who were excited about this art activities/research participation. However, unexpectedly, they made a decision to go back to Korea after the Fall 2015 semester ended due to their parents’ job. Moreover, younger students enrolled in the Art & Craft class in the Spring 2016, compared to the previous semesters. There were five different extracurricular activity classes at KACSCO, and the student enrolled in my Art & Craft class were from six to eight years old during the Spring 2016. Lastly but most importantly, the younger students were not interested in creating artworks related to multicultural topics. It was challenging for me to bring those concepts for the age range, who were not familiar with multiracial/multiethnic and cultural identity related issues.
Although the process of visual artmaking could not fully support the KACSCO students to reveal their multicultural dynamics, opportunities to share their stories while creating artworks provided them with a space to elaborate each individuals’ unique perspectives. Furthermore, the KACSCO students’ interactions, conversations, and experiences provoked them to create another relationship, perspective, and experiences, which was recognized as the actions in this participatory action research study. Therefore, this section will be analyzed based on the roles of storytelling and visual artmaking with the two categories, Part I: Space and Part II: Action.

**Part I: Space of Storytelling and Visual Artmaking**

**Opening Opportunities and Securing Space. Openness.** In this study, there was no hypothesis to prove or disprove, but an open space where any individuals could share their own stories via verbal and/or visual languages (Leavy, 2015; Lykes, 2001). From ordinary daily episodes to serious and sensitive conversations, and from doodles in textbooks to huge poster drawings or paintings, the KACSCO’s students, parents, teachers, and administrators conveyed their own narratives in this open space while responding to one another’s perspectives, stories, and experiences. Sharing stories and making arts became a basis of this research study (McNiff, 1998), in which any ideas were welcomed in both verbal and visual expressions, and fairly treated as equally valuable components (Leavy, 2015).

In fact, many students preferred to participate in artmaking rather than any other activities at KACSCO. In my *Art & Craft* class, JH, KACSCO’s student, who “hates” coming to KACSCO, indicated that the *Art & Craft* class was the only thing he enjoyed
at the school. He explained that the class offered a “space” where he could experiment and explore any ideas he had without limitations and restrictions. Similarly, based on the observation of HNK, KACSCO’s teacher, many students in her *Origami* class were much more enthusiastic in this open space of artmaking activities, rather than her Korean language, history, and culture class. She understood that the space of artmaking offered the individual students with varied interests and needs freedom of expressions.

*Embracement.* The artmaking space played a role as a safer and personal place for the KACSCO students to express their individual stories. For example, two students, who did not want to talk about their own backgrounds with their classmates in my advanced class, shared their sensitive or personal stories in my *Art & Craft* class. Particularly, HL, KACSCO’s student, voluntarily talked about her father’s death in the *Art & Craft* class without any hesitation. However, when she was in the similar situation in the advanced class, she seemed to be hesitating to reveal her pain. Similarly, HJ, another KACSCO’s student who did not want to talk about his personal background in the advanced class, became very talkative and outgoing both verbally and visually during the *Art & Craft* class. These different attitudes of the students in the *Art & Craft* class indicated positive benefits of an embracing space for the students who might have not been offered a safe space to voice their unveiled stories and experiences (McNiff, 1998; Coleman & Coleman, 2014).

**Representation of perceptions, experiences, and social/cultural background.**

*Revealing oneself.* Verbal and visual stories presented diverse thoughts and understandings (Carrington & Allen, 2007; Anteby, 2012; Moss, 2001) of the Korean-
American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) community members’ cultural and social identities. While having general conversations or formal interviews, the community members were given to share their own perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, through both the advanced and *Art & Craft* classes, KACSCO’s students actively expressed their interests, social perspectives, cultural transition, and biased standpoints. The students and I became comfortable with sharing our interests via stories, comparing different perspectives toward social issues, and debating opposite ways of thinking through constructive dialogues.

For example, HJ, KACSCO’s male student, initially disclosed his perspective toward gender roles while having a class conversation with classmates. Students were supposed to pick one of the characters who is a part of dialogues in our textbook, but HJ did not want to pick a character named *Seulki*. He argued that he did not want to play the character since “‘Because I (HJ)... Because I... because I'm a male. No male should be talking like Seulki.” Although there was no identification of Seulki’s gender as female, HJ approached the character with his perception about male and female identities. Whereas HL, KACSCO’s female student, claimed that “that’s sexism,” HJ asserted that a man cannot marry a man, saying that “You cannot change yourself. You cannot change who you are,” which revealed his own standpoint against gender roles.

*Cultural and Social Reflections.* The students’ stories and visual images reflected on social and cultural aspects via the context of their stories (Clandinin et al., 2007). The visual images of HJ, KACSCO’s student, with his narratives often indicated his unique perceptions, and his “transnational cultural ties” between his Korean heritage and
Korean-American contexts in the United States (Kang, 2014). As described in Chapter 4, HJ created and set up several characters and their characteristics based on his cultural and social exposures. For instance, Frodo and Neo, HJ’s drawing characters, revealed his rigid perceptions of wealthy people, in addition to Danmuzi, another character, which represented his Korean cultural exposure. On the other hand, besides JHJ’s portrait with his friend and mom, his drawings with English vocabularies kept up his transnational background and language development (Kang, 2014) living in the United States.

Confrontation. The KACSCO’s students’ standpoint about their parents’ identity as “foreigners” was one the most surprising perspectives that was discussed in this study. Whereas all the students in my Advance class see themselves as “Americans,” they argued that their parents are “foreigners,” coming from Korea. Since most of the KACSCO’s parents were born and grew up in Korea and moved to the United States as the first generation immigrants, all students in the class agreed with the concept that their parents are foreigners regardless of their American citizenships. In particular, HL’s judgement under this viewpoint was that “[even] if they’re nationally citizens, they [are] STILL from a different country… just because you are nationally a citizen, doesn’t mean… you do not come from a different country.” She also highlighted that their parents “have to take” all citizenship tests “to become a national citizen” unlike themselves who were “born in the United States.”

