Beyond English language proficiency: international secondary school students' diverse practices of belonging

AIEC 2017

Wednesday 11 October 2017

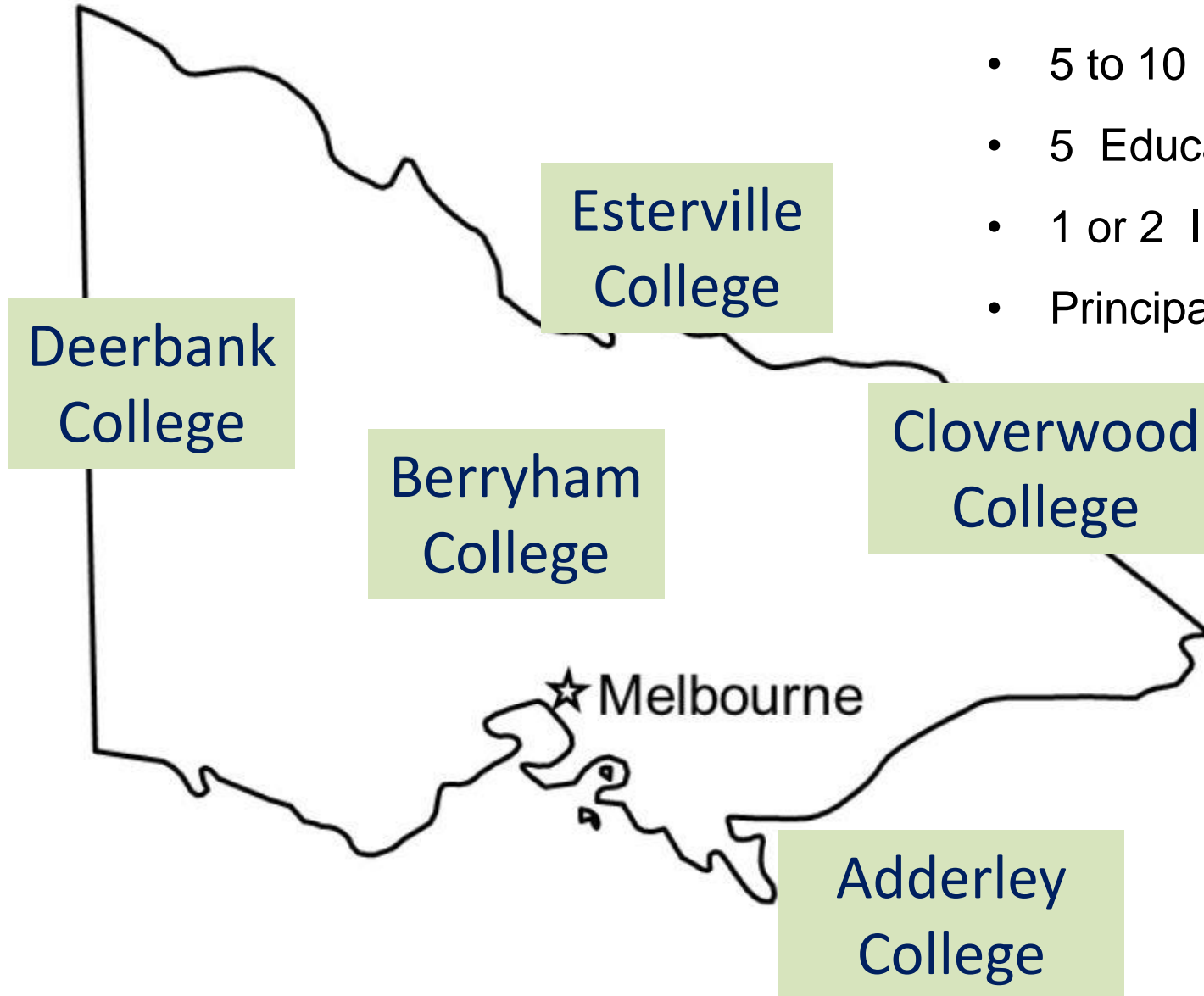Trang Hoang- Deakin University

The big picture context
The "**International Students in Australian Secondary Schools: transnational connectedness**" research project

- Funded through **Australian Research Council** grant DP160103181 (2016-2019)

- Joint between Deakin University and Griffith University

- **Chief investigators**: Alfred Deakin Professor Jill Blackmore, Prof. Christine Halse, A/Prof. Ly Tran, Prof. Catherine Beavis, and Prof. Leonie Rowan

   Researchers: Dr. Caroline Mahoney, Ms. Trang Hoang, Ms. Manaia Chou-Lee, and Ms. Catherine Moore

- Approach: qualitative **longitudinal** study, **multi methods**

Victoria

Deerbank College

Esterville College

Berryham College

Cloverwood College

☆ Melbourne

Adderley College

In **each school**, the team heard from:

- 7 to 10 International Students
- 5 to 10 Domestic Students
- 5 Educators
- 1 or 2 ISP professional staff
- Principal and/or Assistant principal

My PhD focus – **International Student Voice**

Aspirations

Transnational networks

Post-school pathways

Identity-formation

Whether young international students maintain existing and/or forge new **connections** during their secondary schooling in Australia?

