

Participant P10

School Experience: Diverse public high school in Texas (Seven Lakes High School)

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell me when you came to the United States?

Response:

My name is Huiyi. I came to the United States about four years ago. I recently graduated from Seven Lakes High School and am now a freshman at Texas A&M University, where I will study General Engineering before applying to Chemical Engineering.

2. What was the biggest challenge when you first arrived in the United States?

Response:

The biggest challenges were language and cultural differences. Although I had learned English in China, I had very little experience using it in real-life communication. I also found it difficult to fully adapt to American culture. Even now, I sometimes hesitate when talking to other people because I am unsure how to interact naturally.

3. Can you describe your experience learning English?

Response:

I never learned English through a systematic approach. Instead, I mainly learned from school textbooks, reading English fan fiction, listening to English audio, and memorizing vocabulary. Most of my English developed gradually through these experiences rather than through formal language training.

4. Do you remember a moment when language made you feel excluded, embarrassed, or misunderstood?

Response:

Yes. I often found it difficult to express myself in English. Even when I knew what I wanted to say, I could not fully communicate my thoughts or emotions. This often made me feel frustrated because I felt that people could not understand the real me.

5. Do you feel like the same person when speaking Chinese and English? Why or why not?

Response:

No. I feel like a different person when speaking English because I cannot fully express my personality, emotions, or feelings. Speaking Chinese allows me to communicate much more naturally and authentically.

6. Has moving to the United States changed the way you think about being Chinese?

Response:

Yes. Before moving to the United States, I was simply proud of being Chinese. After living in the United States, I gradually realized that being Chinese became more like a tag attached to my identity rather than something that completely defined who I am. It is one part of my identity, not my entire identity.

7. When do you feel most Chinese? Can you give an example?

Response:

I feel most Chinese when celebrating traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival or the Mid-Autumn Festival, and whenever I speak Chinese. These moments remind me of my cultural background and make me feel proud of my heritage.

8. When do you feel most American? Can you give an example?

Response:

I feel most American when I participate in American traditions and festivals, such as the Houston Rodeo, or when I have conversations with people from different cultural backgrounds. In those moments, I realize that we are all sharing the same classroom and the same experiences despite our different backgrounds.

9. Have you ever felt caught between two cultures? Can you tell me about that experience?

Response:

Yes. I sometimes find it difficult to relate to people my own age in China because I no longer fully understand the way they socialize or communicate. At the same time, I also hesitate when talking with American classmates because I am often unsure what topics we have in common. As a result, I sometimes feel that I do not completely belong to either cultural group.

10. If you could describe your identity in one sentence, what would that sentence be?**Response:**

I don't think I need an identity label. Although it can sometimes feel lonely, I believe we are all human beings. I don't want people to put labels on me or separate us into different groups because of those labels.

Participant P10 (翻译, 原英语采访)

学校经历: 德州 Seven Lakes High School (多元化公立高中)

1. 请简单介绍一下自己, 以及你是什么时候来到美国的?

回答:

我叫Huiyi, 大约四年前来到美国。我刚从 Seven Lakes High School 毕业, 目前是德州农工大学 (Texas A&M University) 一年级学生, 第一年学习通用工程 (General Engineering), 之后希望申请化学工程专业。

2. 刚来到美国时, 你遇到的最大挑战是什么?

回答:

刚来到美国时, 我遇到的最大挑战是语言和文化差异。虽然我在中国学习过英语, 但几乎没有真正使用英语进行交流的经验, 因此很难适应真实的语言环境。同时, 我也一直觉得自己没有完全融入美国文化。即使现在, 我和别人交流时仍然会有些犹豫, 不知道怎样才能自然地融入对话。

3. 你能描述一下自己学习英语的经历吗?

回答:

我没有接受过特别系统的英语学习。我主要通过学校教材学习英语, 同时喜欢阅读英文同人小说 (fan fiction)、听英文音频, 以及记忆课本里的单词。我的英语更多是在这些日常接触中逐渐提高, 而不是通过专门的语言训练。

4. 你是否记得某个因为语言而感到被排斥、尴尬或被误解的时刻?

回答:

有很多这样的经历。我一直觉得很难用英语真正表达自己。即使知道自己想说什么, 也很难准确表达自己的想法和情绪。因此, 我经常觉得别人无法真正理解我, 这让我感到很挫败。

5. 当你说中文和说英文时, 你觉得自己是同一个人吗? 为什么?

回答:

我觉得不是同一个人。说英文的时候,我很难表达真实的个性、情绪和感受,因此总觉得自己像另一个人;而说中文的时候,我能够更自然、更真实地表达自己。

6. 来到美国以后,你对于“中国人身份”的理解有发生变化吗?

回答:

有。在来到美国之前,我一直以自己是中国人为荣。来到美国以后,我仍然认同中国文化,也依然为自己的文化背景感到自豪,但我开始觉得,中国人身份更像是我身份上的一个标签(tag),而不是定义我的全部。它只是我身份中的一个部分,而不是我整个人。

7. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己是中国人?能举个例子吗?

回答:

当我庆祝中国传统节日,例如春节、中秋节,或者说中文的时候,我最能感受到自己是中国人。这些时刻都会让我重新感受到自己与中国文化之间的联系,也让我为自己的文化背景感到自豪。

8. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己像美国人?能举个例子吗?

回答:

当我参加美国的传统活动,例如 Houston Rodeo,或者和来自不同国家、不同文化背景的人交流时,我会觉得自己更像美国人。大家一起上课、一起生活,让我觉得我们拥有共同的经历,而不仅仅是不同的文化背景。

9. 你有没有感到自己夹在两种文化之间?可以分享一个相关经历吗?

回答:

有。我发现自己越来越难理解中国同龄人的生活方式和交流方式;但与此同时,我和美国同学交流时也会犹豫,不知道该聊什么,也不知道彼此有哪些共同话题。因此,我有时候会觉得自己没有真正属于任何一边,而是夹在两种文化之间。

10. 如果让你用一句话描述自己的身份认同,你会怎么说?

回答:

我觉得自己并不需要一个固定的身份标签。虽然有时候这种感觉会让我觉得孤独,但我认为我们首先都是人,不需要因为身份标签而被划分成不同的群体。