On the other hand, the perception of the KACSCO’s parents toward the KACSCO’ students’ identity challenged the sense of foreignness in a different angle. In contrast to the students’ perception of themselves as Americans, their parents highlighted
their heritage root as an important part of their identity, which led a conflict standpoint. HL and JH revealed that their parents said that they (HL and JH) are “Koreans.” Although both of them did not seem to fully accept their parents’ viewpoint, the coexistence of different perspectives toward their national, cultural, and social identity influenced their identity development. In the same way, as YG indicated, HR (and YG)’s father asserted that they are “Spanish” since they have a half Spanish ethnicity. These conflict views between the KACSCO’s parents’ and students’ identity often contested the students’ sense of belonging to this nation as non-foreigners.

In addition, cultural identity confrontation happened among students. HR and YG, two students with multiracial/ethnic backgrounds, were often in those spots. They were uncomfortable with certain questions such as JH’ and HL’s challenges about their “pureness,” and “foreignness.” During a language class, HR, who has multi-ethnic background, questioned “what pure Korean means.” Since he has both Korean and Spanish racial/ethnic backgrounds, people including their parents perceived and expected him to recognize his identity differently. One day, JH with Korean ethnicity asked the classmates a similar question, whether the students who have a multi-racial/ethnic backgrounds are “real Asians.” JH’s genuine curiosity ignited the other students to confront the issue that they had avoided to talk about in public.

To sum up, this study offered a space for KACSCO’s community members to share varied ideas and experiences freely. This process revealed unique, complicated, and multidimensional situations of the community in the context of a Korean-American community in a multicultural setting in the United States.
Part II: Action of Storytelling and Visual Artmaking

**Awareness/Recognition.** As a participatory action research study, one of my concerns in this study was how to interpret, approach, adopt, and adjust the “action” part in the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) setting. However, while listening to the students’ and teachers’ reflections of their participations in this study, I came up with initial thoughts of how I might define the actions of this research study.

**Self-awareness as a Process of Action.** Sharing stories and/or visual stories in this study prompted the participants to re/think their daily experiences (Carrington et al., 2007). Participating in this study was not just telling a story without thinking process (Clandinin et al., 2007), but a process of understanding about their situations and surroundings in a multicultural setting. Many teachers and students revealed that they never thought about most questions that I asked them via interviews and class conversations, and raised their concerns and awareness. Regarding to JH, HR, and HL, KACSCO’s students, it often took some time for them to answer my questions, since they needed to ponder varied aspects of their culture and identity in order to reply to me. HL pointed out that she never had a conversation about her identity as a “Korean-American,” even with her mother, although she had been experiencing different situations as a person of color who has a multicultural background.

Moreover, some of the teachers were even embarrassed when I asked certain questions such as “what do you think the KACSCO’s common goal?” While volunteering at the school, most teachers never were informed nor had a chance to think about the
common goal of the school. It became considered as a problematic situation among the interviewees. In the case of HNK, KACSCO’s teacher, she replied to some of my questions after talking with her husband. The following week of the day when we had an interview, HNK came to me and presented her ideas in addition to her husband’s input. Those processes were a way of challenging the community members to reconsider their cultural and social values (Moss & Hay, 2004; Carrington et al., 2007), and their identity perceptions.

Additionally, HNC and MJ, KACSCO’s teachers, asserted that the school was lacking the opportunities to voice their current problems and issues. They said that they never talked about the issues discussed in their interviews with me, and there were certain needs to bring those issues in their teachers’ meetings. The interviews in this study provoked them to speak out their understandings of the problematic situations which the school faced with, and raised the public awareness for all the community members. Certainly, there were different degrees of awareness and demonstrations of the concerns. However, they had opportunities to recognize what was happening in the setting, and all those attempts were an important part of delivering their experiences with self-awareness.

Creating Connections and Experiences. Understanding One Another. The participants had opportunities to present their understandings of the KACSCO’s situations via public discourses, and learned from one another. Over the recurring processes, we learned from one another and the social/cultural/political contexts of the society where we belong. However, the process was not always seamless nor smooth. Some of the students became awkward toward one another due to the sensitive topics that
we talked about. At the beginning, whereas JH considered the population with multi-
racial/ethnical backgrounds as non-Asians, some students were embarrassed about the situation of questioning their peers’ Korean/Asian identities. Certainly, the two students, HR and YG, who have multi-racial/ethnic background and were directly involved with the topic of the conversation reacted awkwardly and said that they were “half-Koreans.” However, thanks to the frequent discussions, they became partially comfortable with reconsidering their own concepts and developed ways to explain their ideas to the other students. Finally, at the end of the semester, all the students raised their shared opinion that HR and YG, the students of multicultural background, are the key members of their Korean-American community.

Furthermore, I could learn a lot about Korean-American communities’ experiences in the United States. It included other Korean-American communities in Los Angeles and New York City thanks to the input of EJ and MJ, who taught in the cities. Since they had first-hand experiences in those cities, and still get informed about the situations through their colleagues in those regions, I could confirm what I was wondering, whether certain phenomena were still happening in Los Angeles and New York City. For example, much of my knowledge related to the two cities was obtained through scholarly works, not through real practices. Therefore, listening to their practical viewpoints helped me to acknowledge those conditions. These ongoing inspirations among the research participants and me were a part of the action in this research study.

*Open Invitation of Interactions/Communication.* The personal stories of the students resonated with other participants of this study (Anteby, 2012), inviting them to
join our conversations. For instance, when MJ, KACSCO’s kindergarten teacher, and I, teacher in advanced class, combined our classes, those traits were remarkably observed. While performing a role-playing game as animal doctors, the students in the two different levels shared their opinions, decision making process, stories, imaginations, and visual outcomes. The students actively provided the others with lots of feedback, and they developed another new experience together. This collaborative process of sharing and overlapping experiences (McIntyre, 2008) in a shared space became another part of each individuals’ lives and actions of this study.

*Interactions as New Experiences.* Sharing stories and visual artworks, and interacting with other community members provided the participants with shared experiences (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) as new experiences. In particular, the process of collaboration supported the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s (KACSCO) students to understand the other students while impacting them at the same time. Their experiences were co-developed in the process of interactions. While my students in advanced class had discussed about their identities and the roles and meanings of KACSCO, some students reorganized their own perspectives toward those concepts.