And if so, in **what forms**, **to whom**, and **to what extent** do their practices of connectedness play out and change across three years (Yr 10 to Yr 12)?

Supervisor panel: Associate Professor Ly Tran, Alfred Deakin Professor Jill Blackmore, and Professor Catherine Beavis

International Student in Secondary Schools
The three-generational evolution

| Pre-1990s | Mid 1990s - Early 2000s | 2010 - Current |

"Hsiao Liu Hsu Sheng"
(Lin 1998)
First 100 Chinese to
USA **1872** (Gao 1982)

"Parachute kid"
(Tsong & Liu 2008)

"Chogi Yuhak"
(Abelmann et. al 2013)
Early Study Abroad

United States, 73,019 → 81,981
Canada, 40,706 → 44,510
United Kingdom 25,913 → 27,633
Australia 16,623 → 22,265

2013 — 2016
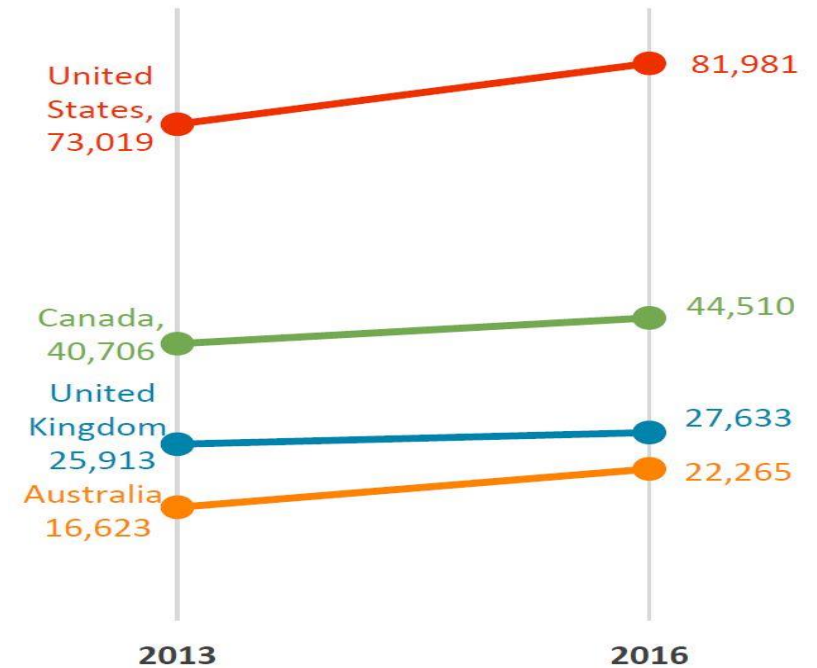
"Globally mobile youth" (Farrugia, IIE, August 2017)

Challenge
Interactions with Australian Schools and Students

2016 International School Student Survey (DET)

- **1,626** International school students responded;

- **84%** want **more** Australian students as **friends**

Documented scholarly research

- Low levels of interaction bw local and international students (Arkoudis et al. 2010; Leask&Carroll 2011; Marginson&Sawir 2011)

- Only 14% of teachers felt possible to form close bonds with international students. **Reasons**: lack English skills 70%; lack specific subject and content specific skills 30% (Arber & Blackmore 2010)

PHOTO: There were almost 4,300 new enrolments of Chinese teenagers in Australian public and private high schools last year. (www.sxc.hu: AQUANEWS)

*"Degrees of **social integration** varied across sites and were largely seen as **dependent on individual students** and their **ability to adapt**".*
(Arber & Blackmore 2010, p.13)

Bourdieu's conceptual and analytical framework

- The interaction of habitus, cultural capital and field generates the logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990b);

- Habitus operates in two key ways: 1) it is structured by one's circumstances, and 2) it is structuring in that it shapes one's present and future practices;

- Using the concept of habitus to analyse interview data elucidates the diverse intercultural, social and interpersonal connections that contribute to international students' sense of belonging in educational and social settings.

"*Connectedness is defined as the **multiple avenues of belonging** to **different communities** in the home and host nations that international students use to create a meaningful existence for themselves while **in transience**"*. (Gomes & Tran 2017, p.16)