For example, HL, KACSCO’s student, was involved in those topics the most, and wanted to reorganize her ideas based on her understanding thoughtout the semester. The final outcome of her exploration was presented at the KACSCO’s ending ceremony in front of the administrators, teachers, parents, the students, and the other community members. HL gave a presentation about her opinions and understandings of the role and
value of KACSCO, and how she wants to approach her Korean-American identity. The school administrators and teachers were moved by her thoughtfulness, and decided to confer a prestigious award on her accomplishment.

**Implications**

Many scholars underline that both storytelling and visual artmaking approaches can extend the boundary of research methods with/in/through which more individuals can experiment (Leavy, 2015; Cahnmann-Taylor & Sigmund, 2008; McNiff, 1998). During this research study, numerous stories and images were delivered and created. Everybody shared a part of their lives via stories and visual creations. Storytelling and visual creation provided important opportunities for KACSCO’s community members to express themselves. Not only obtaining knowledge through the participations, the students also brought out their own assets, experiences, and previous understandings from their own end, which helped the other students to understand certain social aspects in different angles. By doing so, the students learned about themselves, the other classmates, and part of social configuration.

Reflecting on ones’ situations or social/cultural/political issues provoked the participants to think and look at their own surroundings with a different angle. One might argue that it does not change any problem, but I cannot agree with that. Stories and visual stories provided each individual with unique experiences based on their own situation, and that might be an alternative way of conducting a research (McNiff, 1998; Leavy, 2015; Prosser, 1998), and/or more approachable space for many people to be able to talk about various topics.
Summary of the Findings

The contexts of KACSCO as a research setting shaped the outcomes of the study. The school played a role as a unique space that is different from a formal public or private American school. KACSCO is a Sunday community school partially supported by Korean government. The main purpose of the school is to encourage people to learn Korean language and heritage culture. Most attendees of the school were 1.5 or 2nd generation Koreans/Korean-American students whose first language is English. Students were encouraged to speak Korean while mainly interacting with other Korean/Korean-American peers. These unique situation and power structure led to different expectations, attitudes, and responsibilities among the community members (Kim, 2014). Certainly, positive and negative viewpoints about KACSCO coexisted based on the individuals’ wide-ranging backgrounds.

The various backgrounds of the KACSCO population fostered the community members to think about the boundary and definition of a Korean/Korean-American community in a multicultural society. KACSCO’s students challenged the rigid concepts of who Koreans/Korean-Americans are while expanding their understanding about themselves and their peers. The process of identification has been a long journey which is still evolving. However, having multiple perspectives about the population owing to the participants’ diverse backgrounds positively impacted their involvement in this study.

The framework of this research combined with three theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological approaches maximized the positive processes and outcomes. This study emphasized connectedness and intersections among multiple theories, methodologies,
and pedagogies. Combined with critical multiculturalism, narrative inquiry, arts-based research, and community-based participatory action research, it indicates that they are closely linked, and could be utilized together. Building a bridge between theories and practices (McIntyre, 2008), multiple aspects of those approaches merged naturally and supported one another in this study.

This study intended to provide participants with a space to critically think about their identities and surroundings (Kanpol & McLaren, 1995; Bose, 2014). Critical multiculturalism offered a fundamental background of this study. The participants had multiple opportunities to reconsider their daily experiences related to social perceptions and systematic power relationships (Kang, 2014). Many participants shared their reflection of changing their own perceptions about the community and social structures while challenging other people’s common biased perspectives toward Korean/Korean-American population.

The study extended the theoretical framework that many critical theorist investigated such as social perceptions and education systems in regard to social structure and power relationships of society (May, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Kanpol & McLaren, 1995; Rasmussen, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; McLaren, 2007) by including a discourses about Korean-American community’s experiences. Understanding the community which has not been fully discussed in academia led to challenging existing misconceptions about the population (Kim, 2014) while making the people’s stories and experiences more visible.
The process of critical awareness on social and situational contexts led to actions among participants. Critical reflection and dialogues made several unstated or hidden issues uncovered (Lykes, 2001), which was transformative to the participants. Through involvement, the participants became agents of the knowledge and experiences (Heron & Reason, 2001; McIntyre, 2008). This recognition led them to express their own opinions about existing issues, and to further take actions. For example, most teachers, parents, administrators, and students indicated that there were significant physical and structural problems in the school system such as the location of the school, lack of enrollment, and unstable staff issues. Generating knowledge about the community, these conversations led the school to take actions such as moving the school to another location with a better circumstance.

At the same time, this study added unique aspects of a contemporary Korean/Korean-American community’s experiences onto Asian-American related discourses. Whereas Nazli Kibria (2002)’ and Pyong Gap Min (1995)’s cultural understandings of Asian-American communities underline a bigger picture of Asian immigrants’ experiences in the United States, this study further highlights variety of local contexts. In addition, unlike other Korean/Korean-American studies mostly conducted in two cities, Los Angeles and New York City (Min & Kim-Lu, 2014; Kim, 2008; Ryu, 2014; Kim & Oh, 2014), this study showed another aspect of a Korean/Korean-American population by focusing on a community in Columbus, Ohio. As discussed, Columbus is a mid-size urban city, where many community members are affiliated with a large university, The Ohio State University. This situational context revealed that the
population’s different social, financial, and educational status impact the community’s perceptions about Koreanness, Americanness, and Korean-Americanness. Exploring a wide range of age levels and different ethnic and family backgrounds via interviewing three main groups, students, teachers, and parents, attested that cultural understandings are multidimensional, so they should be explored via multiple layers of investigation.

The approach of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2013) and Storying (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014) was further developed in this study, conceptualized as Visual Storying. Integrating visual components, participants extended options to share their personal experiences. Students who have several cultural backgrounds explored their in-betweeness through both storytelling and artmaking. The multicultural contexts was presented in multiple visual forms including drawings, painting, and photos.

Storytelling, artmaking, and visual presentation as well as the interactions and communications during the involvement in this study functioned as a socio-cultural bridge for the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Brown, 2006; Lykes, 2001). Both narrative inquiry and art-based research approaches supported the community building process as effective means (Leavy, 2015; Rolling, 2013). Participants shared collective understanding (McIntyre, 2008) and empathy about their cultural and social contexts via stories and visual images (Grushka, 2009). These interactions broadened understanding among the participants and their surroundings.

This study helped to uncover hidden stories of the community and encouraged the community member to gain a better understanding of themselves and the complex
structure of their society. Via sharing the KACSCO community members’ stories and experiences as well as learning from one another, this study portrayed a multi-faceted community which goes beyond the monolithic perspective of a Korean-American community.