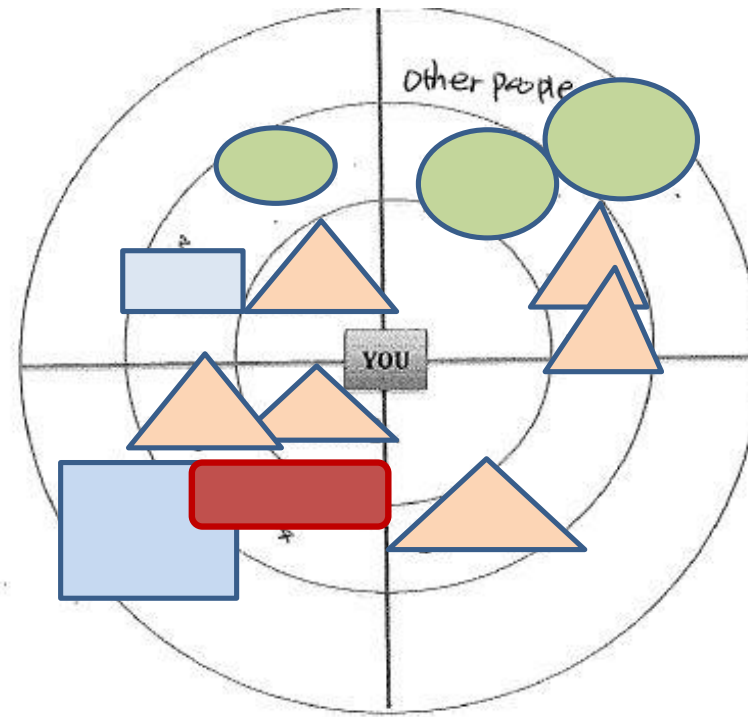# Adderley College: Institutional Habitus
Pilot study October 2016

- \> 700 students; all girls; 23% LBOTE

- ICSEA =1160; 70% upper income quarter

- Approx. 27k p.a. (Domestic Yr 9– 12); AUD 33k p.a. (IS Yr 7 – 12), 2017 fees

- CIS accredited; IB Primary Year; VCE

- Median ATAR 89 (2016); 44% of students in top 10% Australia-wide, ATAR >=90

- Post-school: 96% to University.

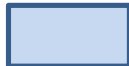- Destinations: Monash, Melbourne, RMIT, Deakin, ACU, William Angliss.

The transnational networks
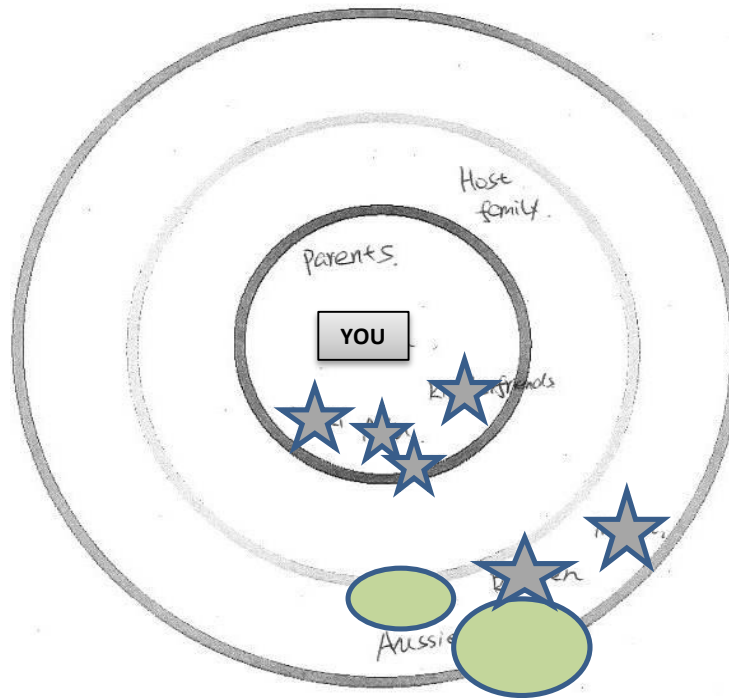
⭐ Japanese childhood friends, on/off-line	🟥 Local community
🔺 Chinese IS friends, In and outside school	🟦 Online friends
🟢 Australian classmates	

Individual Habitus as Compilation of individual trajectories

Ariel Highly mobile, transnational schooling trajectory	Andrea Academic-focussed Positional motivation	Addison Music talent Caring and affective
• Has had schooling across 4 countries • Connect via Facetime and Facebook • Has strong ties with **childhood Japanese friends studying in US** • Form close bonds with the Anime **online game community** • **Teach Japanese for local kids** • Aspiration: Actuary, Uni of Tokyo or one in the UK	• Main goal: English, excellent scores, build academic profile • Form friendships via **sharing of Chinese and Japanese cultures** • Value friendship with **teachers** particularly • Connect through **interactions** with peers **in class** on **subject content knowledge** • Aspiration: to study Engineering in the US.	• Conscious that she does not "quite belong" to the school • Connect via WeChat • Felt a sense of belonging at homestay when **caring for host family's pets** • Felt included and proud when **participating in the school symphony** and won First place in a local contest. • Aspiration: study in Uni Melbourne

Take-away message and Future works

- Facilitation of "belonging" needs to be purposefully shaped, driven, and demonstrated;

- The project is to investigate further the online connectedness component;

- Track the post-school pathway decisions and how international students engage with the selection and application process to universities; and

- Work with the international students in constructing their life-story from their perspectives.

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THANK YOU