The addition of the visual transcends limitations of language, allows for complex meanings, and engages emotional aspects of stories. This was particularly potent in this study because of the language barriers among the participants and the communities in which we live.

This study unveiled the positive aspect of art as a collaborative process while connecting people who might have different backgrounds. This study underlines the functions of art and art education as a way of interacting with other people. While creating or talking about a visual image, people easily react to others’ opinions or feedback. This process often leads to open-minded interactions among people. In this vein, this study expanded people’s perceptions about the boundary of art and art education, as well as their significant impacts on society (Eisner, 2002; Grushka, 2009).

Becoming a member of the community and a stakeholder/participant of this study (McIntyre, 2008), I also developed a keen relationship with the community members. Community-based participatory action research approach strengthened the relationship with the participants. Without the close interaction with the community members and shared ownership of this research study, unveiling meaningful discourses about Koreans/Korean-Americans’ cultural identities would have not been possible.
This study developed connections between unfamiliar local contexts, knowledge, and experiences of others while bringing meaningful implications for the KACSCO’s community. As Dewey’s understanding of experience, this study offered KACSCO’s students to have an experience to shape their future. Dewey (1938) says that “Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process” (p. 50). This study offered the community members to share their own experiences via multiple pathways of learning including class discussions as well as formal and informal interviews. Many participants revealed that they never had those conversations and learning experiences before participating in this study.

The experiences offered the KACSCO members to set up a new and different perspective toward their cultural identity while “becoming agents of change in their own lives” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 64). Stringer (2008) asserts that “Understandings derived from research can provide people with new concepts, ideas, explanations, or interpretations that enable them to see the world in a different way” (p. 3). Once participants were offered the meaningful experience, they would be able to easily revisit or articulate other experiences with the new angle (Stringer, 2008; McIntyre, 2008; Heron & Reason, 2001).

Students became active leaders of this study (Stringer, 2008; Irizarry, 2011). Students’ evolving inquiries and understandings of Koreans/Korean-Americans as well as multi-ethnic peers led them to revisit, analyze, and articulate their own situations and experiences, resulting in their public speeches at the 2016 Spring ending ceremony. These evolving questions, discussions, and actions in “processes of change” were significant outcomes of the study (McIntyre, 2008, p. 61).
Implications

Art is a universal language that anybody can freely create and/or interpret. Without having the same cultural, historical, or social correlations, people can appreciate visual artworks, share emotions, and learn with others.

Visual Storying was developed and offered as an effective communication tool in this study. This expands San Pedro’s concept of Storying to draw upon the value of the visual to communicate beyond the constraints of language. Art as a universal language invited the participants to share unstated and hidden stories more easily. As an artist and art educator, I found values and possibilities of communicating via both stories and visual images. I created and implemented the method to reexamine participants’ daily experiences in the community setting. Through Visual Storying, participants had the chance to share their experiences and ideas more easily without the traditional language barrier, developed understandings of themselves and others, and learned social, cultural, and situational contexts of their surroundings and the community in an alternative way. Communication among the community members expanded, resulting in positive actions for the community.

Visual Storying adds a new paradigm in the methodological and pedagogical environment and workplace. When visual language was embedded in learning activities, participants more actively expressed their ideas and stories through visual forms than verbal/written language(s). Young students were very receptive in utilizing Visual Storying while parents, teachers, and administrators could easily access complex
concepts of cultures and identities and the students’ disparate perspectives related to those concepts.

The concept of Co-Created Visual Storying emerged from this study because Visual Storying embraced collaborations among participants. One could easily approach another by co-creating and/or discussing artworks. Participants expressed their ideas about visual representations while interacting with others.

*Digital Visual Storying* was developed and showed to be very effective depending on the studied population. Combining visual expression with technology, Digital Visual Storying allowed students to be more involved in learning activities and share different types of experiences. This concept was particularly effective because the children grew up with technology so were at ease with digital media interaction.

Visual Storying connected people and opened an inviting space for sharing and collaboration. Individuals have their own public and private spheres. Sometimes, people share their private space with others when they feel comfortable with others and/or the shared space. Visual Storying in this study established bridges between participants thanks to the absence of language barrier. Parts of individuals’ own private spheres overlapped to become private shared spaces, the “Space Between,” where individuals could build trust and meaningful relationships. Participants appreciated the open space where they can learn from one another, and feel a sense of community.

The concept of *Space Between* indicates the open space for diverse people to understand others and their experiences. In the Space Between, people with various backgrounds are invited to share their experiences. Community members, Koreans,
Korean-Americans, Americans, a German, an Italian, a Vietnamese, a Chinese, and people with multiethnic backgrounds at Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) revealed hidden/sensitive/complex subjects in the Space Between. In the Space Between, people who were considered as outsiders could become insiders. Most community members were racial or ethnic minorities in the United States, but they became majorities in the space, where they gained an equal voice, as active participants.

The concept of *Optimal Space Between* was developed and represent the largest shared space that could exist after “optimal” negotiations between parties. The Space Between has invisible boundaries, which limits can be pushed by identifying the researched population's interests. As Kinloch and San Pedro (2014) highlighted, dialogical listening is critical to Storying. The amount of information that can be shared depends on the roles of the participants. Those invisible boundaries and by extension the Storying scope can be enlarged by extracting interests and themes which are meaningful to the participants. The boundaries are the results of powers at play, which push them in either direction. Educators may want to enlarge them while parents may want to reduce them. Defining the Optimal Space Between at the early stage of a study allows educators and researchers to know their degree of freedom, hence create more adapted curriculum or study plans, and be more effective at getting information.

Differences meant diversity. Diversity generated knowledge. Knowledge led to awareness.

Differences meant diversity in this study. This Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) study began with my personal inquiry about being different as
Korean in the United States. The question expanded toward a Korean/Korean-American community in a multicultural setting in Columbus, Ohio. At Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO), the community members including myself shared previous experiences and perspectives related to cultures and identities. We started realizing our differences among and beyond boundaries of Koreans/Americans/Korean-Americans. We compared ourselves to White Americans, Black Americans, hyphenated-Americans, and Asian-Americans. We also explored our identities as Koreans, Americans, and Korean-Americans. Based on different social, cultural, and situational backgrounds, each individual recognized herself/himself differently. These realizations had changed multiple times as we learned from one another. While talking about our differences, we understood that being different does not and should not imply any negativity or inferiority, but diversity.

Diversity generated knowledge. Learning about differences among the community members, we underlined our diversity. Since all of us live in an intersectional space between the two cultures, Korean and American, multicultural aspects were repeatedly highlighted. Recent Korean immigrants/migrants, mostly consist of parents, teachers, and administrators, perceived their culture and identity differently compared to the Korean/Korean-American students who were born and/or raised in the United States. Our shared stories uncovered several temporary understandings of Korean/Korean-American identities and local contexts. We as participants/researchers discovered that our different perspectives toward the cultures, the heritage root, American nationality, and
multi-ethnic populations are valuable assets in understanding multiculturalism and multicultural aspects.

Knowledge led to awareness. The growing understandings of cultures and identities in relation to social/cultural/situational contexts of the community encouraged us to look back at our surroundings in a new way. Knowledge is data and an asset to rely upon in order to raise awareness about social and cultural issues within communities, and improve social interaction and thinking. The study allowed participants to question both familiar and unfamiliar concepts, social structures, and their positions as Korean-Americans in Korea and America. Teachers and parents challenged existing stereotypical perspectives toward their own identities as members of a racial/ethnic minority group. They also understood the gap between their appreciations of cultures/identities and the ones of their students and children. Language and biased perceptions toward minority groups can be addressed.

Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not meaningful unless it serves a purpose. From awareness, teachers can improve the teaching experience, students their social interaction, and organizations their rules and policies.

The effectiveness of this study in gathering data was demonstrated through the outlined methodologies of this research, such as Visual Storying and Optimal Space Between, which positively impacts the teaching and learning experiences for teachers/educators and students.

Defining the Optimal Space Between allows educators to develop Context Responsive/Sensitive Pedagogy, which is developing a pedagogy knowing the interest of
the population. Combining Context Responsive/Sensitive Pedagogy with *Cultural Responsive/Sensitive Pedagogy*, teachers can fully expand their understanding of other populations whom they were not familiar with, such as a Korean/Korean-American community, and develop adapted and adaptive curriculum. Teachers/educators can become sensitive to their students’ cultural, social backgrounds, and center of interests, and reconsider what to teach or how to better teach the students with diverse backgrounds. Understanding cultural complexities of their own or other populations, and social and situational contexts of a multicultural setting support educators to improve their teaching.

This study demonstrated that *Adapted and Adaptive Curriculum* is key to reach an effective learning experience. The Adapted Curriculum allows for a tailored learning experience, while the Adaptive Curriculum allows to expect the unexpected, and update the curriculum as internal and external forces require it. Adaptation is the continuous process of questioning and improving the status quo to face ongoing challenges.

Awareness raised among students help them respect each other. Understanding other people can result in cultural and social tolerance, especially when they are young. Since students learn from everywhere, learning opportunities about the Korean/Korean-American community’s experiences might lead students to avoid some issues such as bullying caused by cultural differences.

Students can become familiar with hidden issues in society, learn from them, and develop open-minded attitude. Many people revealed that it is not common to talk about multicultural issues in a school setting. Reviewing stories of the Korean-American
community, students can be more comfortable with talking about so-called sensitive or complicated issues.

Awareness raised within organizations allow the creation of a better environment for teachers and students. This environment, encompassing places, rules, and guidelines, plays an integral role in developing the sense of community, and can expand or limit the Space Between.

This research laid out the concepts of (Co-Created) Visual Storying, (Co-Created) Digital Visual Storying, Space Between and Optimal Space Between, Context Responsive/Sensitive Pedagogy, and Adapted and Adaptive Curriculum that will help researchers and educators define methodologies or pedagogies more effective for their targeted population. Even though, in this research they were applied to children from a Korean/Korean-American community dealing with multiculturalism, the concepts can be applied to multicultural population from various age range, and can deal with sensitive, complex and broader topics.

If there are ten different aspects among us, we can learn those ten. If there are twenty different varieties in society, we can learn and achieve the twenty different valuable assets by learning from one another. Differences mean diversity, and having diversity means enriching our society.

Further Research

This community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) study was designed and developed by the KACSCO community members’ collective interests, needs, and feedback. However, it also restricted the boundary and direction of this study.
For example, several key personnel who wanted to develop this study left before this research study was conducted under an IRB approval. Also, I could not regulate the age range of the participants due to the school’s condition, which caused some limitations of the research data. Although this study unveiled several important aspects of the community, the process and outcome projected other possible research directions including working with older student populations and/or utilizing art intensely focusing on multicultural contexts.

Moreover, it would be interesting to have follow-up group interviews with both parents and students in order to see their direct interactions and reactions to their disparate opinions about the major topics of this study. Since I had conversations with them separately, I could document each side individually. Securing multiple dimensions of their different perspectives could add another standpoint about the community’s cultural understandings (Mori-Quayle, 2014).

Conducting a follow-up longitudinal study could reveal another breadth of this research study. The distinct gap between KACSCO student participants’ age groups was found in this study (Bose, 2014), so the long-term method might support the validity and outcomes of this research study.

I hope to conduct a cross-sectional study to compare Korean/Korean-American communities in different cities (Kim, 2008). The firsthand comparisons among the communities via the same approaches might show concrete impacts on the communities in different social and situational contexts.
Similarly, using the same approaches to other Asian or hyphenated communities might reveal uniqueness and/or commonalty between or among the populations. My first CBPAR study guided me with profound possibilities to work with people who might have different cultural, historical, and social backgrounds.

Although my direct involvement in KACSCO as a teacher has ended, relationships with the school and connections with the community members continue. KACSCO’s teachers and parents who are interested in cultural understandings of Korean/Korean-American population have asked me to share some of my research findings. Several parents also asked me whether they could see my final outcomes including visual images. The relationship I have formed with the participants provoked their increasing interests in the topics of this study, and became a moving forth for my future research direction.
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Appendix A: Story Book
“Asian American are underrepresented in all aspects of research, theory, and practice about culturally responsive teaching”

(Gay, 2000, p. xviii)
"we all have a basic need for story"

(Dyson & Genishi, 1994, retrieved from Gay, 2000, p. 2).
"language is one primary maker of ethnicity and identity"
(Paris, 2009, p. 431)
invisible...
multiethnic youth space...

"where youth challenge and reinforce notions of difference"

(Paris, 2009, p. 430)
personal narrative...
"our world is not the only valid one. When we overlap our understandings, perspectives, and viewpoints, we may begin to engage in a meaningful [learning] based on storying, listening, and reciprocating. In so doing, we hear the other and see each other in the space between, and thus achieve... becoming"

(Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014, p. 33)
Appendix B: IRB Approval
01/22/2016

Study Number: 2015B0487
Study Title: Co-Created Visual Storying through Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Type of Review: Initial Submission

Review Method: Expedited

Date of IRB Approval: 01/12/2016
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: 01/12/2017

Expedited category: #5, #6, #7

Dear Karen Hutzel,

The Ohio State Behavioral IRB APPROVED the above referenced research.

In addition, the following were also approved for this study:

- Children

As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for ensuring that all individuals assisting in the conduct of the study are informed of their obligations for following the IRB-approved protocol and applicable regulations, laws, and policies, including the obligation to report any problems or potential noncompliance with the requirements or determinations of the IRB. Changes to the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before implemented, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378 and is valid until the expiration date listed above. Without further review, IRB approval will no longer be in effect on the expiration date. To continue the study, a continuing review application must be approved before the expiration date to avoid a lapse in IRB approval and the need to stop all research activities. A final study report must be provided to the IRB once all research activities involving human subjects have ended.
Records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 5 years after the study is closed. For more information, see university policies, Institutional Data and Research Data.

Human research protection program policies, procedures, and guidance can be found on the ORRP website.

Michael Edwards, PhD, Chair
Ohio State Behavioral IRB
12/22/2016

Study Number: 2015B0487
Study Title: Co-Created Visual Storying through Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Type of Review: Continuing Review

Review Method: Expedited

Request for changes dated December 12, 2016 (remove all funding for the study).

Date of IRB Approval: 12/21/2016
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: 12/21/2017

Expedited category: #5, #6, #7

Dear Karen Hutzel,

The Ohio State Behavioral IRB APPROVED the above referenced research.

In addition, the following were also re-approved for this study:

- Children (permission of one parent sufficient)

As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for ensuring that all individuals assisting in the conduct of the study are informed of their obligations for following the IRB-approved protocol and applicable regulations, laws, and policies, including the obligation to report any problems or potential noncompliance with the requirements or determinations of the IRB. Changes to the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before implemented, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.
This approval is issued under The Ohio State University's OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378 and is valid until the expiration date listed above. **Without further review, IRB approval will no longer be in effect on the expiration date.** To continue the study, a continuing review application must be approved before the expiration date to avoid a lapse in IRB approval and the need to stop all research activities. A final study report must be provided to the IRB once all research activities involving human subjects have ended.

Records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 5 years after the study is closed. For more information, see university policies, [Institutional Data](#) and [Research Data](#).

Human research protection program policies, procedures, and guidance can be found on the [ORRP website](#).

Daniel Strunk, PhD, Chair
Ohio State Behavioral IRB
Appendix C: Original Curriculum
- Jan 31 (Class 1): Create a safe-shared space by learning about who we are (Introduce each individual background) and draw a family tree.
- February 7 (Class 2): Bring pictures of their family members and talk about their influences on each student and sketch their favorite person among them and describe stories related to the person (Introduce two books, *The Name Jar* and *My name is Yoon*).
- February 14 (Class 3): Share each student's future goals. Based on the completed family tree drawings, all students will collaboratively sketch a background of their big size collage that shows connections among students' favorite people and future goals. Attach the students' pictures and images on the sketch.
- February 21 (Class 4): Continue working on the group collage (Share visual diaries of the reflection of participants’ cultural connections through their personal stories).
- February 28 (Class 5): Explore what are the notions and categories of Eastern and Western paintings. Learn Eastern painting compare to Western style paintings (Investigate new material such as Indian ink and Eastern watercolor).
- March 6 (Class 6): Open exhibition of the family tree drawings, group collage and eastern paintings.
- March 13 (Class 7): Read the books, *Those Shoes*, *The Other Side* and *Colorful world*, and select one character from the books and create masks of the characters. Perform a role playing game that is relevant to cultural identity wearing the masks.
- March 20 (Class 8): Gather students' diaries, essays and drawings and share them with other participants. Talk about their similarities and differences through visual drawings.
- March 27 (Class 9): Create two self-portraits based on two different situations if they have a different race/gender/ethnicity (Talk about adopted youth in the United States).
- April 3 (Class 10): Share each individuals' own cultural norms and related experiences with people from different cultural backgrounds, and create a background of the final group mosaic.
- April 10 (Class 11): Compose different sections of the group mosaic and putting tiles on the background.
- April 17 (Class 12): Continue working on the group mosaic (Reading One Green Apple, Let's talk about race and When Jessie Came Across the Sea).
- April 24 (Class 13): Create each individual's storybook based on their art-making experiences and collaborative works through the semester.
- May 1 (Class 14): Invite parents and teachers to the speech contest of which theme is “cultural diversity as a colorful element of our community.”
- May 8 (Class 15): Open exhibition of craft makings including masks and storybooks, visual diaries and the group mosaic and have an ending ceremony.
Appendix D: Revised Curriculum
**Advanced Class Curriculum**

**Spring 2016**
The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio
140 E. 16th Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

**School Introduction:** The Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio (KACSCO) is a non-profit organization established in 1977 to promote the education of Korean language and culture in the community of Central Ohio. Classes at KACSCO are designed to help students build Korean language skills as well as experience varied aspects of Korean culture and heritage.

**Instructor:** Koo, Ah Ran  
**E-mail:** koo.80@osu.edu

**Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Homework due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Opening ceremony/Open house Introduction, course overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Level evaluation, review previous learning activities, Lesson 1</td>
<td>Review basic sentence structure, reading/writing assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>Korean 6: Lesson 10. (p.115-p.124) Korean New Year’s Day celebration: traditional food tasting during the extracurricular session (4:45-5:30pm)</td>
<td>Reading an assigned book1: Chapter 4-6, Book summary 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>Lesson 9-11 Review</td>
<td>Reading an assigned book1: Chapter 10-12, Book summary 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>Korean 6: Lesson 12. (p.135-p.144) Painting and writing contest during the extracurricular session (4:45-5:30pm)</td>
<td>Book report 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>Spring break, No class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Korean 6: Lesson 14. (p.163-p.172) Egg hunt event</td>
<td>Reading an assigned book2: Chapter 4-6, Book summary 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>Lesson 12-14 Review</td>
<td>Reading an assigned book2: Chapter 7-9, Book summary 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Lesson 15-16 Review</td>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>Final performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s School Structure
## 2015-2016 Academic year curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Course content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder1</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>교육부 누리과정에 따른 놀이를 통한 회화학습, 체험학습, 한글 자모, 간단한 낱말 및 문장, 스토리텔링, 크래프트. Conversation practice using role plays and games, learning by doing, Korean alphabet, basic vocabulary and short phrases/sentences, story-telling, crafts. For students with little or no exposure to Korean language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder 2</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>놀이를 통한 회화학습, 체험학습, 한글 자모, 간단한 낱말 및 문장, 스토리텔링, 크래프트. Conversation practice using role plays and games, learning by doing, Korean alphabet, basic vocabulary and short phrases/sentences, story-telling, crafts. For students with some prior experience in Korean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning 1</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>한글 읽기 및 쓰기 연습, 기본 문형 학습, 기본적 표현 및 일상 단어 학습, 대화 연습. Hangul reading and writing, basic sentence patterns, common expressions and high-frequency vocabulary, dialog practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning 2</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>듣기, 말하기, 쓰기 활동을 통한 어휘 및 문법 연습, 한국 문화 학습, 일기 쓰기 연습. Grammar and vocabulary learning through the practice of four language skills, Korean culture learning, journal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>새로 배운 단어나 문형을 작 활동 또는 모둠 활동을 통해 사용한다. 쓰기 활동을 통해 배운 단어와 표현을 확인하고 자신의 생각이나 경험을 쓴다. 한국의 역사와 문화를 알아. Students practice newly learned words and grammar patterns through pair or group work. Students apply new words and expressions in writing and express one’s thought and experience. Students learn and experience Korean history and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Target Audience</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>This class will encourage students to express their critical way of thinking through Korean language. Student will practice more advanced level of speaking and writing and write reflection papers and book reports. Learning Korean culture and history will help them become informed global citizens. In addition, students will learn and practice diverse expressions through SAT Korean and TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean) questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult 1</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>This class is designed for students who have little or no knowledge of Korean. This course aims at developing foundational reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills through meaningful communicative activities and tasks. Upon successful completion of this class, students should be able to comprehend and carry on simple daily conversations and create simple sentences in the past, present, and future tenses. Students will learn how to introduce themselves, describe their surroundings, talk about daily lives, friends and relatives, and talk about past and future events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult 2</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>This class aims at further development of the four language skills to the novice-high/intermediate level. Students will learn how to use three speech styles (polite formal, informal, and intimate) appropriately in a given context. Upon successful completion of this class, students should</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
be able to handle simple and elementary needs of daily
lives and talk (and write) about a variety of topics such as
family, college life, birthday celebration, shopping, Korean
food, etc.

Spring 2016 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>날짜</th>
<th>주요 행사 Major events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2/7  | 개강식/오픈 하우스, 설날 행사  
Opening ceremony/Open house, Lunar New Year event |
| 2/14 | 학부모미팅 (meeting with parents), 2:30~3:30pm |
| 3/20 | TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean) test for those who are interested |
| 3/27 | 봄방학 Spring break, No class |
| 4/9 (Sat.) | 재미과학자협회 수학경시대회 (OSU에서 개최예정)  
KSEA (Korean-American Scientist and Engineers Association) Math Competition  
to be held at OSU (more information TBA) |
| 4/23 (Sat.) | 중남부 학생축제 Mid-south region student festival (more information TBA) |
| 5/8  | 학부모 미팅 (meeting with parents), 2:30~3:30pm  
기말고사(final exam), during the extracurricular session (4:45-5:30pm) |
| 5/15 | 종강식 Final performance |
Appendix F: Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio’s Participants
## Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JHJ</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Biracial</td>
<td>Costa Rican/Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HJ</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Biracial</td>
<td>Costa Rican/Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>US citizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Teacher, Parents, and Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Legal status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HNC</td>
<td>Teacher/Parent</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNK</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EJ</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Teacher/Parent</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>US citizen/Immigrant</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
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<td>USA</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Temporary resident</td>
</tr>
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Appendix G: Interview Questions
Finalized Interview Questions

Title: Co-Created Visual Storying through Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Interviewer: Ahran Koo, Co-Investigator

[Group 1] Parents

1. Where was your child born between the United States and Korea?
2. How long has your child learned Korean language, history, culture and/or art?
3. Does s/he like learning Korean language, history, culture and/or art? Why?
4. What is the major communication language home? What is your major communication language with your child? Does your child have any language preference in terms of spoken/written language?
5. Do the attitudes/tones/expressions of your child change when they speak Korean and English? What do you think the possible reasons?
6. How do you see your child’s cultural and social identity in the United States? How about in Korea? Is that different? Why?
7. Do you observe any similar or different attitudes from other Korean-American students or their parents in this school? What do you think the reasons of the similarities or differences?
8. What are the cultural and social backgrounds of your child’s closest friends? Does your child often talk about her/his friends? Do you have any unique experience of your child regarding of cultural differences with peers?
9. Have you ever had an experience of sharing your opinions about Korean-Americans’ cultural identities with other people? Could you share your reflections about it?
10. Do you want to share the students’ outcomes of storytelling and/or visual artmakings with other communities? Why?
[Group 2] Administrators

1. What is your role in this school?

2. Why did you volunteer to play an administrative role in this community school?

3. What are the goals of the school?

4. What characteristics do you think parents are looking for in this school? How about students?

5. How many students registered for the school this semester?

6. How can you define Korean-American culture?

7. Do you see any unique achievements, struggles, positive or negative aspects, future possibilities, development of open-minded attitude, identity confusions, or building a global mindset among Korean-American communities in the United States?

8. Do you see any differences or similarities compared to white American students in the United States and/or Korean students in Korea? What do you think the reasons of the similarities or differences?

9. Have you ever had an experience of sharing your opinions about Korean-Americans’ cultural identities with other people? Could you share your reflections about it?

10. Do you want to share the students’ outcomes of storytelling and/or visual artmakings with other communities? Why?
[Group 3] Teachers

1. Which level of Korean class do you teach in this school?

2. Why did you volunteer to teach in this Korean-American community school?

3. Which characteristics do you think this community school pursues through education programs?

4. Could you share your opinions about Korean-Americans’ cultural identities in the United States?

5. Do you see any unique achievements, struggles, positive or negative aspects, future possibilities, development of open-minded attitude, identity confusions, or building a global mindset among your students?

6. Do you see any differences or similarities compared to white American students in the United States and/or Korean students in Korea? What do you think the reasons of the similarities or differences?

7. Which do you think your students enjoy more between Korean language, history and culture class, and the extra-curricular class? What do you think the reasons?

8. Is it helpful for you to understand a certain context of complicated or unfamiliar topics if there is a visual component of the explanation? Why?

9. Do you think storytelling and/or visual narrative can be effective tools to deliver the Korean-American students’ daily experiences in a multicultural setting?

10. Do you want to see the Korean-American Community School of Central Ohio students’ outcomes of storytelling and/or visual artmakings after this study ends?
Appendix H: Example of Interview Note
Appendix I: OSU International Student Enrollment Published in Columbus Dispatch
International enrollment

In total, international enrollment at Ohio’s public universities has increased over the past five years. Ohio is ranked eighth nationally for the most foreign students in the state.

INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Toledo</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1,431</td>
<td>741.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami University</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>325.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Akron</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>1,229</td>
<td>189.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State University</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>2,302</td>
<td>144.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ohio State University</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,812</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown State University</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee State University*</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright State University</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>968</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio University</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>1,812</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Cincinnati</td>
<td>1,953</td>
<td>2,664</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland State University</td>
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<td>1,245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State University</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>-8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central State University*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-75.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*International student population capped at a maximum number

Source: Ohio Board of Regents
Appendix J: Advanced Class Handout about Cultural Differences
고급반 (Advanced) Spring 2016

날짜: 2016 년 2 월 14 일 (2/14/2016)

이름: ____________________________

- 세계 지도에서 한국 찾기 (Korean History & Culture, p. 16)

1. 다음의 서로 다른 두 세계 지도에서 한국을 찾아 짧간색으로 동그라미 찍보세요. 한국 주변에는 어떤 나라들이 있습니까? 대표적인 3 나라의 이름을 적어봅시다.

   1) __________  2) __________  3) __________

2. 지금 우리가 살고 있는 나라 이름은 무엇입니까? __________

다음의 두 세계 지도에서 해당 국가를 파란색으로 동그라미 찍보세요. 주변에는 어떤 나라들이 있습니까? 대표적인 3 나라의 이름을 적어봅시다.

   1) __________  2) __________  3) __________
Appendix K: Advanced Class Questionnaire about KACSCO
고급반 (Advanced) Spring 2016

날짜: 2016 년 4 월 24 일 (4/24/2016)

이름: 

• 한국 학교에 대한 자신의 생각을 학급 친구들과 나누어 보십시오.

1. 한국 학교는 누가 만들었을까요?

2. 한국 학교는 무엇을 목표 (goals)로 설정 (established) 되었을까요?

3. 우리는 한국 학교에서 무엇을 배우나요?

4. 한국어 배우는 것을 좋아하나요? 싫어하나요?

5. 그 이유를 적어보세요.

6. 한국어, 역사, 문화 중 무엇을 가장 배우고 싶은가요?

7. 그 이유는 무엇인가요?

8. 한국어, 역사, 문화를 공부하는 이유는 무엇이라고 생각하나요?

9. 한국어, 역사, 문화를 공부하면 어떠한 장점 (advantage)이 있나요?

10. 한국 학교를 다니면서 가장 좋은 점은 무엇인가요?

11. 한국 학교를 다니면서 가장 싫은 점은 무엇인가요?
Appendix L: HL’s Final Presentation Manuscript
Hello everyone? I am HL.

I do not like coming to the Korean-American community school a little bit.

[This is] because [I] learn too many things during weekdays, and I should come to school on Sundays without taking any rest.

Why do [I/we] need to learn Korean?

It is not easy to learn Korean.

[However,] while writing and reading Korean, and learning [Korean] culture every Sunday [at KACSCO], [I] learn about Korea little by little, and it helps me understand where I am from.
My American friends get amazed by when I write, read, and speak Korean. By learning Korean well, I would like to teach my friends who want to learn Korean.

I feel like I would be able to enjoy a trip when I go to Korea next time, while finding locations easily as well as ordering and eating delicious food.

Although it is difficult for us, I thank you for the teachers who have taught us for this year.

Have a great summer break.
Appendix M: HJ’s Drawing Book
Tonsils

Eyes

Tongue

J Yorks

Brain

Awkward

Body

Characters

Esophagus

Trachea

Lungs

Thyroid

Right

Lung

Spleen

Pancreas

Bladder
Heart and Brain Characters

Tongue Stomach Brain Heart
All about a who ate all the cakes? Probably stomach and now he has to pay for it! Watch the food cycle as he become slim again! The question is... will he succeed?
Ice cream for Tongue!
All about Tongue loves Ice cream.
Join Tongue as he goes to the Jeni's Ice cream store!
In dirty teeth brush off.

Brush your teeth. Lesson:
Brush your teeth and there be flow.
All about!

Does your child don't even brush their teeth? Follow Dent to the dental and gets cleaner!

Yes he will be small in bad but now you can join him.
Tongue  Eyes  Dent  Tooth  Tonsils
Lungs  
Heart  
Stomach
Liver  
Spleen  
Bladder  
Appendix  
Thymus

Tayden's body characters
Appendix N: JHJ’s Drawing Book
ART of DESIGN
Form, Function, and the Future of Visual Arts Education

NAEA 2015 NAEA National Convention
MARCH 26–28 | NEW ORLEANS, LA

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366
in the middle

boddum
One is for fun
two is for Boo
three is for reed
four is for I'm bord
five is for his
six is for Mix
seven is for I am going
to heven
eight is for the right.
Rock
citship
Siger

Car
socket
bal
Done.

the end.
buble